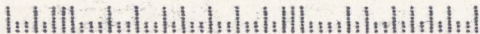


Ivan Doig  
17021 - 10th Ave. N.W.  
Seattle, WA 98177



America the Beautiful USA 15

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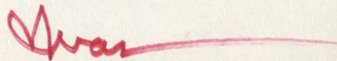


18 Feb. '90

Dear Linda--

Finished the novel/trilogy--is this my personal sign that the 1980's are over?--and it's already been read and liked in NY. Am awaiting a cover sketch (anticipation), the copy-edited manuscript (dread), and then proofs (exultation). Honest to God and sometime before spring, there will be an actual letter from this household, once I get the all-enveloping bookwriting apparatus disassembled enough for anything else to function. For now, the news is (a) Seattle has 6-8" of snow this weekend, and you'll remember the beautiful paralysis that produces and (b) Carol got a sabbatical for next winter quarter and we're going to expend it in Tucson, how about them sunkissed apples?

love and fishes,

A red ink signature, possibly reading "Ivan", followed by a horizontal line.



14 Jan. '91

Dear Linda--

Have been trying to catch my breath long enough to do a decent job of answering letters, but at last decided I'd better do it on the run. Sorry I dropped off the face of the correspondence earth last fall, but 50 bookstores beckoned. The three months of hard slogging for Mariah Montana did pay off; 3,200 Mariahs sold by hand at those bookstore signings (and at least that many paperbacks of the earlier books), damn near twice as many as Rascal Fair three years ago. The over-all sales total for Mariah ought to be over 40,000, best any of my books have ever done; the publisher was happy, even downright impressed, and we've signed a contract for the next book for what even I have to admit is getting to be pretty good money. (Next book is going to be a shortish House of Sky-like look at my mother's life, using some letters of hers I unexpectedly inherited a few years ago, and no I'm not going to tell you any more about it because my books never sound like they're worth doing when they're described anyway.) Penguin bought the paperback rights for Mariah, will bring it out in October.

There. That's the business report. In the beyond, which is to say after whatever the hell takes place in the Persian Gulf tomorrow, Carol and I are planning to snowbird to Arizona for the next couple of months. We fly to Phoenix on the 23rd, if planes look like a safe enough bet. Several motives obtain, I guess, for this Arizona jaunt; the immediate ones are for Carol to sop up Southwestern literature, landscape, slant of light etc. to add a Southwestern portion to her wildly successful Literature of the American West course, and for me to sop up landscape, slant of light etc. for my next book, as the batch of my mother's letters begin there in Arizona in the last winter of World War Two. Beyond the nosing around for research, we're looking for a site where we might begin spending winters. Arizona might ~~prove to be it~~, not prove to be it, and whenever this house needs a minute of maintenance I think, holy christ, how are we ever going to handle two places--but at least we thought we'd look.

We thought up this Southwestern exploration even before this kickass winter hit Seattle. We've hunkered in pretty successfully--had to bail out of the house during a 13-hour power outage, was all--but I suppose this household has had more weather on its mind than in any comparable season during our, would you believe, quarter century here. If you've got any auld lang syne buttons about Capital Hill, brace yourself because I'm about to push 'em: we spent Christmas Day within catapult shot of Federal Avenue, at the East Crescent Drive house where our friends Mark and Lou Damborg live. (You met them once at our place before this house, in an era when you had two tykes with runny noses and probably worse, and Mark and Lou were just back from childlessly skiing or some other pursuit you assessed balefully.) It was a pretty far cry, for the suburban Doigs, but Volunteer Park with snowmen everywhere, those streets of big old houses with the Christmas night snow sifting down...

I see I forgot to preface the Southwest veer with the explanation that Carol has a sabbatical this winter. She sits around here doing quiet orderly reading and looks downright blissed out. Oh yeah, one other case of heartening contentment, at least as far as we could see in a quick crossing-of-paths during a Portland book shindig: Jan Bateman, still with Joyce, seeming on the beam and going well in life. Which is how we hope you are too, going as well as can be, in these times.

Will ping you with a postcard from Arizona. Love,

*Awa*



6 June '91

Dear Linda--

Tucson, hmm; should have written to you some time ago (that's real news to you, right?) as our Southwest stint already is receding into some kind of sunset. I guess the long and short of it is, there were some things about Tucson we liked but to make any kind of snowbirdy move to there, we'd simply be swapping one overbuilding metropolitan area for another overbuilding metropolitan area. And in Tucson's case, all the sprawl is being done on a landscape a lot less absorbent/resilient than Seattle's. Carol particularly felt this--I for once had geared myself up to make a cosmic shrug and say that's the way of the world, we can exist here if we put our minds to it; interesting, that we ended up farther apart in opinion (still about a hair's worth) on this than on anything else in years--and when she came home from some chore in Lynnwood the other day, she said, That's what bothered me about Tucson, it looks like a big Lynnwood! Actually, we both found that parts of Tucson had a great deal of grace--a good downtown, though nobody lives there and everybody ignores it at night; a terrific bookstore, with a 35-acre cactus park and teahouse next door; the Santa Catalina mountains right at the edge of town--and I think you'd get a kick out of visiting there sometime, right enough.

As to how we spent our time, Carol did swimmingly at the University of Arizona library, imbibing all kinds of stuff about Southwest literature to put into her Western lit class next fall, while I had a hell of a hard time trying to find info about that most ancient of times (in Arizona's view of things), World War II. Did finally come up with one picture and article about the housing project where my folks and I lived--a mere 5,500 of us lived there--and some newspaperly general history of how Arizona merrily turned into an armed camp (still is; Warthogs in the air day and night, pretending all of us under them were Iraqi tanks, throughout our time in Tucson) during WWII and has thought pretty damn highly of the defense ~~project~~ pork-barrel ever since. Slowly, and with more thanks to the National Archives than Arizona's historical depositories, I am getting pretty much what I need for this book, but I swear to God, 1853 Alaska was easier to research for The Sea Runners than Arizona of 40+ years ago.

One more class day in Carol's school year. We're going to Montana the first two weeks of July, up around your old stomping grounds, Glacier National Park. Friends have a place all the way up the western boundary of the Park, right against the Canadian line; it's at the end of a 60-mile dirt road that's destined for paving, so we figured we'd go see this--the Polebridge country--before it changes.

Let's see, you wanted to know how come we're talking about fleeing Seattle's winter rains. Aches and pains, mostly mine, I guess is the answer. We are tightening this house up, insulation and thermal panes in that mile of glass in the living room and the whole deal, and that may persuade my aging bod to cheer up in the mornings. (Nothing drastic seems to be going on with me; Grp Health guys tell me some people just get stiff in their connective tissue; I suppose it's what our ancestors would have called rheumatism, though nothing complaining in me diagnoses that specifically.) We figure we'll take a look at the north end of the Sacramento Valley, Davis and up, next, in our snowbird longings. But being us, maybe we'll be right here forever.

So have you got a job yet? Specifically, do you have one with Conrad Burns, the Montana senator? If so, just lock him in the closet and do the job for him until his term is up.



Whatever is loose in the air this spring, we've been having visitors out of the Northwestern days. Latham House redivivus, Medill as we knew it, gracious, it's been deja vu all over again. The really unexpected caller, right here unto this very door, was Ben Baldwin. I know you saw him at a Medill whooptydoo in Washington, but that was Washington; Ben has talked for twenty-five years about making a trip out here, and we've said yeah, yeah, yeah... damned if his wife Jeanne didn't get the job done last month, driving out here from Hilton Head. Jeanne doing all the driving, as Ben's eyes have gotten so bad. They spent a couple of nights with us and we went through tons of whatever-happened-to, do-you-remember-so-and-so. The other NU connection of this spring has been Jerry Ziesmer, who lived in Latham virtually all the 4 years I did, and by his own not altogether unpleased admission, is best known for his one-sentence appearance in Apocalypse Now: "Terminate with extreme prejudice." That brevet of fame aside, Jerry has been assistant director--which turns out to be an actual ~~executive~~ executive-officer kind of job; that is, not just guys trying to be directors but career people who set out to be assistant directors--of 50 or so movies and he was here in Seattle running the set on a movie called Singles, which, if it lives up to the script, is going to be a very funny, very savvy-about-Seattle pic looking at young professionals and their addiction to dance clubs. Except for every third word out of Jerry being "Wonderful!", which Carol and I agreed is little enough affectation given what Hollywood is capable of, we liked him and his wife --an ex-schoolteacher from Appleton, Wisconsin, who goes around the set with her white hair in a grandma bun and wields a walkie-talkie with the best of them--and found him funnier and looser the more we were around him; he was ecstatic about the flop of Hudson Hawk, not so much because of Bruce Willis as because of the despised producer of that movie, and had been phoning around the country asking friends how bad the reviews were. Jerry's favorite: somewhere somebody got up and walked out in the middle of Hudson Hawk, saying "This is the worst American movie ever made," and the critic in the audience said, "It isn't that good." One last NU-is-everywhere-ism: we had our monthly Chinese pig-out supper with Ann and Marshall Nelson last night, and Marsh reported that one of Ann's former Cherubs, now a Superior Court judge, had just ruled against him in a massive case.

Well, quitting time. Hope all your spectacular kids find ways to set the world on fire this summer; best to Eli, tell him we spent a lot of Tucson time cringing as ~~the~~ CNN showed the Scud-attacks; Jesus, poor Israel, with Saddam for an enemy and the U.S. for a friend. You been hearing anything about this Clark Clifford stuff? I find it heartbreaking, but that probably says more about my illusions than Clifford's.

luv,

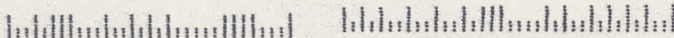
Aran



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Whoops, damn near forgot the main point of writing this. Turn the page over, quick.



Peter Koenig! Actually, now David Koenig! He too saw the NU alum mag thing, and wrote a nice note, adding that as a cherub he'd been "a friend of Linda Blair" (are we talking Clan of the Cave Bear times here or what) and wondered if I could provide your address. Instead I'm going to give you his and write him a postcard saying I've done so.

David Koenig  
9355 Lincolnwood  
Evanston IL 60203

That's all the trouble  
I know to make. Best  
to Eli, Gabe, Fran.

A-



# Truth Emerges in Writer's Love of Lingo

■ **Books:** Ivan Doig, author of a trilogy about a Western family and other books, creates scenes that 'come right up off the page and get you.'

By BRAD KNICKERBOCKER  
THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Toward the end of "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," the third in Ivan Doig's 100-year trilogy about the McCaskill family, there's a 30-second scene in which a character jumps out of a Winnebago fueling up at a gas station, runs over to the sign for "Air & Water" and grease-pencils the other two ancient Greek elements, "Earth & Fire."

It's a wonderful bit of whimsy, an example of what novelist Doig calls the "crocodile factor" designed to "come right up off the page and get you." And it's just one of the things that makes him one of the most readable and productive authors from that vast expanse of real estate west of the 100th meridian today generating some of the very best American writers.

To read Doig's fiction, to hear him speak wisdom and wit to a gathering of historians in Sparks, Nev., and to discuss his craft over a meal or two is to learn of a man with a passion for language, for the minutiae of life and historical accuracy and especially for "the lingo" of his characters—"the tongues that express their lives."

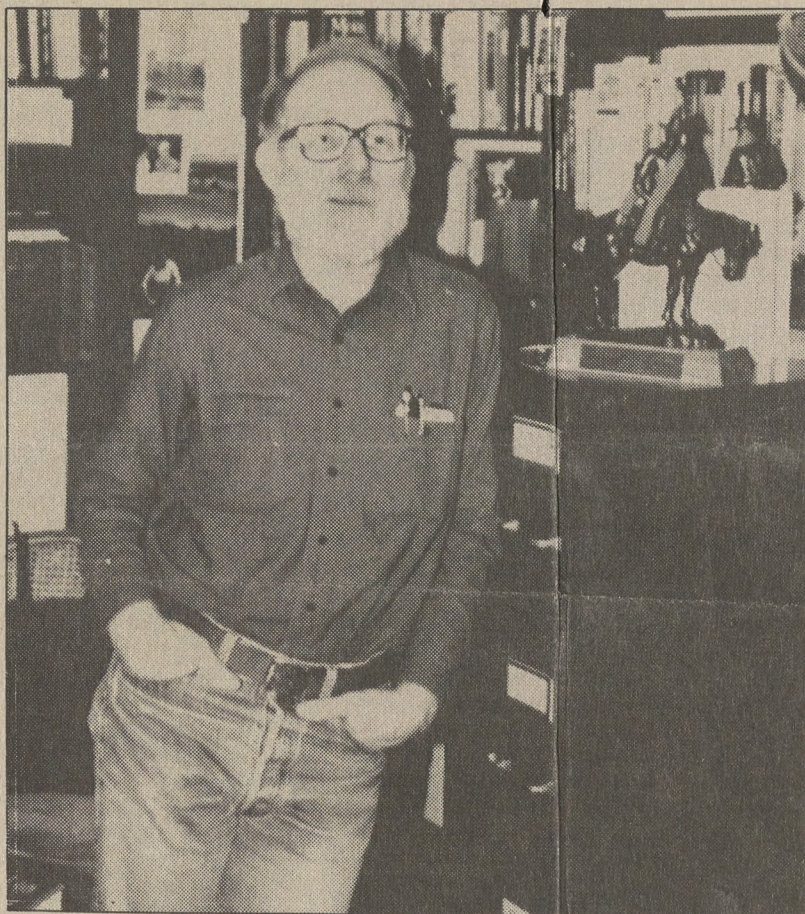
Doig's career as a writer took off a dozen years ago with "This House of Sky," reminiscences about his early life in Montana. Since then he has produced five more highly acclaimed books, including the Two Medicine trilogy (named for the river near where much of it takes place).

On Ivan Doig's sixth birthday, when he was living with his parents in a sheep-herding camp on the front range of the Rocky Mountains, where his grandfather had moved from Scotland, his father woke him to say the boy's mother had died in the night. For the next few years, father and son bounced around Western towns and ranches before settling down with Doig's maternal grandmother as homemaker.

By the time he was 16 and spending most of his summers on a horse tending sheep in the high country, Doig knew that he wanted to be a writer and that he had to get out of Montana—beautiful as it was—to succeed. He won a full scholarship to Northwestern University, worked on a newspaper in Downstate Illinois, then did magazine editing in Chicago, where he also picked up a master's degree before heading back out West.

At the University of Washington in Seattle, he earned a doctorate in history (he says graduate school cured him of any desire to teach), then spent an enjoyable but lean decade as a free-lance magazine writer while his wife, Carol, earned most of the family income teaching at a community college.

Like the fictional character who completed the gas station list of elements in "Mariah Montana," Doig found journalistic writing too limiting. But his training as a



BRAD KNICKERBOCKER / Christian Science Monitor

The sound of the language—"the shimmer behind the plot" feeding the "delicious hunger of the ear"—fascinates author Ivan Doig.

historian and newspaperman left him with the strong need to fill his fiction with accurate details from real life, including the spoken word—the earth of daily human affairs and the fire of speech.

In researching the 1889 trans-Atlantic trip of 19-year-olds Angus McCaskill and Rob Barclay for "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" (the first book, chronologically, in the trilogy), Ivan and Carol went to Glasgow (to the very pier from which his grandfather, Peter Doig, had departed), pored over emigrant letters at the University of St. Andrews and looked up steamship blueprints and investigative reports on the conditions poor travelers endured in steerage.

Later, he dug back into Depression-era Works Progress Administration writers' files in Montana to learn how Anaconda Copper smeltermen, cattle ranchers and sheep ranchers talked in the early part of the century. The sound of the spoken word is very important to him—"the shimmer behind the plot" feeding the "delicious hunger of the ear." He was careful to have the two Scotsmen gradually lose their burr over the 30 years of "Rascal Fair."

When he wanted to include scenes about fighting fires, he had four forest rangers check his manuscript for details. He photocopied old Forest Service cookbooks so he would know what it was like to cook for 75 men in the woods.

"I'm always looking for details," he says. "The details are what the skeins of life germinate out of." He loves to repeat Vladimir Nabokov's instruction to students at Cornell University that they must write "with the passion of the scientist and the precision of the artist."

In a spare bedroom office he shares with his wife at home in Seattle, Doig works at an old gray Royal typewriter. The remem-

brances of Scots ancestors are in his sandy hair and beard. Just back from 50 book readings and signings in San Francisco, Boston, Washington, Chicago and Minnesota, he relaxes in jeans, a red-striped shirt and Birkenstocks.

Shelved around him are his favorite writers, including Wallace Stegner, Nadine Gordimer, John Steinbeck, Isak Dinesen, Edward Hoagland, Robinson Jeffers, Loren Eiseley, Beryl Markham, Eudora Welty, Frank O'Connor, Joseph Conrad, Barbara Tuchman, Gretel Ehrlich and William Faulkner. Contemporary Western historians Patricia Nelson Limerick and Donald Worster are there. So is "The Songwriter's Rhyming Dictionary" by Sammy Kahn.

"I like people who dance on the page," he says, leaning back in his chair. "Anybody hip-deep in love with the language." One of his characters in "Mariah Montana" says, "Language is the light that comes out of us."

But "with nine-tenths of the ink of this century now expended," he told the Western historians in Nevada, "modern American fiction in terms of originality and staying power still adds up to 'Faulkner and the rest of us.'"

On another shelf, just next to where he writes, are his notebooks: "Comparison and Description," "Ideas," "Lingo," "Anecdotes," "Phrasing" and "Technique." Bits and pieces waiting to be worked into future projects.

His next book, which will focus on his mother (based on letters to an uncle during World War II, interviews with family members and his dim recollections as a small boy), will feature "deliberate dreams."

"It's the only way I can think of to get at what might have gone on beyond what I can hear and see," he explains. When it comes right

down to it, he admits, "a lot of style and technique is best guess." Then, too, "the alchemy of language carries with it the high probability of fizzle."

Of the growing recognition of contemporary literature coming out of the American West, he says: "I think there are enough classy writers west of St. Paul that scholars will eventually have to write about them as a group, as they did about the Southern fugitives."

The thing that connects many of these writers, he acknowledges, is love of the spectacular landscape. "But I don't agree that that's our strongest muscle," he says.

"The language, the style, the craft is of such a skill that I don't see why this kind of travelogue tag is at all justified. I mean, Louise Erdrich is a world-class writer—the equivalent of Robert Penn Warren. Jim Welch in 'Fools Crow' has produced a truly great book. Bill Kittredge has been a unique writer. I mean, this is increasingly fine stuff and, even if it appeared on a barren planet, it would be unique writing."

Yet Doig and many of his contemporaries do connect with the land and worry about what's become of it over the past century or so.

"It is saddening that a lot of what we tried in the West—with reasonably good intentions—has not worked out," he says. "Plowing up the prairies was not a good idea. Pulling up the ore and running it poisonously through smelter stacks turns out not to have been a good idea. Damming up every river of any consequence except the Yellowstone hasn't been a good idea, either."

"So the stance many of us write from out here is 'Wait a minute, we'd better try something else.'" In "Mariah Montana," Jick McCaskill arranges to protect his land when he retires from sheep ranching without selling out to developers or a big agribusiness spread.

The result of Ivan Doig's passion for detail and "the lingo" is more than the sum of the parts. Much more, and it comes through most obviously in the clear personality and especially the sound character of the people we meet.

He has been described by one reviewer as "the most hopeful of writers—not blindly optimistic but deeply humanistic." A friend of mine wrote recently: "Over the past year I read most of his books and just fell in love with his characters and their goodness, and of course his descriptions of the West."

Another says she slows down when she gets near the end of a Doig novel because she doesn't want it to end. Not to worry. He's got many productive years ahead of him and plenty of history to mine—with passion and precision.



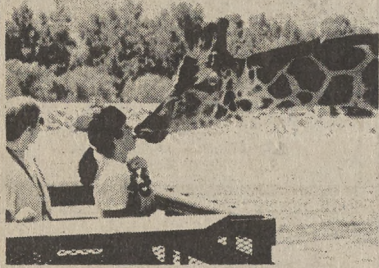
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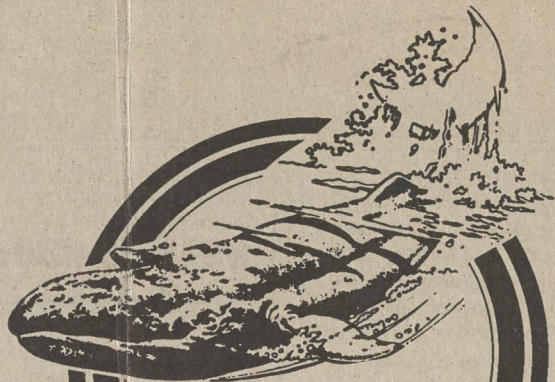
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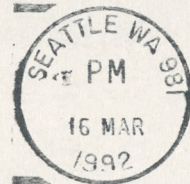
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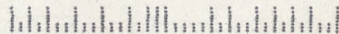
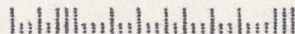
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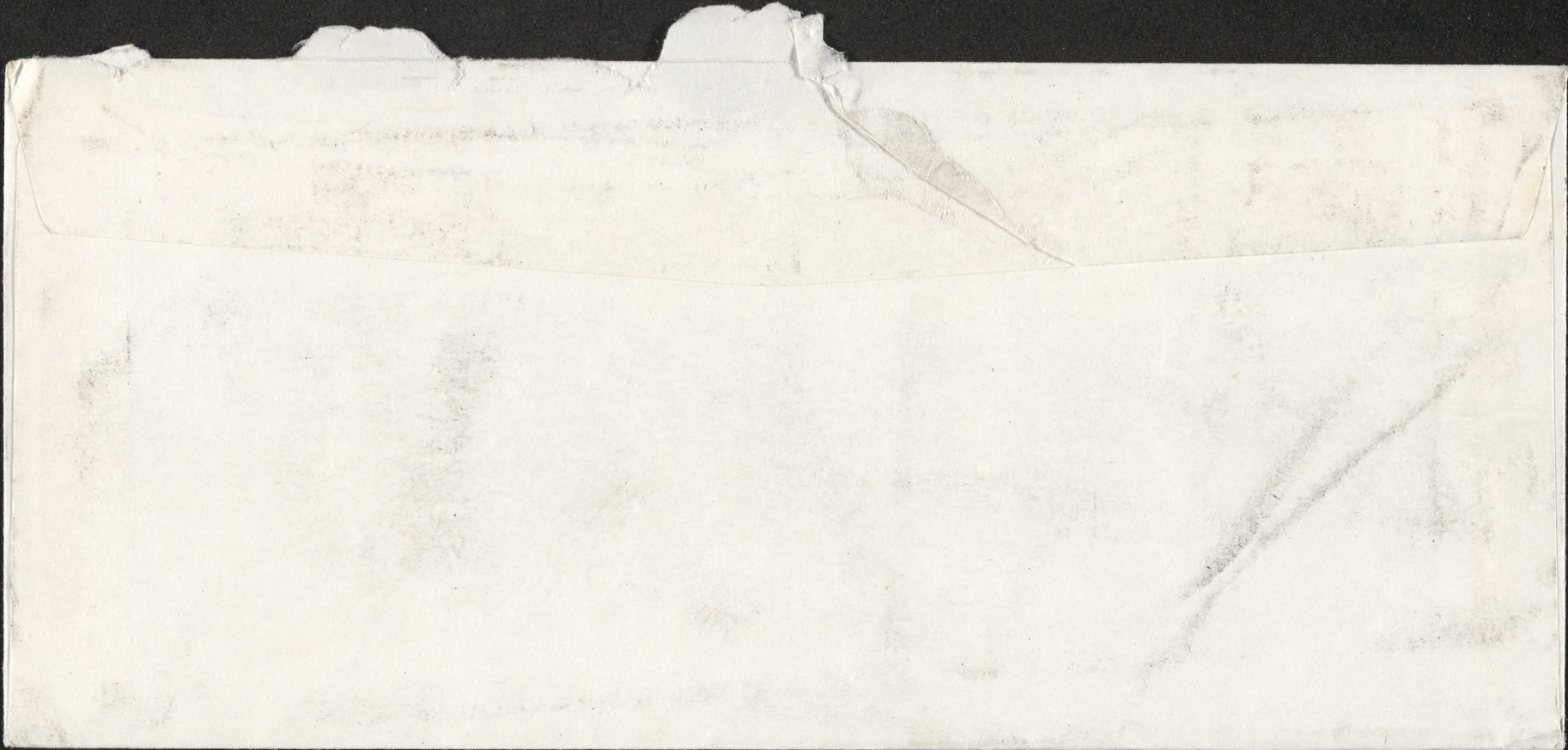


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Loved it. Despite cold,  
windy weather I would like to  
return to bite. Love, Carol & Jan

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Made in Australia.



\*\*\*If for no other reason, Clinton deserves to be elected for having on his staff a person with the moral acuity to say that he would not deign to piss on Hamilton Jordan if his heart were on fire.



The USIA staffers in NZ turned out to be dazzlingly more nimble than their counterparts in Oztrylia, with the result that I shared a countrywide speaking tour they put together with the leading historical novelist of NZ, Maurice Shadbolt. Maurice is writing a fictional trilogy of the Maori Wars--hell, he's already written half of the country's best novels to date, its best-known play (about Gallipoli), the Shell Guidebook to NZ, on and on; he's kind of a cross between a literary icon and a public utility--and he turned out to be not only a wordsmith I admire a whole bunch, but somebody Carol and I both treasured. So, down the North Island and then the South Island the three of us went, bureaucrats in escort, doing our speaking and reading and mediaing. Carol, not incidentally, more than held her own. The American Studies faculty members at both NZ and Oz universities were polite about my showing up, but they'd downright kill to lay hands on Carol's syllabus and reading list for her Literature of the American West course. Travels with Maurice were always a kick--we'd be being driven somewhere and he'd say, Now this roadcut was a Maori fortress, see the



terraces where they put up their defenses, and there's where the Brits brought their gunboats up the Waikato River.... The weather was atrocious (in Australia too) and just about every night there'd be a literary dinner or diplomats' do, with the requisite one-drunken-writer to be evaded, but we greatly liked the New Zealanders, whom an astute friend here summed up as people of British civility and American energy.

Australia seemed to us looser around the edges than the workaday New Zealanders (and NZ's landscape is a lot more comfortable to Pacific Northwesterners), but we did like the West Australians. Perth has so much of the population of Western Australia that it amounts to almost a city-state, albeit one several times the size of Texas, and we liked the feel of both Perth and its miraculously preserved old Empire port, Freemantle.

Let's see, what else about the trip. Great beer down there, and terrific seafood, and good Chinese food in Melbourne, and roast lamb as good as you'd expect in New Zealand. 14 plane flights in 21 days, and still we had a good time.

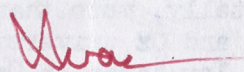
Publishing stuff: have in essence finished the next book, am waiting for a page or so of niggles from my editor. Feels like a spiffy piece of writing, although it's kind of strange--sort of a surreal memoir. I mean, did you ever think I'd be conjuring up an epigraph from Pablo Neruda--"Intervals of dreaming help us to stand up under days of work"? And hey, in the meanwhile I at last have a national bestseller: my audio-cassette reading of *A River Runs Through It* (which I did because Norman Maclean's health failed). The audio cassette business, as far as books go, is still small potatoes--River has 23,000 copies out, and is #3 on the bestseller list--but even so, it's nice. By golly, I hope Robert Redford appreciates just how much his little ol' movie is riding on the coattails of my audio cassette....

Thanksgiving is coming, and so are about sixteen people, including an evidently willing Jack Gordon, this year. This is just between us, but last year Carol and I could have throttled him. Jack I think for some years has been doing some kind of easing away from old friends out here--not just us, because he and we have never been super-close--and so a couple of Thanksgivings ago, he said he'd come for a little while but then he had to go visit this communal sharing group he was really interested in. Fine, Jack, whatever, we guess, say we. Then last year he said no, he wasn't coming, gonna go off on his own, do something different, didn't know what yet. Fine again, say we. Then a couple of days before the event, phone call from Jack, can he please come? (It turned out that some of his social worker buddies who customarily come gave him so much crap about going his introverted way that he figured he'd better change his mind.) This year, thankfully, none of that bachelor farmer will-I-or-won't-I from him, so I hope he's feeling better about life.

You likely remember Mary Carstensen, whom you crossed paths with in, what, LWV? Her husband Vernon, my old history mentor at the UW, died a couple of weeks ago. Emphysema, grim enough that I believe he was ready to let go of life.

That's probably about all I know, and maybe more. Happy inauguration and all the other stuff you DCers get in on.

luv

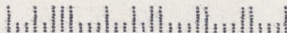




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Ft. Collins CO 30 April '93

Norris Spangler and sheep at Emigrant Bridge,  
Paradise Valley, circa September 1939. John C.  
Haberstroh photograph. From the Photo Archive,  
Museum of the Rockies, Montana State University,  
Bozeman, MT.

Photo by John C. Haberstroh

Dear Linda - The Dogs are  
seeing the West, by gawd -  
Idaho, Montana, & Wyoming  
behind us, NM, AZ & Utah  
ahead in this 5-week trip.  
Began (in Missoula) and will  
end (in Utah) with speech-  
making, but mostly it's  
just to soak up the country,  
and so far it's been gloriously  
worth it. Fuller report  
later. Love

CP9592  
Printed in U.S.A.

Alan

POST CARD

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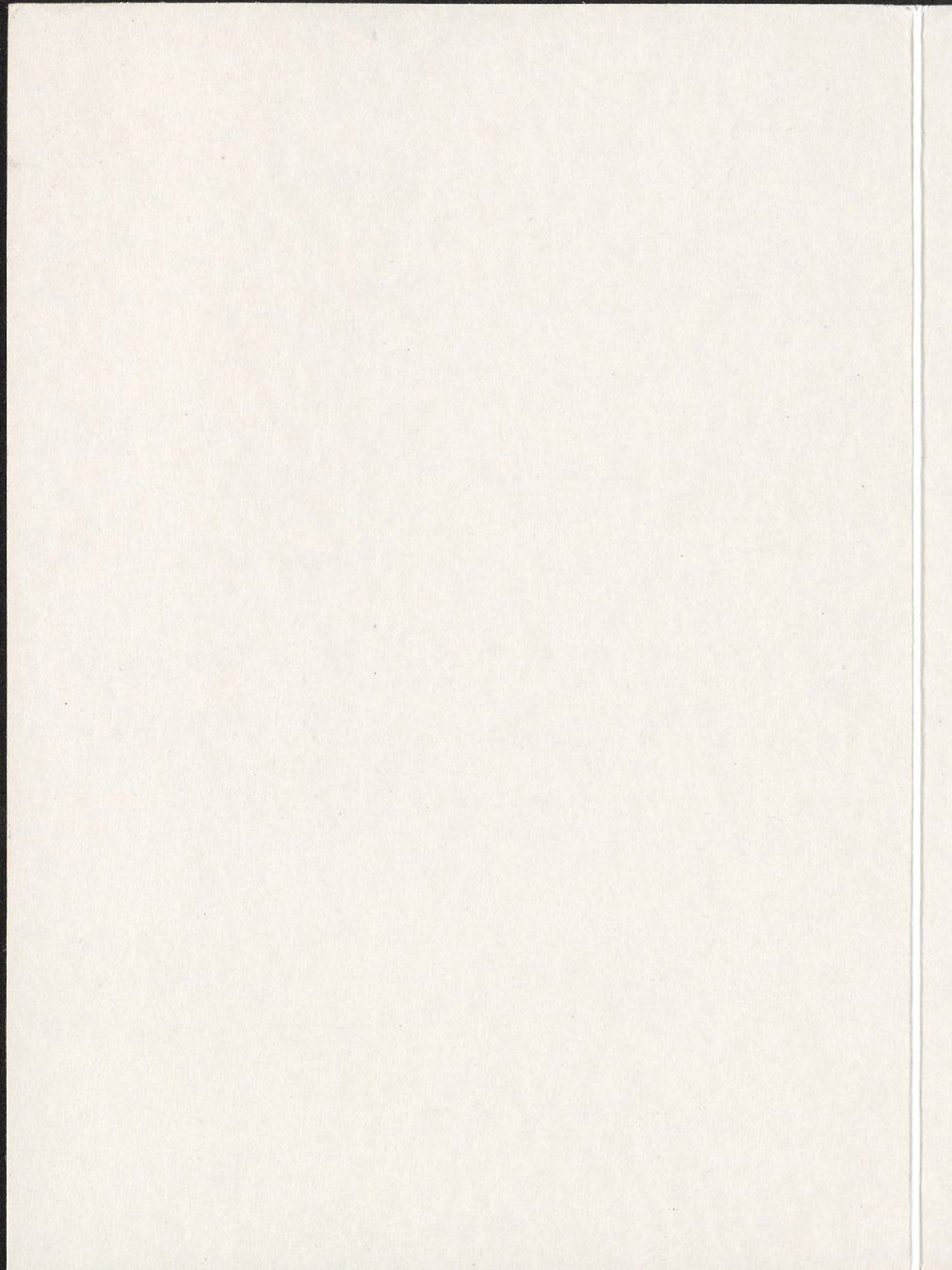


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Dear Linda & Eli -

*Let there be peace  
over all the earth.*

*Heaven & Carol Doris*

Linda, luv, humongous thanks for passing along the Wn Post review. Heart Earth and its author are both a little weary from the bookstore trail thru the West, but we did okay. Probably the most gaga news we have is that Simon & Schuster (PARAMOUNT!) won the auction for my next book; so far so good... details to come in a letter after this Xmas stuff.

*u.*



*Carole Smith*

Carole Smith Gallery, Inc.  
363 State St.  
Salem, OR 97301

WINTERSCAPE  
Photograph  
Art Wolfe ©



And soy-based inks.

#1040-(1.50)  
(Canada 2.25)  
Litho in USA



20 Aug. '93

Dear Linda--

Doubtful that this will constitute a real letter, as in about an hour we go to the wedding of Linda Sullivan, Frank Zoretich's ex-, if you recall. Linda has stayed one of our closest friends, and we're glad that the match this time is with a guy who has none of Frank's fey quality--he's another Nebraskan, seemingly as solid as Linda.

Well, another book. I'm not sure if it's what I set out to write, or even what genre it is (you know I've never given a hoot about that), but in any case, Carol and I got home last night from Utah with a \$10,000 award for "best biography in (get ready for this) Mormon country." Obviously, Mormon country is being broadly defined--the Rockies from Mexico to Canada--and they're ~~being~~ being remarkably ecumenical or something by including stuff like mine, but that's what happens when donors turn the award process over to the academics, I guess. We met the offspring of the original donors--the Evans family, of a humongous Salt Lake City advertising firm and then a not-dumb offshoot into what has become a computer-sound system company--and they seemed perfectly happy <sup>with</sup> the Doigs and Heart Earth. Makes us wonder if we really know ourselves, huh?

The high dry sunny air of Utah was wonderful for 3 days. This has been a dreadfully gray rainy summer, and even those of us who claim to be immune to the rain here are feeling down-in-the-mouth.

I know I haven't done a letter to anybody for a helluva long time, so the flip side of that is that I'm 150 pp. into the next book, a fat novel set (mostly) in 1933-38, during construction of Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri River, up in northeastern Montana. Lots of good stuff to work with, radical politics (an elected Bolshevik sheriff in a nearby county), boomtown atmosphere (10,000 damworkers, 10,000 campfollowers, is the legendary census of the Fort Peck dam towns), vivid history (Margaret Bourke-White's photo-essay on Fort Peck was the cover story in the first issue of LIFE magazine, but then you knew that as a Medillian). I plan to hole up all of next year and work on this book, as it feels like my best one ever.

Meantime, Sept.-Oct. will be the bookstore tour for Heart Earth. Will be flogging ~~the book~~ the book from Aspen to Anacortes, but nowhere east of the Mississippi, at least as of yet. Though I'd like to come to DC, I don't have any yearnings toward NY-Boston-etc. and have told the publisher no go, unless they can come up with some national TV or some such to really justify my dragging myself through airports and hotels back there. (The Wash'n Post did so much on me the last time or two, it's doubtful if I'm due for another interview or feature there until 2021.) Carol meanwhile has had so much sabbatical--last spring until now--that she's actually wanting to go back to work at the college. So, we're both doing good, feeling good; and now we have to go off and cheer Linda Sullivan on.

best to all

*Wvas*



Thanksgiving, before that, and our customary houseful, and what we thought was finally a definite up-tick in Jack Gordon's mood. For some years now, inviting Jack to Thanksgiving has been an exercise in letting angst out of the bottle, as he'd first say no, he didn't think he'd come, then edge around to maybe, then on the actual day might or might not show up. We're all for him determining his own life, but at some point we do need a simple goddamn yes or no, and I suppose it's particularly appalled me that a guy who counsels other people on their lives can't recognize himself going into an annual holiday mope. So, this year, no mope! A phone conversation brought about the great revelation, which we'd pretty much suspected anyway, that Jack is now with another man, Michael. Fine, we say, bring Michael. That set off some new hemming and hawing, now to the effect that they weren't sure whether or not they'd come... Carol fortunately was willing to persevere in the face of now having two jellos on the guest list, instead of being able to ask other friends to come in their stead, and so on the day, in the face of my skepticism, here came Jack bright as a new penny, with gorgeous hors d'oeuvres enough for a regiment, courtesy of Michael. Michael couldn't come this time, Jack explained, because this was the first holiday since his, Michael's, marital breakup and he needed to spend it with his kids, but Jack had decided to come for a while until he, Jack, went off to Michael and his kids. Fine, we say, have some champagne. Anyway, Jack visited merrily with our whole gang of 16 or so, and indeed hung around and finger-ate off the turkey before going on to the next of his doubleheader--this too was a good sign, as there was a period when Jack wouldn't eat anything that had clucked, mooed, baaed, or for that matter, swum. When Jack-the-life-of-the-party had left, still in high spirits, I cornered Peter Rockas, whom you may remember as another of the East Side Mental Health social workers when Jack and all the rest of them worked there, and said, umm, Peter, did you work on Jack about today somehow? Peter smiled and said, "Look, you ought to come. This is family." Whatever, it was a new Jack for a change. Not before time, either, as the New Zealanders say.



Well, the book biz, you asked about. First off, I didn't mean to pooh-pooh Heart Earth in the last letter to you--I'm actually really pleased with it, and the luke-warmth I was expressing was toward what was happening at the publishing house. Indeed, maybe it's the tenor of the times, or some mark of a generation reaching a certain age, but whatever brought it on, the Heart Earth bookstore tour was the most emotional yet, lots of people on line with their hearts damn near in their hands. This time around I signed books to parents dying of cancer, sons dying of AIDS, in memory of husbands who'd died young, and among a lot of unforgettable cases, to the grown son of a World War II vet who'd been all shot to hell--there they stood in Helena, the son hale and mid-40ish, beside him the father who had come back to Montana from the war and started a family despite wounds which among other things had left him blind. Thankfully, there was also a lot of fun, as in Bozeman when a woman wanted some kind of an inscription to her sister, explaining that the two of them got a kick out of English Creek and Jick's attention to Leona's "blouseful"--both a bit flat-chested, they'd ~~kissed~~ kidded that if they only had blousefuls they could do something with these Montana men. Well, I say helpfully, how about if I inscribe it "from a guy who knows a blouseful when he sees one"? Perfect! she says and goes merrily away.

Meanwhile back at the New York ranch, Macmillan was slowing down more and more, in the aftermath of its sale out of bankruptcy (brought on by Robert Maxwell). I couldn't get them to come up with any imaginative national marketing of the book (hence no D.C. trip), had to throw a conniption fit to get a decent cover, and, final straw, while I was out busting my bippy on the bookstore trail I discovered they'd violated the contract clause stipulating a press run of 50,000 copies--i.e., they'd printed 37,500 instead and weren't even pushing those anywhere east of, say, Helena. Thus, the auction. It worked roughly like this: the literary agent, Liz Darhansoff, ~~pitched~~ and I picked out 8 or 9 publishers we thought I could live with and she faxed them, as a sample, the opening scene of my next book and a further one-page precis of the plot, characters and so on. Good news was that a bunch of houses--Harcourt, HarperCollins, Holt, Houghton Mifflin, and Simon & Schuster--said okay, we're in the bidding. Bad news was that two of our favorites, Viking and the Pantheon imprint at Random House, and Hyperion, owned by Disney and accumulating some of the best editors in the business, said huh-uh, they couldn't get financial go-ahead from their bean counters. Then Liz conducted the auction in a day of being constantly on the phone: the low bidder in each round bids first in the next round, while the high bidder gets to bid last in ~~the next~~ <sup>that</sup> round. Liz muttered a lot during the day, saying in agentspeak "Caution is what I see here"; on the other hand, it did occur to me that the \$5,000 increments the publishers were anteing up were more than I used to make in a year of writing. Anyhow, the first round got the bid up from Macmillan's floor bid (by dint of their option right in my Heart Earth contract) of \$160,000 to \$185,000, Harcourt the high bidder. Nobody dropped out, in either that round or the second, which brought the bid up to \$230,000. Pronto in the third round, Holt and Houghton Mifflin folded their cards, and--again in Lizzpeak--"here's where it begins to get subtle." Because I know and trust the guy who's #2 in the Simon & Schuster hierarchy, and is in charge of sales and marketing, we decided to wink toward S&S, and they took it with an ultimate bid of \$260,000. I keep reminding myself that there is 3 years of writing work for that sum and so it's not as big-rich as it sounds, but for us it's still pretty damn middling-rich. Also, half the money comes in the next couple of weeks, alleviating whatever the hell happens to Paramount (which owns Simon & Schuster) in this unending takeover mudwrestle.

So, that's where we are, on the brink of '94. Carol sends hiyah, and we hope the whole family thrives.

love,

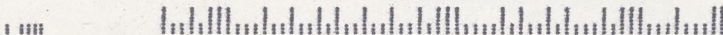
*Wanda*



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**PADDLEFISH**



The paddlefish serves as a classic example of an organism that has gone through millions of years of ecological tuning. Fossil evidence indicates that the slateboard-nosed fish has been around for better than 70 million years.

Photo by Ron Hoagland

Glasgow, Mont.

Sept. 11, 1994

Dear Linda & Eli -

We're deep in the wilds of Montana, doing research for my next book. But I am ultimately headed your way - reading at Politics & Prose 7p.m. on the 27th, Olson's Metro store 7p.m. on the 28th. Will call you the weekend of the 24th to see if we can get together, OK? Hope you're both hunkydory.

CP9058

Printed in U.S.A.

Best, Alan Doris



POST CARD

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July 3, 1995

Dear Linda

It's 6:50 a.m. and Ivan is sitting in his accustomed spot, inventing fiction. His habit has been to begin the day shortly after 4, make breakfast for both of us (with homegrown raspberries and strawberries just now), read most of the NY Times, amble outside on slug patrol, and then settle at his desk for the morning's work.

A lot of work it has been, this 3-year project with 11 major characters, a mystery and a damsite that served as a major employment project of the Depression. Ivan figures that the finished product will be as hefty a read as ~~Maxie~~ Rascal Fair, or perhaps a bit more. And as he told you, he's aiming to have a complete draft by the end of this month, send that off to his new editor, then have the rest of the year to polish.

I'm reading along as he gets chunks ready and, you'll not be surprised to learn, I think it's his best book, from the reader's standpoint of maintaining interest, and I'd venture it's his best technically, too, as he weaves a cast of characters across a Depression-era landscape at what was (until the Aswan dam came along) the largest earthen dam in the world. What he has successfully done is to keep the complex project from intruding into the complex interrelationships of his family of characters. It becomes the stage on which they play out their lives.

After his part of the project is done, it'll be interesting to see what a big commercial publisher, Simon and Schuster, may do with the marketing. At their request Ivan has already sent his ideas, including sending him to as many annual booksellers meetings as possible. Promote it as the great American novel it will be, give away a mountain of advance copies, etc. In past years, Ivan has done what he could, including as many as 50 bookstore signings/readings. What he's never had is sufficient institutional clout. Of course, publishing doesn't hold still for many minutes at a time, and there's no telling what the situation will be by the Fall of 1996, but his editor looks good: young, energetic and savvy enough to work the chain of command. She also warns that the art director is hard to work with -- what else is new?

And so I enjoy rubbing elbows with the book biz folks. The rest of the time I teach, except in summers, when I goof off. I can think about more goofing off in future, if we decide to spend part of winter in a sunnier spot, for instance. I'll be 62 on July 24, and my TIAA/CREF pension fund is chugging away nicely. After 28 years in the classroom, I'm at the point where I don't need to see another paper to grade -- but, on the other hand, I'd definitely miss the students. I'll get this figured out in time to come, but it isn't easy. Lots of folks younger than I am are retiring, good new instructors are joining the faculty, and the college has a promising new president who starts work officially today. One of the faculty taking early retirement is Ann McCartney, who's just 52 and has been married for five years to a math prof at Western. The Bellingham commute (which means staying at her parents' house on Queen Anne a few nights a week) is driving her crazy, so she hopes to do more consulting. Interesting times, watching people re-invent their lives.

Others are in full-bore midlife accomplishment. I guess Ivan mentioned that two Western historian friends have just won MacArthurs. One, Richard White, was here for our Thanksgiving shindig. So was the poet Linda Bierds, who has become a good friend and has just won a Guggenheim. We think these are terrific choices and are an enthusiastic cheering section.



It was fun to hear from you. If you're watching the weather you know that our heatwave suddenly broke, and we're now under accustomed leaden skies, with the thermometer hovering at 60°. A few days ago when it hit 96, that was a record for our piece of property. We've actually had abnormally sunny weather this year, which means too dry, of course. However, the snow pack was a good one and so we're not facing water restrictions, as we did a few years ago.

After your call we finished our chores, then Ivan went to the TV guide to check on the program that used Sky as a prop. It turned out that it was aired at the time we were talking. And that's OK -- it was more interesting to hear from you than it would have been to watch it. Sky continues to go its merry way, selling 12,000 or more copies a year, with over 150,000 sales by now. Indeed, all his books are alive and well in paperback, with Sky, English Creek and Rascal Fair particularly robust. Sea Runners is the only book which has sold movie rights -- the film has never been made, but our money's in the bank. Audio sales and rentals provide a supplementary income each year, and my guess is that Ivan could earn a living wage just from speaker's fees, if he cared to. It has continued to be advance money for hardbacks that pay best. I'm particularly delighted with that, since it's his main work. The rest is "extra."

I'm sure all this interests me because I'm stuck at faculty max of just over \$13,000. The fringes are good ones, though.

Come see us when you can. We still go walking on Dungeness Spit and at Ebey's Landing, as well as around the city. We plan a September trip to Montana and Wyoming, where we get up before dawn at Jackson Hole, drive into the park and listen to the elk bugle. The Doigs' idea of a terrific time. We'll also stop to see our writer friends in Missoula where, by coincidence, Ivan will get one of the first of a new set of governors' awards in the humanities. It ought to be fun since one of the other two awards will be presented to a council of churches group that fought neo-Nazi attacks on a <sup>Billings</sup> synagogue ~~there~~. You may have read that story some time back. The way we hear it windows of many houses in Billings began being decorated with pictures of Menorahs. After which the incidents ceased.

Take care. Best to Fran and Gabe, too.

Love,  
Carol

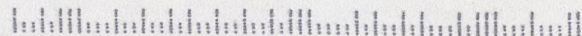


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October 15, 1995

Dear Linda

Your letter arrived yesterday, and I'm going to answer *right now*. Mea culpa. What did happen to the summer?

We spent part of it, several days at a time, at a cottage on the west side of Camano Island. It's a little brown-shingled place that sits at the edge of a high bank, overlooking Saratoga Passage, Whidbey, and the Olympics beyond. At breakfast we watched eagles soaring by, at about the level of our foreheads. The owner of this terrific little place, the poet Linda Bierds, lives on Bainbridge now, is the new head of the creative writing program at UW, and doesn't get to Camano much, and she's been terrifically generous in sharing it.

Those outings got us away from construction next door on one side of our homestead, and a new barking dog on the other. The dog has settled down some, and the reconstruction of the house, being done by the Cochrans themselves, goes on, but they're nice about it and don't start early. Ivan, of course, does, and he's working furiously toward getting a complete draft of the current novel done by next May, when we have plans to head for the high southwest for a few weeks. He has a speaking gig in Salt Lake City, and another in the offing (to a convention of librarians -- always a good and useful audience). Then we'll strike out to the slickrock country around and south of Moab, before heading east to visit the fellow who used to run Audio Press and now raises goats in Paonia, CO. Check your map on that one. We want to visit lots of Anasazi ruins, which tend to be in spectacular geography and often are at the end of unpaved roads. To help get us there we bought a Honda CR-V, their new little sport utility. In September we took it to western Montana and the Teton country, and it ate lots of dirt while Ivan scrutinized the geography for the novel. It did wonderfully well, and its seats make us sit up straight, so we came home without backaches. We saw more wildlife this time than ever before, including a black bear at the National Bison Range, and a fox climbing an embankment between Augusta and Choteau. A beautiful reddish-brown, it was, with a blazing white ring on its tail. First I'd ever seen, but I was amazed when Ivan said it was his first sighting, too. The elk bugled for us on the Flats east of the Tetons, as we took our dawn expeditions into the park, where we'd hike a lakeshore trail. Saw an eagle soar down the lake in early mist one morning, and a coyote running on the far shore another....

Stop me before I get carried away and don't get to tell you anything else.

Yes, we still would like to move to larger quarters, with a view if possible, but seeking isn't the same as finding. I'm out actively looking, but Innis Arden, with its big lots and community regulations ~~are~~ best for us, so we're waiting a while. Much of the ~~rest~~ of what is now the City of Shoreline (drat) is being short-platted, and the Seattle neighborhoods aren't much better. We have various friends on Phinney Ridge, but elbow room isn't to be had there, either. Next year, when I have more time, I'll see about some solution, even if we have to rebuild.

And I will have more time. In September, at the annual faculty convocation, I got my 30-year award. For 20 and 25, it's certificates. But something new has been devised for 30. I now have a plaque attached to a handsome clock (made in China, pat. pending). Right! I cried. It's time. Actually I'd decided earlier that this will be my last quarter. My pension is built in TIAA-CREF, with lots of options, and it's someone else's turn at the classroom. I've enjoyed it, I'm glad I came, and I'm ready to graduate into a new life, which will be made up as I go along. I'd like to *take* some courses for a change; I feel like a dodo in



terms of art, music, drama. Ivan can use some help with the business and financial side of his work, and we do want to travel some more when he gets clear of the current book contract. So how about that?

On the publishing side, Ivan has lost his latest editor. She's going to head Northpoint Press, which is now part of Farrar Straus. Also, the publisher of S&S trade is moving up to oversee all S&S trade, and the new publisher coming in is a non-favorite of Ivan's agent. He'd like to move within the house to the Scribner imprint, where he knows the publisher, Susan Moldow, but.... Office politics, I guess, and they don't want him to leave the S&S imprint. This is unsettled as I write, and Ivan is willing to let it rest awhile while he gets his manuscript done. He doesn't need editing help, after all; he needs marketing clout.

We think things are fine around here. Interesting to hear about Washington Grove. I wonder how many Chataqua-like places have survived in some form or another. Dear old Ocean Grove comes to mind.

When you get a chance, please send Jack's address and phone number so we can be in touch and invite him to Thanksgiving, as usual.

Take care. I promise to be a better correspondent.

Love,  
Carol

Hi, sweetie, this is the other Doug and ex-letter-writer. Someday I hope to be a reliable correspondent again, but for now I'm so busy learning the computer to save time that I ain't got no time. Putting manuscript on the computer is a medium tuel, but I'm trying, Jesus, I'm trying. Excel, though, spreadsheets and all that, has turned me back into the incipient arithmetic whiz I was until I turned twelve or so. Long way from geek hood yet, but...

Appreciated the Fier report. She maybe told you, we crossed paths in Berkeley when she came to a reading I gave there, but because of book tour logistics we couldn't connect beyond a quick chat. Not that I've ever been able to connect with her, alas.

You alluded to Medill credentials in your letter, how about this: I turned down that Medill-Hall-of-Fame or whatever the hell it was, thinking Huh? I'm supposed to drop everything and pay my own way to Chicago to be inducted into something nobody-at-large knows about with seven dozen other people; don't think so. Onward to the hermit cave. Love and tickles, Doug

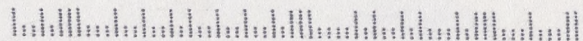


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January 11, 1996

Dear Linda

I've taken the quarter off, Ivan has finished his novel, and we've made plans to drive south to San Diego, visit cousins of mine there, then head east as far as Albuquerque, where we think we'll hang around for the month of February, using it as a base to see some new territory.

Ivan's novel is in the book production process now, and he's awaiting page proofs and new cover art (the book reps didn't like the first idea). The compositor's somewhere in New England, the editorial office in New York, and if snow conditions allow we should get page proofs on Saturday, read 'em on Sunday and Monday, and be on our way on Tuesday.

Well, we'll see. Stay flexible. Thus far, Simon & Schuster looks like the aggressive publisher that Ivan has been looking for. They pushed him for a May publication date, which gives Bucking the Sun a summer season as well as fall. They're talking a 60,000 print run, with the initial laydown some 50,000 of those. This is preliminary, of course, but no other publisher has tried. His agent asked yesterday if we'd seen the catalog. We haven't, but she says he's got a two-page spread.

After telling Ivan not to plan on the ABA convention in Chicago -- the one that draws attendance of about 30,000 these days -- the publicity director called last Friday with news that he's been chosen one of four authors for their big literary lunch, to be presided over by poet laureate Robert Hass. That's a plum.

And you may see him in D.C. some time in May. The schedule isn't fixed yet, and he'll of course let you know when he knows. Just now he's putting together the schedule for Montana bookstores in June, which he'll then fax to S&S publicity. Uh huh. We've come that far in joining the modern world, with an HP 700 that also produces crisp photocopies. (Yes, we know all this can be done within a computer now, and Marsh was talking last night about electronic document transmission at his law firm.)

We'll get serious about a computer when Ivan has breathing space. While all this is going on apace, S&S is also picking up from HarperCollins the paperback rights from Rascal Fair, which has now sold well in excess of 100,000 without noticeable effort.

And then there's the next book idea, for which he's produced a one-age synopsis. He asked the agent about the timing for shopping it to S&S -- they have 60 days to make an acceptable offer and if not it'd go out to auction -- and she said "now." She was on her way to lunch with a new Scribner editor who would be asked to carry it back to Ivan's editor, Becky Saletan, who also is Hilary Clinton's editor, and that's a whole other saga.

Hilary was presented at last June's ABA, and her book on children's issues was supposed to be published in November, but despite working on it at Jackson Hole, in China, on airplanes, it wasn't a complete ms. by then. So it's out just now, in time for snow and for all the current negative news stories re: the travel office and Whitewater.



If you were within shouting distance I'd ask whether this might be a high-risk strategy to help her change the subject. Out on the look trail it's more like her turf.

Frankly, from this distance I don't think most people give a damn. <sup>about Hilary's problems,</sup> They're more interested in how the House Republicans are making all our lives more miserable. Our minor skirmish was the week before Christmas, when we flew off to Las Vegas, rented a car and drove to Death Valley, just in time for the shutdown. So we didn't get into Scotty's Castle, though we did see a lot of interesting geography. Then we went to Hoover Dam and St. George, Utah, where Ivan has an historian friend. Beautiful country and, of course, Mormon country. We met the historian and his wife at the new Chili's, which elsewhere in the country is "Chili's Bar and Grill." Not in Utah. This one's "Chili's at St. George." The bar is there; you just can't put it on a sign.

Sure.

When we get back from vacation, I'll go back to work, but at two-thirds' time for spring. That means I'll actually do one double section of mass media, and attend a few meetings, hold office hours. It's reward time. If I like it, I may well apply for a permanent two-thirds appointment.

That's what's going on here. Ivan at this moment is planning the Montana book tour around his birthday, which he wants to spend in Ennis, on the Madison River, where there's a terrific restaurant, the Continental Divide. The woman who co-owns it has a birthday the same day. That's Montana, where it continues to seem the case that there are only nine people in the world, and the rest is done with mirrors.

Love,  
Carol



# Building Lives In Montana

The power of geography  
in a big, roistering novel

**M**ONTANA NOVELIST IVAN DOIG sets himself a challenge in his big, roistering new novel, *Bucking the Sun* (Simon & Schuster; 412 pages; \$23). His subject—not just the book's setting but also the presence that rules its composition—is a monstrous, chancy construction project in the mid-1930s, the huge Fort Peck dam across the Missouri River in Montana bottomland.

BUCKING  
THE SUN



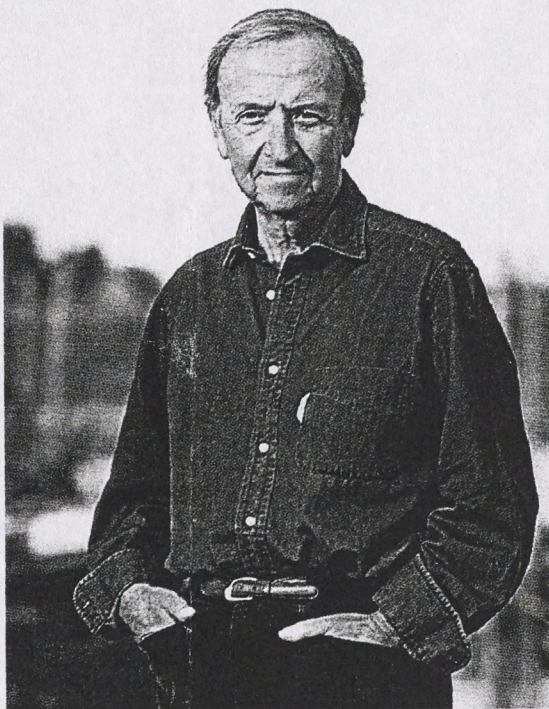
IVAN DOIG

To save his novel from the curse of what used to be called socialist realism, Doig must come up with characters large enough to symbolize the unruly river and the vast dam in combat as construction proceeds, but sufficiently strong and gritty in their own right so that they can't be yawned away as costumed actors posing in front of a diorama.

He finds effective protagonists in the Duff clan, Scottish immigrants and hard-scrabble farmers losing their battle with drought and grasshoppers in the river valley until the dam project lurches into motion. Owen, the bookish eldest son, is an engineer. His twin brothers Neil, a truck driver, and Bruce, a diver, work in the river's murk. Father Hugh is a reluctant laborer and enthusiastic boozier, and Uncle Darius, a union organizer on the run. The younger men marry and risk lives and livers as they watch the river slowly pool up behind the growing dam.

The reader is pulled into their story by a puzzle the author has set: What two Duffs—man and woman, naked, married but not to each other—are extracted drowned from a submerged truck as the construction winds down? This is skillful manipulation, the novelist as conjurer ensuring that the reader's first thought is of human beings, not power shovels and spillways. The device works beautifully, and so does Doig's roguish novel. Though not well enough—perhaps never that well, if your characters wear jeans—for its author to escape the tag "regional."

—By John Skow



**MAKING A STATEMENT:**  
Moore plays tricks with the  
notion of poetic justice

ed statement identifying the intended victim as "Pierre Brossard, former Chief of the Second Section of the Marseilles region of the Milice, condemned to death in absentia by French courts, in 1944 and again in 1946." The statement goes on to say that Brossard was charged with the massacre of 14 Jews on June 15, 1945. The document, which the old man realizes was to be pinned on his body, concludes, "The case is closed."

Not true, of course, because the old man—who is indeed Brossard, although he has called himself Pouliot for many years—survives. But who, in 1989, still wants to punish him for his past by killing him? Brossard assumes that Jewish money is behind this attempt on his life. That belief, a measure of his reflexive anti-Semitism, will have fatal consequences.

*The Statement* may have a classic thriller's plot—a character on the run, private power plays behind public façades—but it unfolds in a moral universe infinitely more complex and

# To Avenge or to Forget the Past?

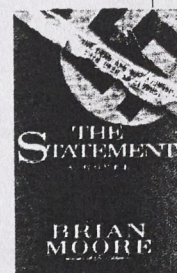
A provocative thriller is set in a  
complex moral universe

**G**IVEN A SCENE IN WHICH AN ASSASSIN stalks a potential victim, most readers will, in the absence of other evidence, instinctively root for the quarry. In the opening pages of his new novel, *The Statement* (Dutton; 250 pages; \$22.95), Brian Moore provides just such a scene: in a village in the south of France an old man is being tailed by a hired killer. The murder, the assassin decides, will take place when his target drives back to the monastery where he has been staying. Feigning engine trouble along the route, he waits for the old man to stop, then approaches as if to ask for a lift, pulls out a pistol and is fatally shot twice in the chest by the man he planned to kill.

This sort of narrative turnaround usually provides the pleasure of surprise, the sense that poetic justice has foiled a malevolent act. Moore quickly cuts off such easy certainties. He shows the old man examining the possessions of his would-be murderer. They include a print-

compromised than the white hats vs. the black hats so typical of the genre. The novel asks not only who is trying to murder Brossard but also why Brossard has been able to remain in France for 44 years, receiving asylum from various Roman Catholic monasteries, and a 1971 presidential pardon for the crimes he committed during the German occupation and the Vichy regime.

"It is hard to pass judgment on what people did back then," says a French army colonel who is also looking to bring Brossard to justice. This remark is the crux of the novel. Does a time come when people must be forgiven for doing what they mistakenly believed was right or unavoidable? Or should evil never be forgiven or forgotten? By challenging the reader to confront these questions, *The Statement* is ultimately unforgettable. —By Paul Gray





The Yew Ess of Ay didn't get Norm Rice with a Christmas bow on him after all, did it. I don't know whether his heart was really going pitty-pat for the HUD job or not. The Seattle Times had just done a big investigative series



on abuses in HUD funds handled by Indian reservations--items such as the rez's housing officer putting up a mansion for herself while other Indians kept on living in shacks. And that's probably only one of many HUD fuddles that may surface. Rice seems to have been a good enough mayor, although he couldn't get his act together in the gubernatorial race--I think he didn't even carry King County, in fact statewide he got only Snohomish County and the little one down on the Columbia where Wahkiakum is. The guy we are getting, Gary Locke, is a beancounter; from watching him try to micromanage King County, which has money running out its ears and really needs some long-range thinking, Carol and I are afraid Locke may end up like Jimmy Carter, reviewing the schedule for the tennis courts instead of kicking legislative ass.

You asked about Simon & Schuster and my book. Won't know the picture on final sales until after January returns from bookstores, but I think there's a pretty good shot at the 40,000-sold that S&S set as its target. I sold about 2500 of those by hand, i.e. inscribed copies, in the bookstore tour of 40+ stores. Virtually all of those were independent stores, which means, sigh, I was fighting the last war. The independents are losing market share to the 4 big chains with every breath they take. To give you an idea of the impact of a Barnes & Noble, the one in University Village (in what was the old Lamonts dept. store, remember?) not only has badly hurt the University Book Store--as a book sales rep told me, who's going to drive past that B&N from Laurelhurst to be hassled on the the Ave?--but Elliott Bay Book Company all the way down in Pioneer Square. As best I can see, what's evolving are niche independent bookstores where geography (Politics & Prose there in D.C.--no site available for a Barnes & Noble for considerable distance around, I'm told) or personality/perseverance/cussedness (Village Books in Bellingham, Elliott Bay) will let this generation of booksellers survive, and the chains and the next Darwinian monster beyond them (possibly on-line) will get the rest. The one statistic at the Booksellers convention in Chicago that had everybody agog was that more than half the books in this country aren't sold in bookstores at all, either chain or independent: the Wal-Marts of the world, specialty stores (Kitchenry, New Age), already some on-line ordering of books, all those have taken the majority market share.

Inasmuch as you know Politics & Prose, here's a moment Carol and I loved from the Booksellers convention in Chicago. We're at dinner with the Simon & Schuster honcha, Carolyn Reidy, a Tugboat Annie physical type who rose from typist to prez of S&S, and among the 3 or 4 bookstore owners also invited was Carla Cohen of Politics & Prose, whom you may remember as resembling two Tugboat Annies in one piece of apparel. The talk turned to how bookstores were starting to nurture reading groups, those little book clubs of a dozen or two neighbors or friends or whatever who do a potluck book discussion once a month, and one of us asked Carla how Politics & Prose is doing on that score. Oh, says she, we have 200 we work with, i.e. furnish the books to and give 'em a basement room to meet in if needed. Two hundred? say Carolyn Reidy and her S&S sales manager; we'd all figured maybe two dozen. Carla Cohen went on to explain that Politics & Prose also sells memberships in the bookstore--for \$15 a year you get the newsletter, some kind of discount deal, chance to go on Politics & Prose travel tours and so on. The Carla Cohens are going to survive in the bookstore world; lots of the others are in trouble.

It's time I started to tending to the snow--we're starting to get rain and melt now, and the drainpipes need the ice whacked out of them--so this is it for now, kiddo. Thanks a million for the letter with the Xmas card, the report on your golden children and all; onward to '97.

love,

*Wan*



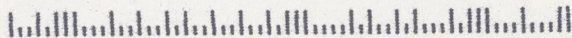
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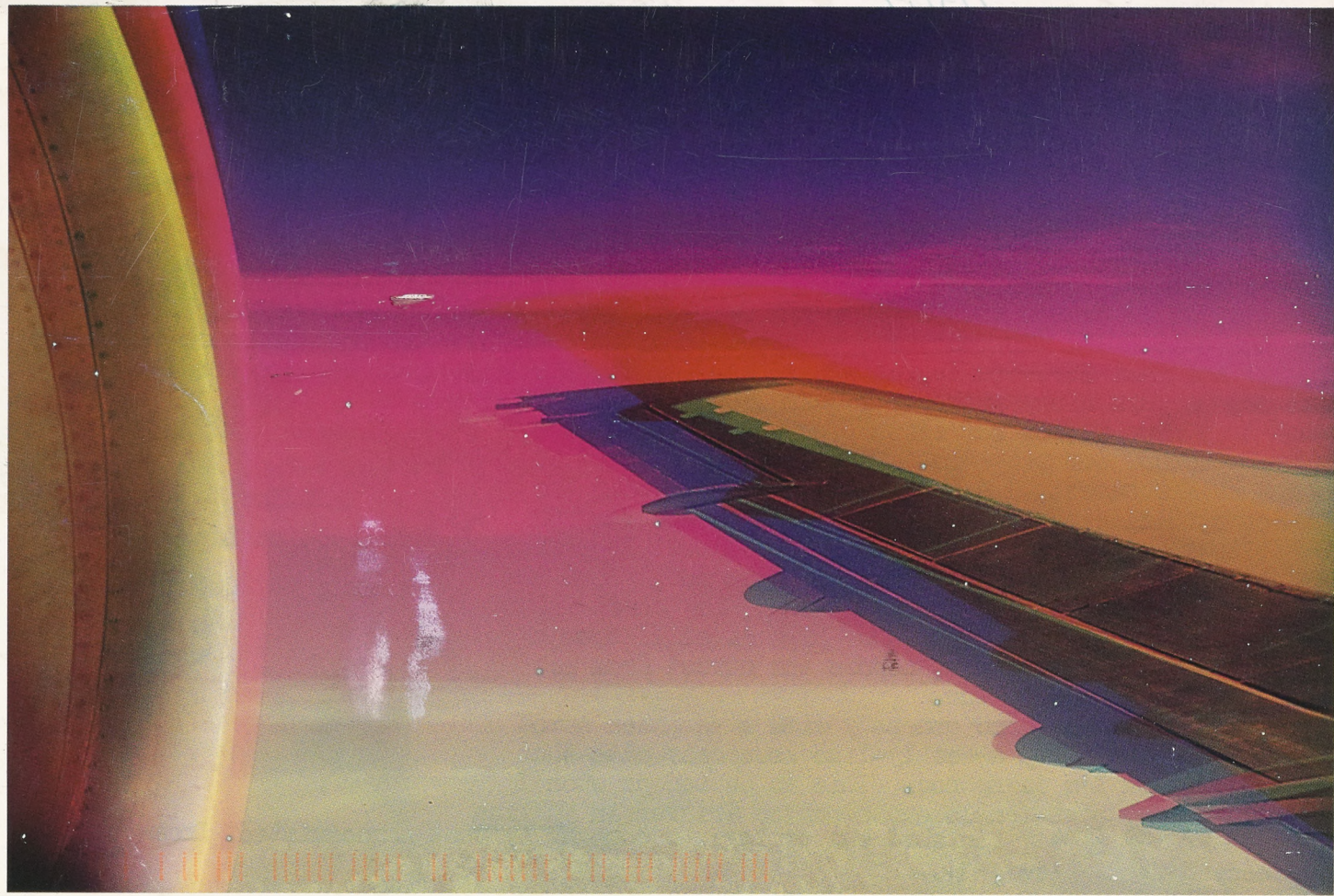




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The Heathman Collection

RAGNARS VEILANDS b. 1943

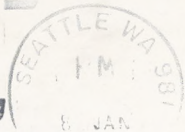
"3 x Wing"

Type-C print 1977 30" x 40"

Heathman Guest Room

1/7/97

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



Dear Linda--

Righto, we of course recall Mindy Upp and you played it perfectly by waiting to pass along the obit. I'd thought you were aware of Mindy's DC life and were in touch with ~~her~~ her, but now that I review it, it was indeed Jan B., who maybe even visited her there. We'll try to pass along the news to Jan with as much tact as you did.

Not only did you see our weather on the national news, you probably saw our sinkhole. It's up at the corner at the end of our street, Thank God out of sight around the bend--cops, utilities crews, and gawkers galore. (And the buzz of news helicopters; KING is still the best TV news station, wonder of wonders.) Took the road out, about a hundred feet across and sixty feet deep, and more nastily, the humongous broken sewer pipe is still spawing raw sewage into Boeing Creek, across the street from us. Fortunately no stink, so far.

Geez, do you really know somebody with a daughter named Cascadia? I've made up a Weekly-like newspaper with that name in the book I'm doing now. This is as bad as when I made up a hungry agri-conglomerate called TriGram in English Creek and by the time I finished the trilogy, a company by that name existed. Damn reality, keeps copying me. love, *Ivan*

Linda Miller  
9820 Wilden Lane  
Potomac MD 20854

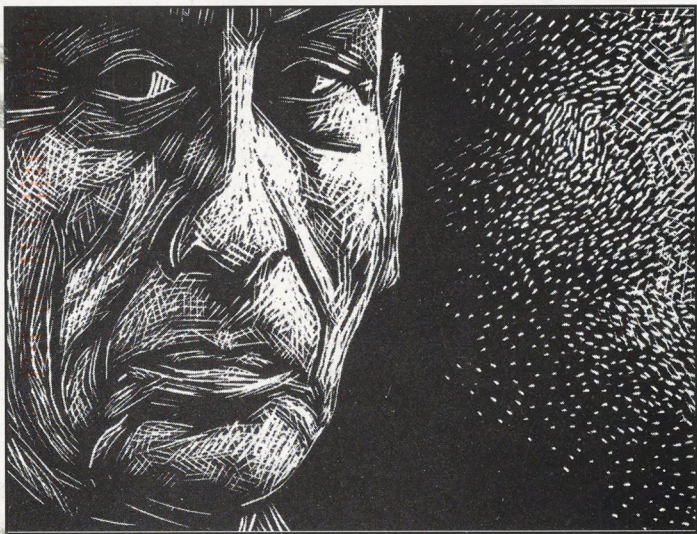




# Fact & Fiction

**BOOKS FOR ALL AGES**

220 North Higgins Missoula, MT 59802



**Norman Maclean**



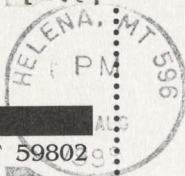
August 20, 1999

# Fact & Fiction

BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

220 North Higgins

Missoula, MT 59802



Dear Linda

yop. Ivan's got a new  
novel, just published,  
and we're on tour for  
Mountain Time. Wa. Post  
supposed to do a Sunday  
review any time now.  
I love being back in Montana -  
Ivan gets to do the work  
while I vacation. We  
owe you a letter, and  
it will come. Love,  
Carol

Linda Miller  
9820 Wilder Lane  
Potomac  
MD 20854

Woodcut by James G. Todd, Jr. from THE LAST BEST PLACE,  
used with permission and gratitude.



by Ivan Doig  
 BY IVAN DOIG  
 DOIG  
 by Ivan Doig  
 By Ivan Doig

Ivan Doig

17277 15th Avenue N.W., Seattle, Washington 98177  
 (206) 542-6658

11 Nov. '99

Dear Linda--

I am almost almost *almost* done with the bookstore trail, three tag-end gigs across the next few weeks and that's it, so any semi-decent excuse I had for not providing you a letter is dwindling. I had been aiming for this Saturday morning to write to you anyway, but lo, and brace yourself to whatever extent you need to at mention of your ex-, the Doigs on Wednesday night made their maiden voyage in the winey waters of the Rainier Club and out of the crowd came Clint and Elizabeth. We hadn't seen them in many years, and that was a good neutral public place to do it, so we heard of Clint's current dabble at advising on restoration of craftsman bungalows, if I have that right. I will tell you, it all seemed a hell of a long winding route from the summer day in 1966 when Carol and I pulled in to Seattle and bunked with you and him. As to why ~~the~~ the Rainier Club was letting in the likes of any of us?--the Museum of History and Industry had decided to bestow "History Maker" awards on Jim Ellis (of Forward Thrust, remember?) and his brother John who runs stuff like Puget Power and the Seattle Mariners, the mayor's wife (Pam Schell, if you ever crossed Golda-day paths with her), Alaska Airlines, and me. I've deduced that my presence on that list owes to an unexpected bit of networking: several of the people on the Museum board are from Montana. Be that as it may, there Carol and I were, suburban druids amid the dark wood of the Rainier Club...

The travels for the book began in mid-August, and even though I wouldn't let the Scribner publicity department put me and my cranky knees on plane flights longer than the couple of hours to Denver and San Francisco, I've ended up doing more than three dozen signings, speeches, and whatnot, plus a bunch of interviews. The only thing I've managed to do besides sign books and move my mouth is successfully hold out for the contract I wanted for the next book. You're of course of too tender an age to remember "spring holdouts" in the era before baseball players became free-agent zillionaires: spring training would come, the player wouldn't report to camp, and it'd be a contest as to who would give in before Opening Day, the management or the player. Scribner, a quite wonderful publisher in sundry ways, is also tough as nails in contract negotiating; they've picked up writers such as Stephen King and John LeCarre, whose sales are on the downhill slope, for instance, and cut sharp deals with them. My sales aren't down, but they aren't up either--the only direction recognized by Viacom, which owns Simon & Schuster, which owns Scribner--and so, la la la, here came a contract offer for \$60,000 less than I've been getting per book. My agent, ordinarily as fearless as they come, nervously advised me to take the offer. I said, no way. Didn't know what I was going to do--eventually look around for another publisher, or declare myself retired, or what--but I wasn't going to take that kind of a pay cut. Out I went on the bookstore marathon, and about midway through, damned if Scribner didn't give in. In what is proving to be the most highly useful snit I've ever thrown, I also stipulated that I have an extra year in the contract--three instead of what has been the usual two--to deliver the book. All in all, things are looking good, the money okay and my writing schedule less calendar-ridden than it's been for a long while.



The next book nonetheless is probably going to be a toughie. Another novel, which will pluck a character out of the one-room school in *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*--Susan Duff, the schoolgirl who sings the title song at Angus and Adair's wedding--and bring her forward to the mid-1920's, through the Montana women's suffrage movement and hard personal stuff that World War I inflicted on her. She's become a singing teacher, and the novel will involve her with a patrician politician and the student he wants her to take on--his black, spiritual-singing chauffeur. I'll be drawing on the actual musical career of Taylor Gordon, the "colored person" as he referred to himself in that era, in my hometown of White Sulphur Springs who did rise all the way to a Carnegie Hall appearance, then ended up back in Montana herding sheep during the Depression. The plot will be less citified and out-of-my-element (I hope) than it sounds, because the politician is a land-based ranch scion, Susan spends time back in the homestead country of English Creek, the singer is a thorough rural westerner sired by a black cavalry sergeant stationed in Montana, and so on. Obviously I have tons to learn about a lot of topics, for this one, but the characters feel intriguing to me and that's what I have to go with.

Jonathan Yardley! You're right that I could rake Hell from end to end and not come up with a nastier reviewer--my buddy Reid Beddow at *Book World* always used to refer to him as "my colleague who doesn't like anything"--and so I, and the Scribner publicity department, were amazed that he liked *Mountain Time* to the considerable extent he did. Funny little story in the background of that review: the Sunday before, Yardley absolutely chewed up a baseball book by one of our Missoula friends--second or so graf was something like: "What's wrong with this book? How much time do you have?"--and I thought to myself, Whew, at least I'm not in that kind of danger, that Dixie-doodler Yardley never looks at anything in the West.

So how's your hip? You make the operation sound easy as running a zipper, for Christ's sake. Don't you know when to coax sympathy?

On our home front, well, we still have a terrific home. Both of us adore this place, and get a constant kick out of the ship traffic going past, the patterns of the weather, the Olympics poking through. Carol has just begun whacking the premises into shape for our first Thanksgiving gathering under this roof, 16 or 18 of us. Needless to say, wish you were here.

Just remembered, I need to give you a bad time about whose fingerprints are on that bold-face bouquet of yours in the cherub history. *Yours*, Missy! It's got to be a quote from some letter you wafted, kissy-kissy, to Ben Baldwin, which ended up in the cherub program files; we didn't provide them any such thing, and when the prof who was putting the history together phoned us for general reminiscence, he mentioned he was drawing on those files. Done in by your own teen-age sweet manners, tsk. How was the Chapin reunion? And Peter K? When we went back there in '96, Chicago looked impossibly big and the chapel where we were married looked impossibly small.

Well, that's it until some kind of Xmas missive, kiddo. You're sounding good. Hang in there, hips and all.

Hugs

*Vian*

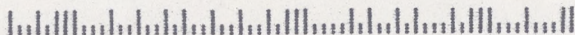


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17277 15th Avenue NW  
Seattle  
September 5, 2000

Dear Linda

Labor Day is over, and Ivan has just left--at 5 a.m.-- for SeaTac and a week's tour in the Midwest for the paperback of Mountain Time. A new wrinkle this time: his publisher sent a Carey limo to pick him up (the driver looked like an accountant, with wire rims, dark suit, carefully combed dark hair), so here I sit at the computer I bought Memorial Day weekend, and have since ignored while yard work proceeded. Anyway, we now have two computers in the house, so that Ivan can use one exclusively for his manuscripts and his spreadsheets.

I've been thinking about you, and about others we've known with a diagnosis of MS. They've been casual acquaintances rather than a good friend and so there's much we don't know, but my impression is of episodes followed by long remissions. You wrote that you figure you've already had one of those, and I wonder if there is any predictable pattern.

Ivan and I have several biotech stocks, and I see that one of them (Elan, an Irish company) has early trials in progress on an MS drug. As well, I've read that stem cell research may be fruitful. Undoubtedly, you know whatever there is to know, and we would gladly hear more.

What's the situation now, with work and so forth? And what can we do to help? We have a room with a view, whenever you need a change of scene.

In fact, we have a house on what we think is one of the great sites in this world. Even Seafair, which we've studiously ignored all these years, has become fun, as we watch a Trident sub, then an aircraft carrier accompanied by four smaller ships. Here came the Goodyear blimp, cruising mid-Sound, and, oh yes, a smaller, bright orange blimp with monster.com written on its sides.

Every Sunday, all summer, a big white cruise ship from the Royal Norwegian line has come in at 5 a.m. from Alaska, then departed again at 5 p.m. Our perch is probably 40 minutes from the downtown dock at the new marina north of the aquarium, and we've discussed the logistics of getting a turnaround in 12 hours. How can they even get the beds made?

We also have a weekly visit from the world's biggest van ship, owned by the Maersk line. It actually looks sleek but takes 19 van lengths bow to stern, and more rows across the stern than we've been able to count. When we're not watching the ship traffic, or the ferries on the Edmonds to Kingston run, we watch for eagles and hawks, usually followed by a challenging gaggle of crows. We have jays and swifts, and much else, and I tease Ivan about worrying that this property would not have as much birdlife as our 10th avenue nest in the woods.



We have a lot that's 335 feet deep and drops dramatically toward the Sound. Beyond, to the West, is an unbuildable sensitive area of mostly wetland, owned now by the city of Shoreline, and beyond that the Burlington Northern tracks. Then the Sound. We have three benches of land in the back, before the land drops precipitously, and they were in an unruly state when we bought the place two years ago. I still call everything beyond the row of lavender that edges the first bench "the end of the known world" but we have made some progress, having a garden shed totally rebuilt and fruit trees drastically pruned.

You'd be most pleased with the veggie garden Ivan has accomplished nearest the house. He can watch over it from his study window, and be there in a few steps. The formerly weed infested area now has seven raised beds. Ivan began planting spinach and leaf lettuce (red sails is a favorite) in late February, and we're now on later crops of both, along with green beans, carrots, walla wallas, leeks, sugar peas, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries (for variety we can always get blackberries in the further outback), and so on. He is a wonderful gardener, taking great care with his plantings, and I'm temporarily in charge and have a neatly typed list of chores.

We've had a 12-sector watering system installed this summer, having spent too much time last year dragging hoses around. And a new driveway of aggregate with rows of gray stone set into it. Best thing about it is that it doesn't shout of its newness. The old driveway was broken up and barrowed to the outback, where it became a retaining wall behind the garden shed. A ramp also was built so that barrows could reach the shed.

A lot of our summer went to things like that. This whole place is a major hobby, and we adore it. Thank heavens for the bull market, which makes everything easily affordable.

We are well. Ivan has occasional flareups of knee pain but is basically sound. We do the Thanksgiving walk of the neighborhood every day, at a minimum. Same walk; we just start from a different place. I'm surprisingly busy for a person without a job and, as of July, without any responsibility to the Innis Arden board of trustees. I had filled an unexpired term for a year, then stayed on a while when an announced candidate changed his mind. It was interesting, since the board has to pass on every remodel of any kind, and the most usual kind these days is new construction after a complete teardown of a house built in the 50s. We can count on any view site to bring angst from the neighbors, so there's much visiting back and forth, to see for ourselves how many inches of beach or water view might be blocked. I learned a lot, and had some fun, too, but twas enough.

As I look over my computer I can just see a car carrier heading down the Sound at first light. Time for me to walk, before the school buses start to roll. Do take care. We always look forward to your letters and we thank you for writing even the difficult news.

Much love,  
Carol

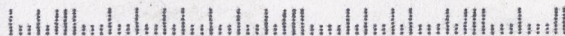


Doig  
17277 15th Av. NW  
Seattle



Linda Miller  
9820 Wilden Lane  
Potomac, MD 20854

20854-2033 26









17277 15th Avenue NW  
Seattle, WA 98177  
November 21, 2000

Dear Linda

We've had a fine Fall, with cool dry weather and a wintry snap to the air these last couple of weeks. The rain and bluster of October/November storms have not yet arrived, and we're about to celebrate Thanksgiving. We accommodated the crowd in our new lodgings last year, but this year we'll celebrate the day at the home of Katharina and John Maloof, in Laurelhurst. She teaches German at the college -- and is about to retire -- and he was an early techie for IBM. We're glad enough to have a little time off; Mark and Lou Damborg also have been sharing honors in recent years. But we decided we just had to have turkey sandwiches, so we're planning to cook our own small bird on Friday. The crowd changes from year to year, but Peter is a regular, as is Ann McCartney, who now lives in Bellingham with her math prof husband, Norm Lindquist, who is a good cook in his own right. Ann bakes the pies and Norm brings something unexpected.

So do think about joining us some Thanksgiving, but meanwhile come when you can. We appreciate your comment about not wanting to interrupt Ivan's work, but all you need do is pass quietly behind his office chair as you move from guest room toward the kitchen upstairs. There's a bath down on the guest room level, a small fridge, and a separate room for tv. There are other rooms, too; come see for yourself.

Most of our rooms face west, and as I sit here at my iMac at 8 a.m. I'm looking out at roses still in bloom, a birdbath which sometimes is a matter of contention between robins and other species, a couple of rows of blueberry plants, and then the Sound and Olympics beyond. From time to time we see hawks and eagles, and we keep BB guns handy to try to teach the crows manners.

You'd be pleased with Ivan's garden, which still is providing us occasional raspberries for breakfast. The lettuce recently gave out, but we have leeks, walla wallas and garlic overwintering. And we had a glorious Summer of snow peas (early), green beans (for much of the summer and Fall), tomatoes that actually ripened, and green leftovers which sent me to digging out the Green Tomato Cookbook. Ivan has detailed plans for the year ahead, and we've just prepared the soil of two of the raised beds for February plantings. That means there's an aroma of chicken manure on the back 40.

You could say we're nesting here, and we've not traveled as much as we used to. Where would we go that's nicer? Last week, however, we did take a blue-sky day and roam to the Skagit. We figured it was too early for the snow geese but, heck, we'd see whatever birds were around, and walk a dike or two. We took the I-5 north, got off at Conway, and drove west on our usual



route. We hadn't gone far when we saw, way across fields on our left, a kind of white edge. The snow geese indeed were back, and when we found a spur road that led to a new viewing area we discovered thousands and thousands of geese (Ivan thought maybe 15,000) feeding on the barley fields planted especially for them. Hundreds at a time came flying in, and the air was full of a din of conversational noises. We must have watched for half an hour and, as we were about to leave, a good part of the flock rose en masse, wheeling black and white through the sky.

The day had already been a success, what with a heron guarding the entrance, and a pair of kildeer peeping along a field's edge. We drove north to a Padilla Bay dike walk that we especially like, and arrived at a tide low enough to provide more herons, many dozens of pintails, along with many hundreds of dunlin, the shorebirds that are even more balletic than snowgeese in their aerial arsenal. So, in less than six hours we'd had one of our premier birding days, and we came home to a dinner of farmed steelhead, and a marvelous sunset.

That's how life goes here, while Ivan also works away on his next novel, which is not due until December, 2002. The extra year has taken considerable stress out of the process -- or at least so it looks to me.

And, in this down market, we're buying. We took substantial profits in Spring and have been reallocating some of it to stocks that we wanted but didn't make sense at their previously inflated prices. That includes Akamai and also RealNetworks, which is where Maria Cantwell made her money, \$10 million of which she just spent trying to unseat goddamned Slade Gorton. As I write this it looks like she's going to lose, currently by 1200 votes with more absentees yet to be counted, but there will be an automatic recount.

She didn't ask for any money, but I did keep writing checks to candidates on Emily's List. Most of 'em didn't win, including Nancy Keenan in Montana, but there were a couple of big gains in Michigan and Minnesota. As for the national picture -- you tell us. I've watched David Boies with admiration, and I do think the situation is fascinating, but...can anything good come of this? We on the west coast did our part, despite Nader who collected about 5% of the Oregon vote, but was it asking too much of Al Gore that he carry Tennessee, and keep fighting for Ohio?

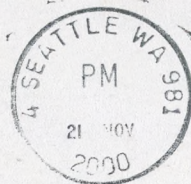
Whatever that outcome, here we are, with a holiday season upon us. We hope you're going to get to do whatever you most want to do, and that you're otherwise doing OK. Thanks for the medical short course, from which I learned much. Do keep us informed.

By the way, we're not surprised that one of your works of linguistic art made Vital Speeches. But it sure is nice.

Much love,  
Carol



Doig  
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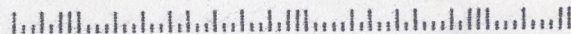


HAPPY  
"WHO-LIDAYS"  
from the  
U.S. Postal Service



Linda Miller  
9820 Wilden Lane  
Potomac, MD 20854

20834-2033 26









Dear Linda

July 23, 2001

I had just sat down to write this note when Dean called from the yard to tell me an aircraft carrier is passing. Sure enough: big baby with a red helicopter on deck, sailing majestically by the living room windows. It's sometimes devilishly hard to get the chores done.

We're glad you came to have your own look and take a break from the D.C. weather. It's been pleasant here, but too too dry.

Tomorrow is my 68th birthday, which I'm pleased to acknowledge. We have three days of events planned, some of it coincidental. And in August we're to spend an unexpected few days away, thanks to another shipboard extravaganza by Paul Allen. This time we fly from Beijing Field to Helsinki, visit Tallin, Estonia, by helicopter, then sail to St. Petersburg for a couple of days of sightseeing. Besides that, big dinner productions at night. All of this to be accomplished August 17-20. Four days and halfway around the world! Who? Us?

(over)



I've recently discovered a nice warm  
overjacket, with zipper, in part of the hall  
closet where I seldom venture. I  
think it's yours, but enough people  
have been in and out of this  
house lately that I wanted to check  
before sending it off.

Ivan is in the yard, shooting at crows.  
I'm about to go buy salmon for  
outdoor grilling. Love in the Northwest.

Love,  
Carol



by Ivan Doig  
 BY IVAN DOIG  
 DOIG  
 by Ivan Doig  
 Ivan Doig

17277 15th Avenue N.W., Seattle, Washington 98177  
 (206) 542-6658

3 Sept. '01

Dear Linda--

This is one of those times when I wish you didn't live the whole damn length of the country away. We're back now from that St. Petersburg fling and of all our friends, you would really, really get it. Just for instance: long and long ago, you said to us: "I know you don't watch much television, but there's someone on *Mork and Mindy* who is a very gifted young man." And lo, it came to pass in the realms of Paul Allen's megafortune, that there Carol and I are standing in the midnight-dark of the gardens outside the palace of Catherine the Great while every imaginable whimwham of fireworks exploded overhead, the smoke gathering against the palace outbuildings and behind the band in Napoleonic Wars period-costumes to make it all seem eerily like, say, the battle of Borodino, and all at once we notice one lone guy right in front of us, privately gesticulating and murmuring to himself as he took in the spectacle. Robin Williams, working out a routine just for his own satisfaction.

So it was that kind of trip, where in one day we met Bill Moyers, David Halberstam, and Tom Stoppard, and our cruise ship suite neighbors on either side were the composer Michael Kamen (film scores for *Mr. Holland's Opus* and *Metallica*) and James Watson, the co-discoverer of DNA. It was a lot of other kinds, too, as a slick new fleet of Volvo busses whisked us around St. Petersburg on excursions to the Hermitage and lots of bloody spots of history--what a kick to stand in Palace Square and know that the Cossacks charged from *right there*, the archway of the General Staff Building, when they rode down Father Gapon's followers on Bloody Sunday of 1905. I also dabbled back into my college Russian stuff enough to get excited again about the natural poetry in the language, and while I still can't get my head around Pushkin, St. Petersburg's own bard, I lit up all over again at seeing what a usefully crazy poet Mayakovsky was. (Kind of spooky; he was so goddamn original even Stalin liked his stuff, although Mayakovsky killed himself before he would have pushed too far and ended up in the line of fire of the purges.)

You long since preceded us to St. Petersburg--it turned out that Bill and Judith Moyers had never been to Russia before, either, so Carol and I felt a little less like hopeless stay-at-homes--but you wondered what Estonia would be like. Medieval! At least the old portion of Tallinn that we tromped around, over endless cobblestones. Fine old turreted towers, roofed with red tiles, on the ancient town wall, and the Baltic Sea beyond. Buildings need a lot of stuccoing, tuckpointing, and general spiffing up--although they're in less bad repair than what we saw from the ship as we entered Russia, which is really a wreck along its maritime shore, and there was an attractive sense of design, maybe the Finnish influence, in streetside wall decorations and even what people were wearing. Our guide Mariliis, a tall late-twentyish blond blond blond, trekked us over all those cobblestones while dressed in a silvery sheened dress to her ankles, almost like a prom dress in this country but more simply tasteful. The Estonians have been out from under the Russians since '89, and while for them it's always going to be like living next to a vast blob of appetite--one of the great leads ever written was that, after the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1938, the USSR ate those Baltic Republics like buns--they make an



interesting point of historic stubbornness to start this walking tour: visitors such as us are taken first to the most prominent building in the city, the Orthodox Cathedral that the Russians imposed on the cityscape, and then to the fourteenth-century Lutheran Cathedral. Looking at its sober white-washed walls and dark wood, compared to the Orthodox gaudiness of decoration, it's just plain as hell, or maybe it's heaven, that those cultures could never be made to meld.

This trip in particular we did under just about presidential-level security. There were five couples of us and a singleton, all the helicopter would hold for the ride across the Gulf of Finland from Helsinki, and as soon as the Estonian Border Guards had stamped our passports, it became evident who our eleventh member was: head of our security detail. We saw some the Allen private-security guys at work on the Alaska trip three years ago, but going up there was nothing like taking 250 guests of the fourth richest guy in the world into a mafia kleptocracy like Russia. Carol and I speculate that an immense amount of the security planning must have involved the greasing of palms, likely in the Russian government to persuade them to shape things up for a few days, but there were also endless guys like the one here, the instant we set foot into Tallinn, who introduced himself by first name only, pointed to the modest identifying button and the others who had suddenly materialized were wearing, and said they were all there to help us out if anything went wrong. In essence, the ten of us went through the Tallinn walking tour with six guards escorting us, much like a loose military patrol--one man out ahead on point, the security chief always close at hand to the bunch of us like he was a chronic straggler, and the other guards around and behind us like sightseers. They all carried innocent-looking backpacks, and as one of the Seattle women with twenty-something kids said, they were dressed in the absolute most current with-it clothes of their generation.

All of this wasn't as stifling or even as obtrusive as it may sound, they gave the group a lot of leeway, and of course the pair of us like nothing better than to watch the workings of things like this. When the cruise ship docked at the English Embankment in St. Petersburg the next morning, we were the only ones on deck for about an hour, watching the *real* security being set up:

--Street ends blocked off.

--On that whole long block of Angliiskaya, facing the ship, the only living things evident in any of the windows were houseplants--evidently a whole blockfull of enforced vacations.

--A barge on the other side of the quay the ship was moored to became the chokepoint of access to the ship: every time, on or off, our passports and visas were checked there.

--Meanwhile along the street, at any given time between forty and fifty security people were in sight--Allen's ubiquitous backpackers, three different Russian uniforms, a police powerboat continually out on the Neva River the other side of us, and ultimately, as if no security setup can ever be complete without these standard-issue musclemen, the way a wedding cake just has to have those bride-and-groom figurines, here came eight beefy Russian dark suits, for all the world like our FBI or Secret Service stereotypes in their Mormon-white shirts. Somebody gave them some orders and they planted themselves here and there, clasping their hands over their crotches, for whatever the duration was going to be.

Some of the stuff we saw, from inside this cocoon of security:

--The Hermitage fascinated and appalled all of us. The art is endless--it's the only place I've been that made the British Museum seem small--and the conditions are scandalous, sunshine beating in through plain plateglass windows on the Rembrandts.

--Both nights in St. Petersburg, Allen rented palaces to throw parties in. First night was in the Tauride, given to Prince Potemkin by Catherine the Great when they were



sharing a bed, and there was wild Russian entertainment, ranging from clowns to astounding gymnasts to, you bet, Cossack dancers. And this, which to me illustrates some of the clicks of brains during these Allen slingshot flings of people to far places: onto the stage comes a woman with what looked like a shortened electronic keyboard with a thick antenna on it. It turns out to be called a Theremin (her uncle invented it), and my dictionary describes it as "an electronic consolelike musical instrument often used for high tremolo effects; pitch and volume are 'space-controlled' by movement of the player's hands over and between the antenna oscillators." The sounds, as she moved her hands through empty air, sort of like playing a harp that wasn't there, indeed were eerie but entrancing. As she went into a second number, a crowd began to gather in front of her, and *my* antenna went up. There was the composer Michael Kamen, intent, arms folded, as close to her as he could get; but there also was the neurobiologist Bill Calvin, and the dancer-choreographer Gabri Christa, equally mesmerized. As a self-appointed Boswell of these trips, I decided that if heads as various as those three were into this, I better get myself in among them. It turned out Kamen knew of the instrument but said it's usually been used for weird sci-f soundtracks, so he was intrigued to see it played 'classically.' Calvin was interested in what it means, in motor-motion terms, to play an instrument that if effect isn't there; Gabri was wondering if it was perhaps a way to make your own music with your dance motions...

--The next night, it was onward to Catherine the Great's own palace, the Versailles-size place at Tsarkoe Selo, and this was the banquet that ended with those fireworks. In between, in near endless courses, there was dancing by principals of the Kirov Ballet, a hilarious group picture of all 250 of us on a flight of steps--it was like herding cats for the photographer to get everyone in the shot, and when he kept asking for "One more!" he got back a chant of "di-gi-tal! di-gi-tal!"

Amid all this, Paul A. and his mother and his sis and brother-in-law float quite unpretentiously, albeit with a little different perspective on possibilities than the rest of us. We heard it said that Allen thinks of the fleet of planes he uses pretty much as we would think of our cars; by the time we were leaving St. Petersburg, he had decided to bop off to Venice, to compare canal cities, I guess.

Oh, yes, and Carol has now fired an AK-47. But that's for another letter.

Now that we're back to earth, we go to Portland this mid-week for me to give a speech to a statewide sustainability forum--hey, don't ask me what that is, I'm just the guy who comes in and says don't mess with nature--and then I have to immerse in finishing up the draft of this next book. A monkish autumn, I've been warning Carol. So we're glad you got out here when you did. Keep us posted on how things are going; we can always at least lend an ear.

Much love,

*Kuan*

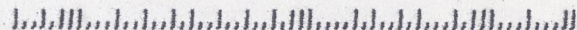


IVAN DOIG  
17277 15th Ave. NW  
Seattle, WA 98177

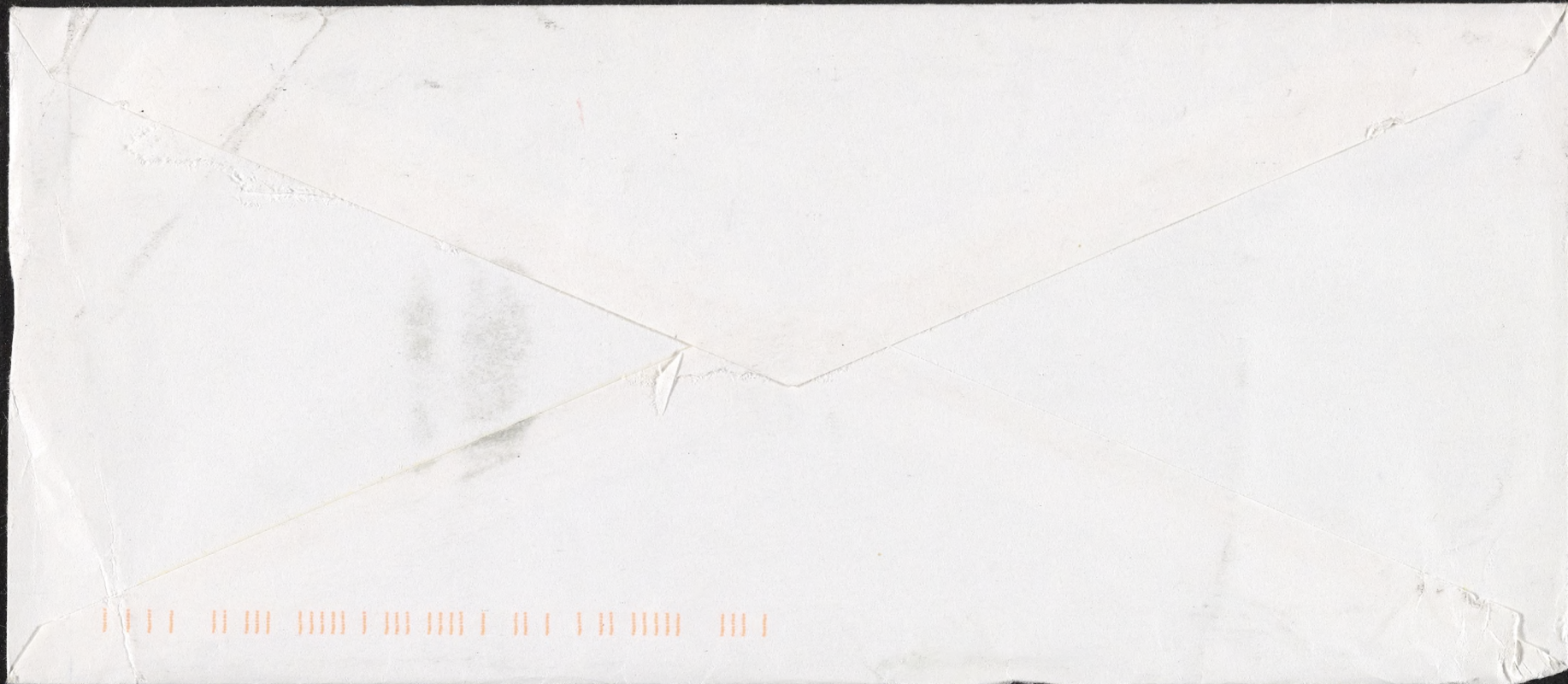


Linda Miller  
9820 Wilden Lane  
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20834+2033









17277 15th Avenue NW  
Seattle, WA 98177  
May 7, 2002

Dear Linda

Here it is, full daylight, with the temperature struggling to get beyond 40 degrees. On the other hand, the Olympics are in sharp detail, seemingly with every snowflake and every tree visible. A Lloyd Triestino<sup>®</sup> van just departed, so loaded that it's a wonder the captain can see to navigate. And Ivan's veggie garden is happily producing enough spinach and lettuce for the two of us, and on some days green onions and radishes, too.

Furthermore, we aren't suffering heatwave or drought, and we're enjoying the bluebells while waiting for the rhodies and azaleas to come fully into bloom. May still is the magic month in the Northwest.

To add to my sanguinity, I'm planning the details of our June trip to Montana: I do the nitty gritty of hotels, eateries and the makeready of the CR-V, while Ivan concentrates on the research. Naturally he wants to go places where roads are doubtful or nonexistent, and that's part of the fun. He also has us aimed to see the remains of Fort Assiniboine, near Havre, which in its time was the largest military installation (106 buildings) north of the Presidio. He's set a scene in the emerging novel there, and wants to eyeball the geography. (No, the fort never was of any real use. The black cavalry stationed there occupied themselves by pushing indians over the boundary into Canada. I think Ivan may have mentioned to you that one of their officers was the young lieutenant John J. Pershing.)

I greatly look forward to the trip, which includes much socializing with old friends. From Lois Welch in Missoula yesterday: "We've reserved the Siena Suite for you on June 2, following a Usual Suspects Dinner."

Meanwhile, Ivan is laboring mightily to achieve a complete draft of his novel by the end of this month. That would give him as much of the rest of the year as he wants to massage the ms. His Scribner editor, Nan Graham, would like to see a draft by late summer, and no doubt he'll oblige. This has been a challenging novel, in that it keeps wanting to be longer. He'd figured 85,000 to 90,000 words, but he's now well past 90 and new scenes keep demanding entrance. So far as I know, he's down to fewer than 10 scenes to complete, and has preliminary work done on them. But, he says, it doesn't get easier.

He does take time off to walk around and tend the garden, which lessens the physical strain somewhat. And every couple of Fridays he's had massages, which also help.

So we're doing fine: I'm in the yard as much as weather permits, we always do our 2-mile



neighborhood walk, and I'm trying to get around Green Lake at least once a week. There's a matter of rebalancing diet and exercise so I can take off a few unwanted pounds.

Thanks for your newsy letter, and keep 'em coming when you can. We plan to call Gabe and Karen when we return from Montana and our garden is in full production, so that we might share some homegrown produce. Would appreciate it if you could provide their phone number, since one of my pet peeves is the piracy of the phone companies and their directory assistance rates.

You probably are busy, with a family wedding in the near future. Our best regards to Fran.

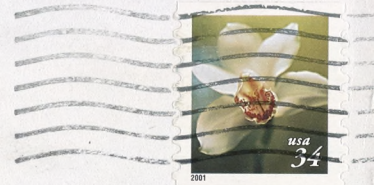
Just looking over your letter -- no, we didn't get to Tucson, but we have hopes for next winter. We did get to the Hoh, still a magical place, and to Vancouver, BC, where highrises are sprouting like weeds and where Stanley Park still is one of North America's fine places.

We're relieved to hear that the MS is stable and that puppies will be in the future -- or are they already in your present?

*Much love,  
Carol*

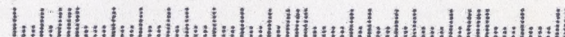


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August 9, 2002

Dear Linda

Let's see if I can remember how to type. I surely haven't done much of late, and if I'm not careful the summer will be gone before I get to it. It's been pleasant: work in the yard, read on the deck, watch the Navy parade by -- Trident, aircraft carrier and all -- en route to Seafair, just concluded last weekend with the, uh huh, hydro races.

The races were Sunday, and we escaped town to Sarah Nelson's wedding. Now that Ann and Marsh live on Bainbridge, they chose a lodge on the outskirts of Poulsbo for the ceremony, waterside and flower-bedecked. Sarah, who is about 5'4, married a guy of equal size, Travis Norsen, who she met playing ultimate frisbee (small engraved frisbees were given as favors). She is about to finish a Ph.D in social psychology at Eugene, and he has finished his in physics at the UW and will teach at Marlborough College in Vermont, one I'd never heard of. So these compact bundles of energy are all brain and athletic muscle. For the ceremony Marshall wrote a purely engaging essay about ultimate frisbee as it relates to Sarah and Travis's relationship.

We had fun. What's not so much fun is the traffic, ferry and otherwise. It's not many road miles to Poulsbo, but a summer Sunday at the Kingston ferry dock is laborious. Two days later we were back in line at Edmonds, en route to visit Eric and Jan Nalder (remember him as an ace investigative reporter? After the last Seattle Times strike he'd had enough of working for Frank Blethen, and now he's on the staff of the San Jose Mercury News, working from home). Eric and Jan just bought a new place in Suquamish which we can see, with a good pair of binocs, from our deck. This trip, a ferry had been out of commission on the Edmonds-Kingston run, so we were delayed about an hour. On our return trip we had the choice of an 8:35 or a 9:50. Yikes.

We have four sets of friends who've gone to live across the Sound. In two cases, the cost of living will be less, at least temporarily, and the other two did it to get away from the city, but Ivan and I just shake our heads. We think we've got it made right here, at our own little resort.

To back up a bit on the summer, we did get to Montana in June, where we visited numerous friends and where Ivan did considerable research. On June 8 we were visiting rancher friends north of Choteau, when they mentioned the weather report predicting a couple of feet of snow. We were being squired around by a development guy from the Montana Conservancy, who was to see us installed for the night at the Conservancy's Pine Butte guest ranch in the mountains west of Choteau. We thought that'd be a nice gig, but the Forest Service folks in Choteau confirmed the snow warning, and advised that, if we wanted to get to Whitefish, our next stop, we'd better get through Marias Pass right away. Which we did, following which Marias closed. We also learned next day that power was out at Waterton (including, of course the ATM machines). Going to the Sun was quite a few days from opening anyway: Lotsa snow this year in your old haunts.



Ivan came home and got back to work on the ms. He came upstairs for lunch on July 10 and quietly announced the end of drafting -- and since has been enjoying what he calls "picking the nits." He's about two-thirds through that but says the final third will be a lot more work. He'll have a couple of small pieces of fresh writing to do, and the last third in general isn't as polished as the rest of the manuscript -- so he tells me. I'll get my chance at an eventual full read-through. His deadline is at the end of the year, so he has plenty of time.

Since I do as I like these days, I'm just now planning a mid-September trip to Ashland and the Oregon Coast. It's been years since we've seen any Ashland Shakespeare, so we have tickets for As You Like It and, shades of high school, Julius Caesar, as well as Noises Off, which we first saw in London almost 30 years ago. For the Oregon coast, we'll spend a few nights at Newport, which has a world-class aquarium, among other amenities, and a couple in Cannon Beach, where we not only have a favorite motel, the Waves, but also a favorite room.

We seem to be creatures of West Coast habit.

We hope the summer is treating you OK. We know DC weather isn't your favorite, but in any case we're a long way toward Fall by now.

I haven't mentioned politics because it's so dreadful. To think that we used to believe in constitutional protections. I taught that. Now I just keep writing checks to Emily's list.

We hope to see Gabe and Karen when Gabe is on hand and can spare a little time.

Rae,  
Cual

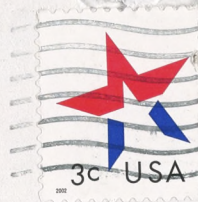


~~Golden + cooking~~  
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~~C taking over~~  
~~Carol - Sheriff~~  
~~Gourmet~~ who

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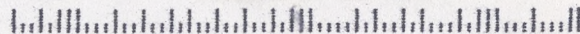


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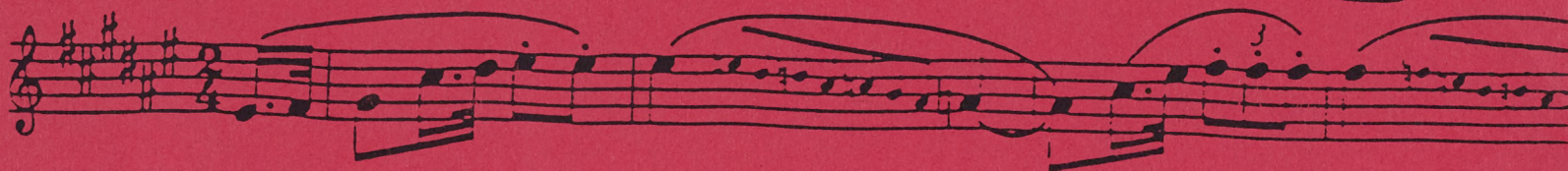
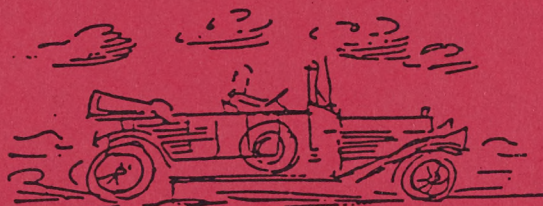
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## Holiday Nocturne for Trio

*Dear Linda - Great to see you! Come again.*

The three of them have kept Ivan's imagination busy for the past three years, so maybe it is only fitting that they will fully blossom into their fictional lives in '03. Other than the book gurus at Scribner who have chosen next Nov. 11 as its publication date because of its news tie-in with Armistice Day, you are the first to meet the central trio of characters in the novel that will be titled **Prairie Nocturne**:

--Wes Williamson, World War I hero and political comet, incurably married but not to...

--Susan Duff, one of the horseback schoolkids in **Dancing at the Rascal Fair**, now very much a woman who has made her way in the world with her skill at teaching singing. But she meets her match in the unlikely pupil Wes presents her with, namely his chauffeur:

--Monty Rathbun, ex-rodeo clown, who has every kind of strike against him in life except his startling voice and a memory trove of his mother's spirituals.

Carol has put up nobly with this cast of characters from the 1920's taking up space in Ivan's head and had her reward of sorts during our summer research trip in Montana when she got to put her camera to work at a remote spot on the Two Medicine river where Meriwether Lewis and his men clashed bloodily with the Blackfeet in the summer of 1806. A haunting site, and a 45 mph Montana breeze along with it to help mark the memory.

So, we are both well and doing what we do. We wish all of you as much armistice as can be had with this post-9/11 world, personal peace.

*Happy Holidays!  
Ivan and Carol*



January 10, 2003

Dear Linda

Here's a communique from one of your few friends, you tell me, who'll sit down and write you an actual letter, lovingly delivered by the postal service. We look forward to getting yours, too.

As I sit down to my iMac at 6:30 a.m. Ivan is already at work, re-reading his revised manuscript for Prairie Nocturne. He's well along and tells me that if he goes back to it tomorrow (he seldom works on weekends) he can finish it, and express it back to Scribner next week. As always, he revels in the revising and polishing, perhaps especially so because he's beyond the first drafting, which continues to be hard labor.

As he's been reading along he has compiled a long list of dialogue uniquenesses to be forwarded to the copy editor, whoever that may be. Usually it's done out of house, quite often by some graduate student, we gather, who consults the Oxford as bible. That doesn't work very well when Ivan has half a dozen people saying sons-a-bitches in their own ways, as in English Creek. This time around he has a character who says, not piano, but "piana." He's cq'd the ms., but that'll also go on the list.

Of course I'm Ivan's first enthusiast, but I'm also journalistically trained to be fair, and I think this novel is special. We'll hope for your unvarnished comments when it arrives to life on November 11, in hopes of commemorating Armistice Day with a news peg. That, at least, is the hope of his publisher, Susan Moldow, who chose the publication date. She's enthusiastic about the book, as is his editor, Nan Graham. Nan, however, is all too busy editing Hillary's tome, for which Simon & Schuster paid a \$9 million advance. It's not even Nan's imprint, but she's considered a genius editor, so Carolyn Reidy, the big boss of the whole S&S empire, tapped her. As a result, after Susan and Nan read Ivan's ms. and commented generally, the line editing was turned over to a young associate editor, Brant Rumble, who was simply an assistant to Nan when Ivan's last book was published. He's amiable to work with, but he's still learning, which means that Ivan is his own best editor, as usual.

You can tell from the above graf that the women are in charge.

On to other matters.

We loved having you at Thanksgiving, partaking once again of the semi-chaos. I at least did get to sit down for a few minutes conversation with you. We hope you'll come back another time, though we do understand that you have a family gathering in Pennsylvania -- so we don't expect to see you *every* year. We hope that Gabriel and Karen will like it here well enough to stay, and that the job situation will allow it. It'll be fun to see more of them. Very fine folks, we think.



Promptly after Thanksgiving, Gabriel forwarded to us the AP article about the new bone-growth drug. Thanks for tracking that down for me. I'm going to file it, and see what happens as it gets into wider use.

Meanwhile, I'm trying an alternative approach of calcium citrate with Vitamin D, mild exercise and diet. Ivan now has kale growing in the garden, we're eating more broccoli and yogurt and drinking more milk. And so on. I'm minimizing drinks that leach calcium, so no coffee (I never was much of a coffee drinker) and much reduced alcohol consumption -- except on Thanksgiving.

I've figured much of this out from miscellaneous new reports and from the book Better Bones, Better Body by Susan E. Brown, Keats Publishing, 2000. Despite what the pharmaceutical folks would have us believe, there is evidence that gains in bone mass can result from a non-drug regimen. It'll be about a year before I have the next DEXA scan, and if that shows continued erosion I'll have to consider other alternatives. Along with the erosion of bone I've got a grumpy urinary tract, which the Group Health specialist calls atrophic urethritis. In my case it amounts to feeling like severe cystitis without having an infection. That's coming around toward normal with estrogen cream a couple times a week, and a mild sedative which I'm gradually decreasing. I conclude that 2002 taught me, if nothing else, that I'm no longer bullet proof. But I'm doing well at the start of 2003, and I hope you are, too.

We're planning a week's sun break to Tucson, beginning January 22. In case the world collapses in the meantime, I bought a package from Alaska Airlines that allows us to cancel up to four hours before flight time. But we do hope the center holds, as we look forward to the climate, the topography, the birdwatching and the eating. We have several trips in the West planned for the rest of the year, and we don't yet know what Ivan will be asked to do when Prairie Nocturne is born. Reluctant as we are to leave our perch over Puget Sound, we are ready to sally forth.

Let us know where you're sallying. Gabriel says you're ready to go back to Italy. I didn't get to talk to you about what's especially appealing there. Take care, and give our best to Fran.

Linda, hi--Weary but pretty happy novelist here. The book seems to me to hang together from one end to the other, which doesn't stop it from simultaneously going all over hell (France a year after the end of World War I! Edinburgh! Harlem and Park Avenue, for gawd's sake!). As Carol alluded to, it's been interesting to be edited by a thirty-some guy who doesn't know what characters mean when they say "talking through your hat" or "take a look at my hold card." I think he's going to be okay on the production end of things, though, and my next nemesis will be the copy editor, of whom I've had one good one in what's about to be ten books. Carol urges me to pass along one of my neologisms, Doigisms, whatever they are, that I slip into supposedly real western lingo--several entries' worth now in the Dictionary of American Regional English.

This time I have a guy arriving in a buckboard, coming with "the makings of a picnic in the johnnybox of the wagon." Poor ol' copy editor could go nuts looking for any source of "johnnybox" except

yrs truly

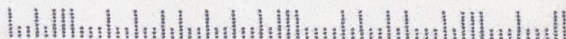


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As to the rest of the continent, I went less far afield on this tour than usual--the only sizable non-driving trip was to Denver-Boulder-Salt Lake--largely out of loathing for airports and hotel rooms. In any case, the book seems to be selling steadily--booksellers and readers are crazy over the cover, and for that matter, the contents get a lot of good comment--and so everybody seems moderately happy, which is quite a lot in a business as given to glooms and dooms as publishing is.



And I am just now starting to gear up to write the next one. The proposal has been put in to Scribner by the agent, we've been signaled that the most propitious time for them to bargain with us is after the holidays when the sales record of *Prairie Nocturne* should look best and the Viacom/Simon & Schuster beancounters might therefore loosen the Scribner purse strings. Unless all hell breaks loose I'd just as soon stay with Scribner. They're a talented bunch, when you can flag down their attention; I may have told you, or maybe Carol did, that my ostensible editor, Nan Graham, pretty much a certified publishing genius (*Angela's Ashes*, for instance), was yanked off all her Scribner duties--she's merely editor-in-chief, for god's sake--for most of a year to handle Hillary Clinton's book for the mother ship, Simon & Schuster. Hard to argue with success; they earned out on Hillary's \$8 million advance the first week the book was in the stores. All in all, with Nan off in various directions and everybody else at the publishing house considerably overworked, there's a kind of Mickey Rooney-Judy Garland "Hey, everybody, let's put on a play!" quality to book production there: they work like crazy on something until the next thing yanks their attention away. I was astonished at the spurts and sputters of getting this book into perfectly proofread form. The third and fourth time through the galleys, I found myself still dealing with stick-it queries--"Did this really exist then?"--that the copy editor usually does on the manuscript, and meanwhile the goddamn software glitch that had half the quotation marks facing the wrong way hadn't been solved. So, it's still strangely adventuresome to get a book into print; maybe always has been, maybe always will be.

The next one, by the way, will probably be more like *English Creek* than any of my recent ones. A first-person narrator again, story centered on a one-room school during the homestead boom, roughly 1906-1910. I sorted book ideas copiously before settling on this one; both of the runner-up ideas have to do with, ai yi yi, military stuff, and there's all too much of that loose in the world right now.

So, that's it with us. We're going to Tucson for a week in late January, and Carol is finally going to get me to see Zion and Bryce parks, in April. Otherwise we're pacing along about as usual. You and Italy sound like you're made for each other; what a terrific trip. Wondered if you know the work of Ann Cornelisen, in the enclosed obit. Seems to me I read something of hers just on the basis of the reputation of the writing, *Torregraca*, maybe. Isn't *Any Four Women Could Rob the Bank of Italy* one great title?

love from here,

*Kwan*

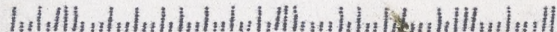


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September 1, 2004

Dear Linda

We sure enjoyed seeing you, and Gabe, and his cottage by the lake, and I wish you were around to talk politics. Since you and Marshall and our Portland historian friend Bill Lang have all been positive about Kerry's chances, I could use upbeat messages; I have a bad feeling about the Bush trash machine. We've written checks until our wrists hurt: to Kerry, Patty Murray, Emily's List, America Coming Together.... But will facts win over destruction politics?

As I write this, a thunderstorm is rampaging north on the Sound, producing a downpour-- and now hail -- as well as innings of clatter as Ivan is on the phone with a Scribner editor, trying to negotiate cover art for the paperback of Prairie Nocturne. He and the young man who's overseeing the paperback work easily together, but the higher powers have vetoed the first idea: an interior of the Helena theater in the throes of an earthquake. Now being discussed are possible scenes from Gates of the Mountains, or from Fort Assinniboine. Apparently, the folks who run Scribner want the trilogy and PN in the same artistic style, which means that four of his paperbacks will have covers done by an artist whose work doesn't match Ivan's writing (see the current paperback cover on Dancing at the Rascal Fair). Ahh, publishing as we all know it. We won't hold our collective breath until these new editions land in bookstores; it'll be a couple of years, at least, until all are accounted for.

On the hardback front, life is perky. Ivan and his editor, Becky Saletan, communicate wonderfully and, as we may have told you, she already has seen the first hundred pages of the new novel, which she liked just fine. Becky and her boss at Harcourt will be here in mid-September, and I've made arrangements for dinner at our favorite downtown restaurant. On these occasions "the author never pays," as was succinctly enunciated years ago by the publicity director at one of his former publishers. Both Becky and Andre, the publisher, are terrific advocates of Ivan's work and have offered him publication as soon as he can get the ms. completed, which he hopes to do in the first quarter of next year. That holds the possibility of a Fall book in 2005 or, if that's too tight, Spring of 2006.

Ivan's days are spent commuting between the office and his garden, which you can picture. We continue to eat wonderfully, and lately have enough variety of fruits and berries to serve on a bed of lettuce, with a honey-poppy seed dressing I culled from Joy. We've eaten so much fresh food that I've lost a few pounds without dieting and without trying to and am currently enjoying the extra room between waist and waistbands.

There's Fall in the air now, and the rain and hail probably murdered some of the raspberries. On the positive side, did we mention that we're going to spend the week of September 20 at Ann and Marsh's new house on the Oregon coast? They're incredibly generous, bless their hearts, and it's



still our very favorite part of the coast, with an enchanting six-mile beach nearby at Nehalem Bay State Park, a deli within half a mile to provide lunches, and a favorite restaurant, the Bistro, in Cannon Beach.

I hear Ivan's printer, grinding out the day's work, and anticipate that we'll be walking the neighborhood as soon as the last vestiges of storm move away. Time for me to extract myself from the iMac.

Do keep in touch. You're an extraordinary correspondent, with a capacity to be present on the printed page. I just looked at our letters files, and our correspondence with you goes back to 1979. If I excavated far enough, I probably could find post-institute correspondence lots older than that. In short, your letters are valued.

Next summer, when you decide to abandon the D.C. humidity, give us a buzz and see if our guest quarters are available for a night or two, OK? Chauffeur service cheerfully provided.

Take care.

Love  
Carol







April 12, 2005

Dear Linda

you're the first to  
wish us a happy 40th  
I giggled at the card -  
it's traditional. No wonder  
you couldn't resist.

The actual date is  
the 17th, and so on  
the 16th we'll drive  
to the Oregon coast, to  
Arch Cape and Ann  
and Marsh's beach  
house, which they're  
lending us for a whole  
week. They'll be on hand  
for the 16th and 17th,



at which point March  
has to get back to his  
high-powered lawyering.

We really appreciate  
that you, of the  
original congregation, have  
a long memory. Next  
time you're here we'll  
get onto the photo album.

As I write this I'm  
watching storms march  
north on the sound. Some  
claps of thunder, a hint of  
hail. Dramatic.

As to this card, I've  
read from winter brother  
last month at a celebration  
of the latest acquisition at  
Cherry's Landing. Great place.  
I owe you a letter.

Much love, Carol



The **JOY** of looking  
and comprehending  
is nature's most  
beautiful gift.

—Albert Einstein



The stunning headland at Ebey's Landing on Whidbey Island is one of the most popular coastal hikes in the Pacific Northwest. Rare golden paintbrush bloom on the bluff. On the beach below is a healthy coastal lagoon. The Nature Conservancy of Washington's preserve at Ebey's Landing grew out of a remarkable land donation by Robert Y. Pratt.



*Front: Perego's Lake from the bluff  
at Ebey's Landing*

© Keith Lazelle

*Back: Golden Paintbrush*

© Peter Dunwiddie

recycled paper and soy inks

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12 May '06

Linda, hiya--

That was so good, to get the postcard from Santa Fe and think of you there. The sun on those walls and the meander of those streets back into time, drinks in the lobby of the La Fonda--damn, but Carol and I have had good times there.

This is quicker than quick--it's still dark out, and the first of the morning's Alaska cruise ships just went by--but I have a heap of stuff to take to the post office when it opens and want to get this book off to you while I have a chance. Things are breaking well for it so far. Ecstatic phone calls from the publishing house yesterday: Oprah's magazine, the eponymous(?) *O*, gave it a rave, put it up there with Dickens. Meanwhile *People* is considering a review and so we've been scurrying around for mug shots of me with absolutely no facial shadows and other persnicketies they demand.

Meanwhile my booktour is looming, and the Washington schedule is tighter than usual: fly in from Boston the morning of Thursday, July 15, supposedly in time to be interviewed on Diane Rehm's NPR show (done at WAMU), live, 11-12; I'll likely get packed around by the literary escort to sign stock in bookstores some in the afternoon, Harcourt seems to like that kind of thing; then the reading at Politics & Prose at 7. As much as I want to see you, you should not bend yourself out of shape to get to P&P or whatever, hear? I should receive more schedule details but the way publishing house publicity departments work, I may not have 'em until the weekend before I come. How about if I call you then, see how things stand with both of us? Or if you have any brainstorm in the meantime about if and how we might get together, call here.

We're both doing well; Carol is being stepped down, milligram by milligram, on the Prednisone regimen. She as ever adores this booktour stuff, can hardly wait to get in the Honda CRV for the ten-day tour of Montana stores. Whereas I am living in 1943, hanging around with my WWII characters for the *next* novel. She tells me I am working better than ever; I have no idea whether she is right, but love her so much I care not.

The post office beckons. Hugs and tickles,

*Ivan*

p.s. Almost forgot: saw Jack Gordon, 6 wks ago when we went to Pt. Townsend for a speaking gig. We thought he's doing very well, seemed more with it than the time we picked you up at his place.



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20 Jan. '07

Linda, hi--

Grand to hear from you. Yeah, it sounds like you have the letters from me isolated, so send them along, please. I've drudged in enough archives to know that originals are always better than flimsy carbons or photocopies. We do indeed have a file of friendship, don't we. Your end of the correspondence here in the file drawer is as wide as the palm of my hand.

As to your NOW material, hell, let's start at the top: write (I don't have her e-mail info; I think that's just a blizzard to folks like this anyway) to Betsy Wilson, Dean of University Libraries, Box 352900, U. of Washington, Seattle 98195-2900, and tell her I suggested she would know the pertinent member of her staff to best deal with your stuff. Betsy is a buddy of ours from one of the Paul Allen trips and beyond, and feel free to tell her I was one of the first to clap hands and shout amen when you invented the Golda poster.

Spooky gardening back there in the eternally thawed East, eh? As you've probably read, winter has roiled through here nasty in several ways, but we're in a moderate patch at the moment and we did get out and achieve some yard work this afternoon. In the rain-soft soil I drove my dad's old steel fenceposts that I lugged from Montana thirty-some years ago and strung my sugar pea trellis on them; Washington's birthday is coming, time to plant those little green buggers. My overwintered Walla Walla onions and spinach both survived our freeze sieges. You know how tough I've found it to grow tomatoes this close to the water, but damned if I didn't hit the jackpot with a variety developed at Oregon State called Longkeeper. We brought in any that weren't ripened in October, paperbagged them, they sat in there and oh so slowly changed color but didn't rot, and we're about to eat the last few.

Things go along here; Carol says she will catch you up fully in a letter soon. I'm at work on a World War II novel which will, no doubt confound every reader who loved *The Whistling Season*. Speaking of *Whistling*, the book has done wonderfully well--six printings, 50,000 in print, far and away my best-selling hardback ever. Along with it, *This House of Sky* had its best year of paperback sales ever--ever!--on its coattails and with no little help from Costco, whose buyer (another old chum whom Carol and I have known since she was pretty much a nobody at a book distributorship in Kent) made it her pick of the month in the middle of the summer. Anyway, so it goes. Keep on enjoying the latest Max--we share your fondness and respect for the original one--and the arias of life.

Love,

Ivan



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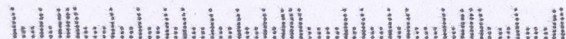
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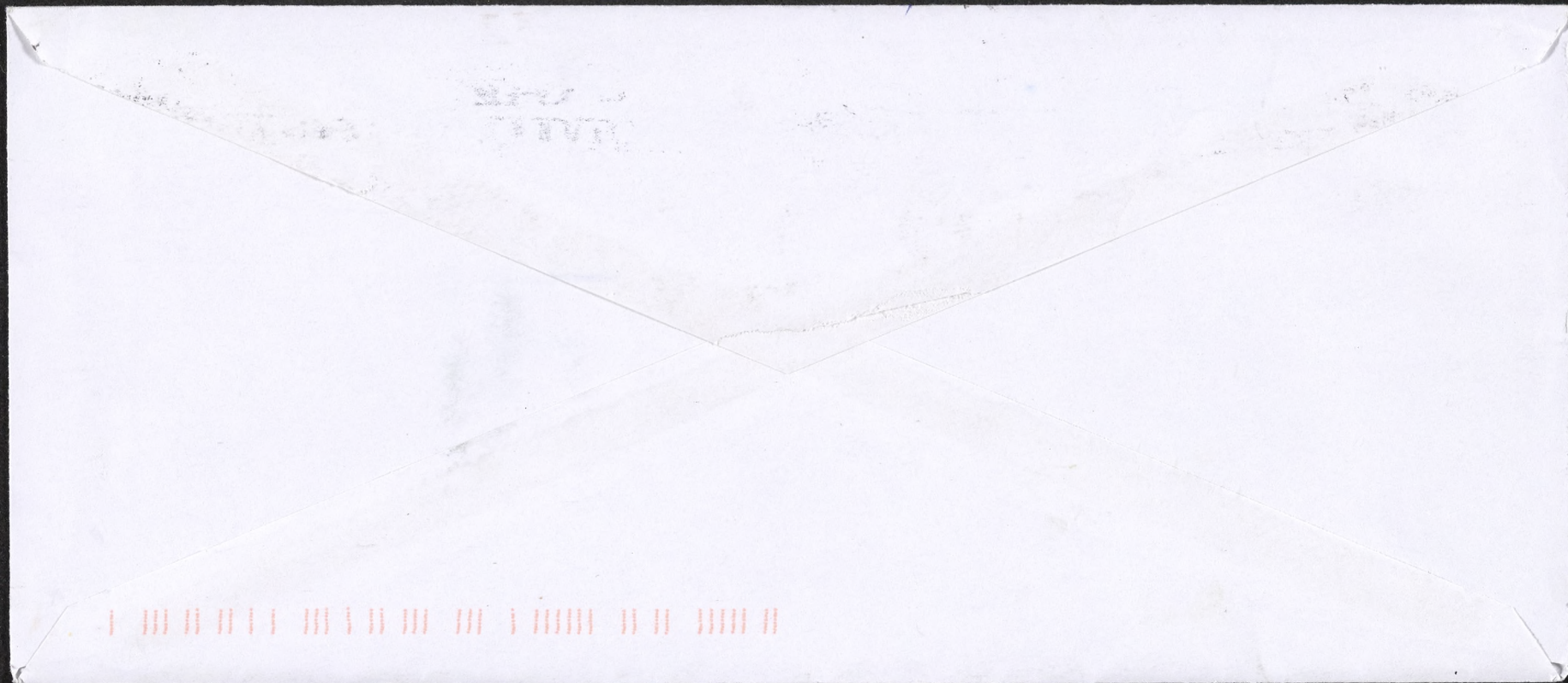


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April 21, 2007

Dear Linda

I've owed you a letter for quite some time, but I wanted to wait until I could give you an interim report on Ivan's medical progress. Yes, Ivan. Group Health followed him for more than six years because a routine physical turned up a slightly elevated blood protein level. For five years it stayed steady, then last year it began to spike. Time for a second opinion, said the hematologist, and off we went to a UW professor who works out of the Hutch and specializes in stem cell research. (This doctor, a Yale med school grad who looks like a suburban mom, is impressive.)

What Ivan has is classified as indolent myeloma -- the suspect cells are inactive; that is, they haven't turned cancerous. Ivan has never felt a twinge of pain or discomfort, but failure to act would produce multiple myeloma.

So, beginning January 1, he began a two-month regimen of potent pills: dexamethasone and thalidomide! They did, indeed, bring the monoclonal protein levels down significantly. This was followed by stem cell harvesting, two days of chemo (melphalan), then reinfusion of his own stem cells, which happened April 5. The side effects of the melphalan are challenging, dry mouth being the worst, but he was able to swallow, take his pills and ingest liquids, and so did not have to be hospitalized, as is the usual procedure. We did commute daily to the GH infusion center for about 10 days, so he could be intravenously hydrated.

Only a small number of local friends know about any of this, since Ivan doesn't want the rumor mill to get things wrong, especially in the book biz and in Montana. Feel free to share the news with Fran, but please keep it otherwise confidential.

Now we're returning toward normal, with Ivan intending to pick up his writing schedule on Monday. He's about half way through his big World War II novel.

We see his hematologist again on May 15, with a blood draw beforehand, and if there's ANY sign of monoclonal protein, he'll do a second round of stem cell reinfusion.

Meanwhile, we'll maintain a normal schedule. The Whistling Season has been a terrific success in hardback, with more than 50,000 in print and a return rate of just 9.8% thus far. The paperback is just getting to the stores, with big orders coming in from Borders, Hudson News (airports! yes) and other quarters. As well, South Dakota has adopted it as this year's state read, and Ivan will go there for their annual shindig in September, after he picks up the Stegner award from the Center for the American West in Colorado. I'm going to make an exception -- I've largely disdained air travel -- and go with him to U. Colorado. We'll also have a chance



while there to have dinner with one of the biggest landowners in the West, who has put up the money for a film option. Normally, nothing then happens, but we do have the option money already, and he has a veteran producer working the project.

For my part, I'm getting along fine, just now on low dose prednisone and hoping to get it lower. I've been doing a bit of gardening in Ivan's patch, since he wasn't supposed to go near soil while his immune system was at low ebb. He can take up duties again now.

And how are you? Have you moved yet? Give us a political update from the D.C. perspective, if you're in the mood. We diligently read the NY Times each day, conclude that the Bush bunch could not be worse, and the next day's news brings worse.

Take care.



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