Dear Mr. Doig,

Yesterday, to my delight and surprise, I not only found one of your books I had not read, Heart Earth, but discovered your strong, legible signature on its 20-year-old title page. The fact that it and two other long-treasured titles of yours cost me only seventy-five cents in a parish-church thrift shop gave me fleeting pleasure but abiding guilt. This long-overdue letter is the result.

A literate friend introduced me to Dancing at the Rascal Fair some 16 months ago when I had to serve time in a hospital bed. I have been an admiring, sometimes awe-struck reader ever since. As advance atonement for yesterday’s bargain, I have sent five, full-price copies of Dancing to those few friends and relatives who had not already fallen under your spell. I have been forced, however, to reconsider my feelings for those friends and relatives who knew your gifts and failed to share their knowledge.

You had me with the image of the “motionless tumult” of the Rockies, then the “rumpus of surging buttes” and, before I could surface for air, “the canyons of stone [carved] into the sky edge”. You have kept me word-drunk through tale after consuming tale up to that of the bartender, even after I discovered in This House of Sky how much your imagination owed to memory.

My own memory of Montana is limited to a brief trip in 1972 in aid of the reelection of a harmless and sometimes sober U.S. senator. That excursion took me one day into a valley outside Missoula and left me regretting ever since that I lacked the skills and strength of character to uproot my wife and sons and resettle in the “tranquility and grandeur” that drew a fly-fishing friend of Jared Diamond to make a second home there. Now, a year older than you, I regret that I am unlikely to see Glacier Park or your own “Two-Medicine” country.

For that reason, among others, I am greatly in your debt. You have taken me into a landscape of men and mountains I can now call not only yours but my own.

I thank you.

Alfred Friendly
Dear Ivan,

We are distant relatives, you met with me in May of last year when I was working for the Governor of the State of New York. I recall you came to Great Falls for a book signing some years ago.

My husband and I moved to Poland in 1979 after my mother, Vi, died in 1989.

I’ve been going through boxes that have been in storage for years. It’s time to become busy and very interesting. Pictures, address books, cards — bringing back many memories. My mother’s address book is a treasure of names and that leads to my inquiries. At the very back is a long list of names — all doings. I’m sure many have passed.
You may or may not know many of the men I met. A gentleman in about 1986 (or 87, 88?) and he was living in Townsend, He also showed up around that time at a lake cabin owned by friends Nancy and Joe Shaw. I think he'd been a cook for Joe on several big-game hunts—I'm getting off my subject!

I'm going to list the names as Mom has them in her address book. When you have time, I'd appreciate your mark time. The ones still living—any changes of address, I know so little about Gramma Mary's family. I have had the woman in Scotland when she was home in Scotland when she was born—Andepi and her graves are still well-kept at the graveyard in Deep Creek.
This Christmas I got a first—a Christmas card from Nita Dewal (Ruby's daughter)—She's in Great Falls—I think her husband Joe still has a bar in Craig—Her sister Georgia died 2 yrs ago—

Have enjoyed your books and have my favorites! What a gift you have!!! We even took a side trip to Butte after "Work Song". Had been years since we'd been in Butte.

Fondly—

Your distant cousin

Connie Christiansen Moss

(Le died in Great Falls 1990 (93) and Mom, Vi, died in 2009 (almost made it to 103.)
Bill & Wilma Daig  
R+4 Box 218A  
Blackfoot I 83221

Dave & Marilyn Daig  
229 S Atlantic  
Dillon MT 59725

Ed & Kay  
PO Box 663  
Livingston 59047

Blanche C Daig  
710 Holly  
Warland WY. 82401

Volgo Daig  
105 Absaroka Apt  
Livingston

Ed C Daig  
Box 55  
Livingston

A.E. Daig  
310 N 20th  
Bozeman

Ivan & Carol  
Seattle

Gordon Daig  
White Sulphur Sp.

Rabit W Daig  
Mitchell Rd  
Blackfoot  IDATTO

Kenneth R Daig  
623 Rock Creek  
Deer Lodge

Jery Daig  
Brule

Lyle Essed (anne Daig)  
123 S Livingston

I never, until seeing this address  
book, knew there were so many Daigs!  
in MT.  
I do realize I may be asking too  
much. I am also looking on line  
but am not
good on the competitor!
Dear Mr. Doig --

This is a rather long letter, with a request at the end. Quite a number of years ago, we first read your *This House of Sky*. We enjoyed it, as does everyone, for its story and, particularly, for its writing. That eventually led to a visit to Montana. Interstate 15 begins in National City, about 2 miles from our home here in Chula Vista, and ends up in the middle of Montana. I did not get lost getting to Montana! I-15 enters Montana in the foothills of the Rockies, and our first exploring was to follow the Lewis and Clark adventures in that area, ending up in Missoula, and then on to Glacier National Park. Once we left Glacier National Park, we headed east DEAD STRAIGHT on Highway 2 all across the north of Montana -- THEN we found out why Montana is called the “Big Sky” state!

A few years after that, we attended an Elderhostel program for a week in Great Falls. After the last day there, we left early the next morning and went straight to White Sulfur Springs. Besides having breakfast there, we wandered around the town, saw the bars you talked about, and visited the graves of your Dad and your Grandmother. That REALLY made your book come true for us. Then we drove to Sixteen on that “red-shale“ road you describe. We have seen such red-colored roads in Arizona, but then all the earth in the vicinity is red, so it does not seem strange. But I cannot imagine where they got the red material for that road in Montana, but I tell people about it and the fact that it was the smoothest dirt road I have ever seen. I could go sixty on it easily, except where they had dumped a fresh load. An hour later, we saw people going a lot faster than sixty on it!

When we got to Sixteen, there was a bridge over the creek, and quite a few buildings behind a locked fence. We saw some people there, but most of the “town” looked empty. As we were driving away, a big pickup was coming. Now my in-laws were farmers in Missouri, and on visits there it was customary to wave, and the locals always waved back. But this guy coming to Sixteen did NOT wave back -- he did not look happy to see us. We have heard spooky stories about gun-nuts that hang out in places like that in Montana, so we sped on our way. As we were almost back to the main dirt road, we saw a car going very fast headed south, and it was like the “desert-cars” in California where they put an air intake on top of the roof, and large lights on the roof, to drive off-road. Wow, we thought, some kid is having fun. Then we got on the main red road back to the hardtop and here comes a Mercedes going at least 90! The red dirt road is raised, of course, so there is no way to pull off -- I just stopped and let this guy zoom by. Then a minute or so later, here comes a Jaguar doing the same thing! Then a little further on, we saw a film-crew. They told us they are filming this for the History Channel. It turns out, that after we had turned off the hardtop to come to Sixteen, the Sheriffs had closed the dirt road to let them film these various cars zooming like mad over that road.
There were about 20 cars in all, from fancy ones like the Mercedes and Jaguar to the final one, a ’56 Chevy going about 40.

Well, we finally made it safely back to the hardtop, and then we drove to Ringling. Now you have to understand I was born and raised in Southern California so I had never seen a “dying” town before I was 35 or so. Sixteen and Ringling were not the first ones I had seen, but the sight still seems so sad to me. You know there was once vibrant life there, and now, no.

When we got back to Chula Vista, my wife, who headed a book club at the Library, chose This House of Sky for the group to read, so we got a second chance to read your book. When they had finished, I brought in photos I had taken in White Sulfur Springs and elsewhere, giving the group a real taste of the book.

By the way, when we were at the Elderhostel in Great Falls, we had a tour of a Hutterite colony, so your description of the “Hoots” near Dupuyer was right on.

Well, my wife has lost most of her sight now, but the Braille Institute has a great little tape player and special tapes for blind people to use. So once again, we have had the pleasure of hearing/reading your This House of Sky (while she is listening to the tape, I am reading the book since I don’t hear too well anymore -- we make quite a couple!)

Now to the point of this letter. I recently learned about Inside This House of Sky by yourself and Duncan Kelso, and acquired a copy. Perhaps because I am a fan of Ansel Adams, and probably because his photographs are only published first-rate in terms of printing quality, I was a bit disappointed that the photographs were not printed “first-rate” and the printing does not do justice to the photos. And the book says it is a First Edition, which makes it even more disappointing.

HOWEVER, I really enjoyed your “The Eye of Time,” and the many references to family photos that you still have taken over the period of the book. I’m sure these photos are not “professional,” but they are the real thing, the real people of the book. Is there any chance you might publish a book of those photos? Or, post those photos on a website? That would be the ultimate pleasure of your book. I hope you consider it.

Thanks for sharing your unique writing style with all of us. Although I have a Ph.D. in economics, I have to admit that I had to ask my wife many times what a particular word meant. My, you have a large vocabulary!

Peter Watry
81 Second Avenue
Chula Vista, CA  91910

p.watry@cox.net
Mr. Ivan Doig
17277-15th Avenue Northwest
Shoreline, Washington 98177

Dear Mr. Doig,

This past September I led a tour to my family’s ancestral Volga homeland and traveled in the company of a wonderful couple, Jerry and Kathi Teel of Shoreline, who told me about their family’s friendship with yours through Jerry’s Uncle Ward. The subject arose during a visit about mutual interests in the one-room country school experience and my comment that each year for some time now I have read several lines from a favorite author’s novel, *The Whistling Season*, to the graduates of our university’s Master’s in Teaching program which I have chaired since 2014 after serving twenty-five years as a public school teacher and administrator. In a day of so much emphasis on high stakes testing and accountability in the name of “school improvement,” I have told our candidates on many occasions that it is refreshing to consider Morrie Morgan’s examples of exciting “fresh swatches of vocabulary” and nighttime adventures “running our fingers across the stars.” I greatly identify with such episodes from my own experience.

Although I never attended a one-room school, I was raised in the shadow of one that served in retirement as a barn on my boyhood farm over in the Palouse Country. Notwithstanding the limitations of education when the Litzenberger School was in its prime, I have long thought and advocated the value of relationship building, cross-age groupings, and interdisciplinary experience known in places like Marias Coulee and rural Palouse schools. When Jerry and Kathi mentioned that you lived in the area, I decided to send off what is probably this first fan letter of my lifetime, and include the framed lines I have given to so many of our teacher candidates in the hope they won’t lose sight of these abiding values in the wake of so many challenges to the wellbeing of young people and schools across the land these days.

Also enclosed find a copy of my most recent book which offers a history of Pacific Northwest farming, a topic of lifelong interest to me along with Native American culture, regional geology, Russia and Russian, and other subjects. My late uncle, Willis Johns, was longtime chief geologist for the Montana Bureau of Mines in Butte so doubtless would have had interest like me in *Sweet Thunder* and Morrie’s later appearances in your novels. I often drive to Shoreline in my work with area schools and would be honored if you would ever consider sparing a few minutes as my guest for lunch, coffee, or whatever so I could ask you about Mr. Morgan and solicit the signature one of his student’s in my copy of that special book which I regularly commend to our students.

Thanks so much for your consideration, Mr. Doig, and I all the best for a blessed Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

Richard Scheuerman
School of Education
rscheuerman@hotmail.com
August 28, '13

Dear Mr. Doig,

I was lucky enough to "discover" your book Walk Song as I was doing my weekly task at the Kailua library book store. (That's a separate room with used books, tapes, records, etc.)

Now try to wake up for that by hastily grabbing on to your other efforts — one at a time.

My most memorable people of
Montana background were from youth growing up in the shadow of the University of Chicago, where my father, Arthur P. Scott, was a professor of history at that learned school. One of his colleagues was Dr. Norman Waleau, a charming fellow and one I got to meet often as a child, as the whole history/social science division teachers, their spouses & kids came out to our home in the Illinois countryside for the annual picnic. Norman's wife Jessie (w/gorgeous long red hair to match their beautiful Irish Setter), and 2 children were always a part of that occasion. Knowing him personally made his book, "A River Flows Through It," even more meaningful. Mahalo & aloha, Ellie Williston
Mr. Dean Song
17277 15th Ave. N.W.
Shoreline, Wash.

Dear Sir:

I'm 93 years old and this is the very first fan letter I have ever written and I also was not the best speller in our school-usually the very first to sit down in spelling bees-but any way-I'm enjoying your books-especially since I know of the area you write about and have met or thru my parents know of many of the people you write about.

My dad came to White Sulphur in 1886 or 1891 and one of his older brothers homesteaded the Ray Place - adjoining the James Stewart on the old Faulkner Place.

He and James Stewart were partners at one time. My older brother was Alvon Ray and late a brother, Nick (run armed) with a book for a hand. A brother, Frank and a brother Ed along with my grandpa settled on the homestead.

Grandpa and Ed went back to Kentucky before long. and had went to work for J. Dol Wilson. He told me about some cowboys that...
person of a band of sheep with Parsoned dog. 

opera and at one time shot a herder.
Campsite had to be when he rode for 2 days.

He also told me about an old abandoned
homestead he often stopped to water his horse
and get a drink.

He said a short ways away a herder had
a band of sheep and when the camp tender
went out the herder was gone—his horses
and dog were there—but the herder was never found.

The next time he stopped to water his horse
the well had been dynamited, he said I just
know that herder is in that well.

I don't know where that was—he never
said.

Had moved us all to the Kingston (Kinnear) Place
in 1927. This was then owned by Fred McDonald
and you probably know where it is. Ed Hugue
was one of our neighbors as was Ab Robinson.

I started school at 5 years old in the 1 room
schoolhouse on Male Creek. One teacher 8 grades.

From there we went to the Kinnear
Place on shares for Jim Stewart ½ the
Calder ½ the horses.

In the winter mom and we kids lived
on ½ mile and my oldest brother Vernon
lived on the ranch and feed the cattle.

My dad built the 1st overshot hay
stack in that area—I was just right age to
drive slacker team—I was 7 then.
We then left the Faulkner place, lived in town when I was in the 3rd grade. I knew Rose Gordon well and ran errands for her when she had the restaurant by Berry Savage and I sold papers for Bob Gordon who was smashed most always.

I remember the hotel stuck out in the street.

There was a grocery near it and not very far down from it was Pete Wiley saloon galette farther. The butcher shop, either owned by a Negro line in Dryden or formed a flat piece of ground on the river behind the building the hotel was on.

Charles Sherman owned the hotel and also had a ranch...

On down the street was Fred Meekalda and the drugstore and the "Plunge" and springs sat all by themselves—a rail road ran up the flat.

The kids all knew Dick Ringling when he came to town it was ice cream time at the drugstore.

We lived across from the river below the Ringling home—at the very end of the bridge and Dick Ringling's daughter had a pony and a wicker pony cart she used to drive across the bridge and give ice cream to her home and me. Ringling always had us sit on the lawn to eat our ice cream.
at that time she seemed to be a very lovely lady.

Abbot ran the dairy and his daughter Florence was my 1st grade teacher on Hule Creek.

Across from the Sherman Hotel was a saloon, the movie house, & saloon ran by Slim Sours. The revenue cut him chopped up his bar and everything in it and Slim got 'Brigance. Below it was a Chinese Restaurant and at the very end Rose Hardung Restaurant.

I had worked the summer of 1928 with Bob, well grading County Roads, and then we went to work for Manager - Harold Britton ran the Manager Place. That would have been the year 1929. I remember the stock market crash and how the adults talked about. That year the "Baby Austin" car came out. Had some one in front of "Pete's Place" and told us how little it was.

Across the Street from the Sherman Hotel was the fire bell on a large wooden frame and on up the street was the old "Gersy" barn when Bob Gordon used to stagger and lie up on an old pallet he had.

Later we moved from down below the ringing tone to a house 1 block down from the Castle.

A fellow by the name of Sebby who had logging house lived almost the street he used to
Give my brother and I 10$ to clean his barn once a week.

Rose Gordon's house was next door and a block below was Mrs. Afro - who had a talking Moppie; on the same block was Charlie Sherman's house. Mrs. Sherman was a lovely lady.

I believe a stable was built where the old Silo Barn was.

Mr. Abbott that ran the Ringling Dairy showed me where they kept the circus animals when they passed through there.

My Dad and oldest brother knew your Grandfather and your Dad well - One heard the talk about seeing one of the Worge or talking to one of the Worge many times and of the Ringers - and how almost everybody was mad at Rankin -

The big Bellows in the Castle Collector - donated by Baker - came from the Ring on Place and as a kid I have pumped it for Dad many many times.

Reading your books especially "House of Sky" I can shut my eyes and see it all clear as can be.

In my mind as sharp as a tack - health is pretty darn good. The odometer has one half of lot of miles on it - but Mr. Wong I think after seeing the movie "A River Runs Through" your story of "House of Sky" would be a
Story that would be a picture of a life time.

I've been back to White Sulphur 3 times since 1930 but with never enough time—and now that I can no longer travel—I'll keep reading Van Houg books and dream.

I hope there hasn't been too boring for you and God Bless you and yours.

Monde A Ray
Dear Mr. Clapp--

Sorry it's taken some days to respond to your generous email via Mary Ann Gwinn--we've had some medical whimwhams in our household lately, but we're getting over those--and yes, I'd very much appreciate hearing the family stories you mention, if you're willing to share them with a light-fingered writer. My wife's e-mail address on this, which I hide behind in probably not very effective camouflage, is the way to reach me, unless you prefer surface mail. (It sometimes gets my attention faster than email, which I mostly avoid because of my writing schedule.) The address: Ivan Doig, 17277 15th Ave. NW, Shoreline WA 98177. Either way, thanks for you generosity in thinking of my and my work.

respectfully,
Ivan Doig

p.s. Just occurred to me: the Back of Beyond bookstore in Moab, Utah, (backofbeyondbooks.com) is handling signed--and personalized, if wanted--mint condition first editions of my books, if that's the sort of direction you're going. Otherwise, as you know, you might troll something from the Internet.
Dear Mr. Doig,

I've decided it's time to send a little note of thanks not for keeping me tied to my Montanan roots, but reminding me of my own history every time I read one of your books. It started back in 1979 when I was living in Seattle working as the financial controller at a shipyard called Marco located on West Commodore Way on the ship canal. I suppose I've always been a little fanatic about selling Montana as the last best place wherever in the world I might be. One of the directors of Marco was an old gentleman named John Cannon. He was the former owner of Cummins Northwest and I assumed he had considerable wealth. I tend to gravitate to old personalities anyway, but in any case I liked his sage advice about the pending corporate doom at Marco. This was well before my departure from Marco in 1989 and well before the actuality of business cessation of shipbuilding at Marco about 10 years ago. Anyway, John gave me a copy of your ‘This House of Sky’ in November 1979 with a note... “Dale – Thought you might enjoy this!”

Enjoyment was an understatement. It was like a picture of my past not only with the physical descriptions of home, but with the emotional descriptions of an aging and failing father surrounded by indescribable beauty. My paternal heritage was my rationale for who I was growing up in the Gallatin Valley. My great grandfather had brought his wife and 4 children to Montana in 1893 from the Groningen area of The Netherlands. My grandfather was 4 years old at the time (he was the youngest with a brother as the eldest and two older sisters between them. The homestead dairy located near Amsterdam and Churchill Montana was of course deeded to the eldest brother, so my grandfather made his way as an owner of a hardware store in Manhattan, and later as a mechanic and welder after losing the store due primarily to events of the Great Depression. His marriage to Grietje Van Der Burg kept much of the Dutch heritage, as she was born in another largely Dutch U.S. community in Orange City, Iowa. She came to Montana to become the first schoolteacher at the Dutch school in Churchill, now known as Manhattan Christian School.

I learned about everything important to me from my grandfather, as my dad was always too busy for anything except work.... “this boy’s got too much work to do to fool around with that”. I was also fortunate that my grandfather was kicked out of the Dutch Reform church because he was found to be driving up the Gallatin on Sundays for picnics and fishing (violation of whatever resting on the Sabbath was supposed to include). The elders of the church apparently said they would take him back if he asked forgiveness. He was even more upset claiming God provided the Gallatin and the fish and he was closer to God up the Gallatin than he was in church. My grandparents remained good Christians but attended something called the Grace Bible Church in Bozeman after that. This pretty much kept our family out of the confines of the Calvinist way of life. Anyway, fishing, bowling, morning coffee and doughnuts, chess and having a little ‘medicine’ in a shot glass before bed became my ideal way of living. Before he died my Grandfather told me he was uncertain about the benefits of heaven, as there would be so many people there and he really hated crowds.

My mother was born and raised in Anaconda. There were four children. My grandmother Vogel had been sent out from Wisconsin to work before finishing the 8th grade. She married a painter (also German) named Bruckner. He apparently died of poisons from the paint, and my grandmother then married a Swede John Anderson out of desperate need of financial
support. My grandmother had two boys (Herbert and Clarence) from Bruckner, and a daughter and son from Anderson (my mother Helen and Robert the youngest). I learned later from Uncle Bob that his father’s name had originally been Hoegblum or something similar that was difficult to translate at the time of entry to the US so many Swedes became Anderson ... not sure about this but I never talked much to my grandfather and had no curiosity about his origins. He was mean and lazy in my opinion. He walked to work every day to the Anaconda Company machine shop a few blocks away from the home on Birch Street. He had a large goiter and had tobacco or snuff juice dripping from his mouth and nose. I don’t think he drank, or if so it was out of the open. He sat in a rocking chair and ate cake for breakfast. They were not church goers, but my mother started attending a Pentecostal Church where she was ‘saved’. She then got me grandmother to go with her. I remember attending on one of our visits to Anaconda and was amazed to find black people and lots of music including piano, marimbas, drums and guitars. My mother must have learned to play piano there because in thinking back she had a way of playing chords that were not precise. I thought it was lack of music reading ability but as I grew older and started listening to Thelonious Monk I started enjoying my mother’s playing more. I was very upset when my two sisters wouldn’t let me play the Monk recording of Blessed Assurance at her funeral. I listen to it often. I tried again when Dad died, but the best I could do was have one of the church pianists play the song...not the same, but it’s my memory anyway.

The interesting thing about my maternal grandmother is that education was ‘golden’ to her and that is the only goal she established for the kids. My uncle Herb went from Anaconda to Purdue and then to Cornell where he ultimately was the Poultry Husbandry department head and had a building named after him. My uncle Clarence went to Montana State and had a degree and masters in electrical engineering and spent his career working for the Montana Power Company (mostly in Butte but later in Lewistown and Missoula). My mother graduated from Montana State and got her masters in education and was a teacher. My uncle Bob graduated from University of Washington and got his masters in aeronautical engineering from Cornell (didn’t want to be short changed by the big brother). He worked his entire career at Boeing.

Sorry about the diversion. Your descriptions of the landscapes of your early childhood are so real to me as I traveled the terrain on foot, on horseback and in pickups. My dad worked for Gallatin County as the maintenance foreman, but his passion when he wasn’t working was driving the county roads and trails in our area. I also went to school with friends who lived at least near where you grew up. Jim Moore remains a good friend (I attended Bozeman public schools K-3, and then was the new guy in Belgrade from 4th grade through high school. Jim told me you had been in the area and talked to some people including him and maybe Frank Morgan or another neighbor. I’m not sure you know it but Jim is now the manager of the MSU Sheep Institute in Stanford. He still is shearing sheep (manual clips rather than electric for what reason I’m uncertain... seems he said it had a better result). I suggested it would be fun to take some pictures of some of the old sheep ranchers and barns during his shearing visits, but I think it’s a bit like your character Del needing Tom Harry to introduce him to the Fort Peck Dam workers... and Jim was about as enthused at my idea as Tom was in the beginning.
But here's an interesting story about the sheep around Stanford. On my last visit to see Jim I was totally amazed at the number of windmills. I stopped to take some pictures and within 5 minutes a pickup with two military boys showed up and asked what I was doing. I told them I was taking photos of the windmills. They said 'we're going to have to ask you to stop and give us the film.' I said there wasn't any film as my Hasselblad was digital. They said they wanted me to delete all the pictures. Beats the hell out of me what they thought I was photographing, but maybe there was a silo I didn't see. Well, when I got to Jim's place I asked about the hundreds of windmills and he said it had been a big deal in the Judith Basin. I asked if there was any opposition to the installations, and he said there had been some environmentalists who felt it was dangerous to birds and the noise could bother the sheep. Jim said they went to a few of the ranchers who were leasing the land for the windmills and asked if there were any problems with the sheep. One rancher apparently said 'hell no, the critters have never had so much shade before and they just rotate around with the shadow from the tower to stay in shade all day'. Jim keeps asking me when I'm moving back to Montana. Unfortunately my wife Janene (although born and raised in Billings) does not have the magnet pull to return. Anyway, I told Jim I was trying to get Janene to agree to a cabin or something but they were so damn expensive I couldn't justify it. He said, "Hell Dale, you can buy the house across the street here for twenty thousand". It sounded good to me. They also seem to have a lot of Hutterites in the neighborhood with ample supplies of good poultry and eggs and young workers if needed. He called them the Hoots. We ran into a few of the young girls at the bar.. they were drinking cokes.

So now I'm jumping back to the early 60's again (I graduated in the Belgrade class of 63). I'm assuming we will have a 50 year reunion sometime this year. I think we had a class of about 28, and maybe we've lost about 5 or 6 so far.

As you know everyone over the age of 10 worked at something in the summer. It was harder for the town kids and the farm kids had no choice. I didn't share my lawn mowing also saving up for model planes and boats. When I was a freshman my sister's boyfriend was Roger Schell (now her husband Dr. Schell). His family had moved from Eastern Montana (near Baker) and had purchased a farm outside of Belgrade. However, it was too small to make a great living and Roger's father Henry found out about a lot of land that could be available to lease from Jeanette Rankin. The land was located North and East of Ringling on the Martinsdale road. It was all undeveloped land with range cows the only real business. Henry determined that the sagebrush could be mowed down with a 'gyro mower', which was hauled behind a tractor and had a large strong rotary blade that would cut and chop the sagebrush. It had about a 7 foot diameter so clearing hundreds or thousands of acres was not simple or quick. To set up operations Henry bought a trailer that would sleep about 6 people. He hired old friends from the Baker area (Arnie and Dorothy Kartch) to manage the project. They also had an 18 month old son. Henry offered to hire me for the summer for fifty cents and hour. I was to keep track of my time in a little book and at the end of summer the hours would be added and wages paid. The official starting time was after breakfast and devotions (essentially getting out of the trailer) and ended upon return to the trailer. Noon meals were generally driven to wherever we were by Dorothy. So I was typically working 14 or 15 hours per day (except Sundays). There was an artesian well with hot mineral water (I guess it's from the same geothermal geography resulting in the name White Sulphur Springs), but no electricity or plumbing. The hot pool about 100 yards from the trailer was
our daily bath, although the soap would not foam or dissolve in the water. The out house was the first project and was large enough and deep enough to last the few years of the project. Roger, who was an electrical engineering student at MSU, built a small waterwheel and put in a generator that had enough power to run a radio in the trailer, but that was it. Much of the sage brush clearing was done by the time I arrived in May 1960, which was fine with me as the mower spit large pieces of sage wood and the tractor driver was in danger. We always wore protective eye goggles and shirts were worn even if it was hot to avoid big cuts and abrasions from flying sage. It was a wonderful smell and I still consider the beautiful blue green sage color as my favorite. I still find myself taking photos of sage and old fences. My job took a fortunate turn when fencing began. The spring planting of barley created new smells for the range cattle owned by the Rankins, and it was an edible delight. So keeping these range cows out of the new barley fields until they could be fenced became a full time job. I would saddle up Babe, a horse brought from Eastern Montana that was the transport to school for the Schell kids before the move to the Gallatin Valley. Babe and I became good friends and I enjoyed moving the cattle across highway 12 to the West into 16 Mile country. Babe didn’t like the cows much, and liked to take little bites from their arse if they didn’t mosey along fast enough. If I was on Babe the cows became more aggressive and were not frightened. My routine was to move the cows up the gulches and gullies for an hour or two where they would find new Spring grass and forget the barley. While they would graze in a downwardly direction I would get off Babe and let her graze with the bit on. I would just lay and look at the clouds and horizon. Within an hour or more the cows were going around us and I would start over further down the hills. My only problem was following Highway 12 North back to the Martinsdale road where I would cross 12 and head East to the trailer. About every 5 minutes a car would go by on 12 and about 1 in 4 drivers felt compelled to honk their horn, which consistently created a big buck or two from Babe, and I seldom stayed in the saddle.

One afternoon I met up with an old grizzle faced man on a rather bony underfed horse. He asked if I lived in the trailer on the Martinsdale road and I said yes. I thought he was some old hired hand from one of the ranches in the area. He said he worked for the Rankins. He was curious about Dorothy and asked about her. I was too young to consider Dorothy as ‘interesting’ from a male perspective. The cowboy asked me my name and I told him. He said his name was Roy. He also had a dog that looked undernourished, but appeared to be a shepherders breed with light blue eyes. He was more friendly than I would have suspected, but I noticed a few large marble sized enlargements on his skin, and after looking closer I knew it was ticks that had become engorged in blood. I asked Roy why he hadn’t taken care of these tick bites, and he said something like ‘I don’t give a rats ass’. I started bumping into Roy almost every day. I think he was watching for me and would approach me along the trail. Eventually our talks included where he stayed, and how much he was paid. He told me there were about a dozen men, all parolees from the Montana State Prison in Deer Lodge, working from a bunkhouse 5 or 6 miles from our trailer. Roy’s language would have eliminated him from Belgrade High School within the first day, but I found it pretty interesting. He was so interested in Dorothy that I was a little worried. He would say ‘you know whose pants I want to get into?’.. and my only reply would be ‘yeh, but she’s married and has a little kid’. He also showed me his homemade pistol made from pipe and wood.. used single shot .22 rounds. He said he needed it to kill occasional cows who got broken legs or busted up from the bulls that would be turned loose on the cows each Spring. I didn’t
know whether to let Arnie and Dorothy know, but felt it was the right thing to do. But rather than be worried about Roy’s behavior both Arnie and Dorothy thought I should see if he knew the Lord, and maybe give a testimony about being a Christian. This would be near impossible for me since my level of belief was shallow at best. But they started asking me each night whether I had met up with Roy and whether I had my chance to testify. So one day I just thought I would get it done. I simply asked Roy if he knew anything about being a Christian. My recollection is he quickly replied…“goddamn right, I got saved 20 years ago in a gospel mission in Pocatello, Idaho.” There were no esses of bees in his language, only the real thing. Criminetlies! Another interesting thing about the work was the daily prayers for rain. My sister still prays. A few years back I was at her house in Livingston and she asked a blessing before dinner. She too asked the Lord for rain. I remember saying to her to forget asking God for rain, and she said why. I said ‘God knows we’re all smart enough to know it ain’t gonna rain in Montana in July, and we know if we want rain we should move to Seattle’. I added to show I wasn’t a total lost cause..."if you want God to answer a prayer, ask to become a better person than you were yesterday”. This is a prayer that we can actually work on by ourselves and maybe get an answer.

Well I got a raise during the next summer to 75 cents per hour. I never saw Roy again, and wondered if he found a new trail to follow. Oh, when I had asked about the pay they got he said they had all the blue jeans and cigarettes they needed and were fed twice a day. I wonder how the ACLU would view Jeannette Rankin’s employment practices?

One more story you might be interested in hearing, which brings us back to the Marco Shipyard and my reading of your first book. The owner of the shipyard was Peter G. Schmidt. He is the grandson of the founder of the Olympia Brewery. At the time Olympia was having all kinds of financial difficulty, and had recently acquired Hamms and Lone Star Breweries. It was about the same time as the start of the Red Hook brewery in Ballard, so I talked him into having lunch at the Ballard Athletic Club where they were serving Red Hook. He took one smell and said ‘Yuk, you can smell the hops’.. He took one sip and had a terrible look on his face and told the waiter to take it back and bring him an Oly. Peter said this brewery would be out of business within a few months. We many times ate lunch at Louie’s near the Ballard Bridge and the only allowed alcoholic drink was an Oly..just one.

The story is about how the Olympia Brewery got its start. Peter told me his grandfather was working at a brewery in Deer Lodge as a young man. I’m not certain of his position but it must have been in management, because he was nominated to join a committee of Montanans that were given the responsibility of recommending the design of the new State Capital for Helena (guess this means about 1889). The State of Washington had already constructed their capital in Olympia and so a visit was deemed necessary. Peter indicated his grandfather decided to get his hair cut during the Olympia visit, and that in speaking with the barber about the brewing business and the difficulty in finding pure water the barber told him about the great pure artesian wells of Tumwater. He apparently took samples and had them shipped to Prague where water purity tests were highly developed. He received word back that the Tumwater samples were the purist they had ever tested. As a result of this, Peter’s grandfather moved his entire family back to Germany where he completed a brewmaster course of study, and then moved back to Washington state to start the Olympia Brewery, with the well know saying on every bottle or can “It’s the Water”...
Oh, and Montana adopted the same design for its State Capital Building.

The other thing I learned about the brewing business (Peter remained on the Olympia board of directors until its closure) was the cost information. Namely, the highest cost per bottle or can of Olympia was Advertising, followed by the container cost, and then followed by distribution costs. I concluded I prefer to drink beer that is not advertised and if it is only available in barrels at a pub I'm fine with that. I like to think quality ingredients and well paid staff will result in me being a happy customer.

So Mr. Doig, thanks for writing This House of Sky which arranged and cemented my puzzle personality into a coherent lover of Montana, even from our distant homes in Germany, Singapore, Maine, England and of course Seattle. And thanks for telling your stories (fictional only in part) from a Montana perspective. My son recently moved to Missoula after marrying a gal from there, and he sent a recent winter photo near their home. I texted him asking if it was Rattlesnake Crick... and his text back said no it was Rattlesnake Creek. I texted him again that people in Missoula must be more sophisticated than where I grew up..., and he responded maybe I just had a smart ass son....to which I replied 'a lucky smart ass son' .

Bartender's Tale has me thinking of how we say things...

Harlowton..... Always known as Harlow Town to me and my friends 
Absarokee or Absaroka... Always just Ab Sorkee 
Squaw Creek, Willow Creek, Dry Creek... Always Crick 
Sacagawea... just like it looks Sack a ja wee’ uh Coyote... Kai Oat 
Turns on a nickel.... My mom goofing up the saying 
6 of one, 7 of another... My mom goofing it up again 
What the sam hill.... My dad being polite 
Jiminy Christmas or jumpin johosaphats... too polite for my dad 
Crimenetli.... My friend Paul Newby’s favorite

All the best for 2013..... we have an apartment near the Public Market so if you’re up for a beer or coffee and a little Montana memory jogging (closest I get to exercise) let me know. I'd be proud to meet you.

Dale Alberda
1916 Pike Place #12
Seattle, WA 98101
414 791-7279
dbandja@mac.com
Oh, and Montana adopted the same design for its State Capital Building.

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All the best for 2013..... we have an apartment near the Public Market so if you’re up for a beer or coffee and a little Montana memory jogging (closest I get to exercise) let me know. I’d be proud to know you.

Dale Alberda
414 791-7279
Dear Ivan Doig,

Thank you for taking the time to craft such a thoughtful reply to my request: it was by far the kindest rejection notice I’ve ever received. I can’t tell you how pleased I was to hear your high opinion of the Pharos list. It’s a struggle getting recognition for these books and to hear such praise from a writer I admire, well, it makes it all worthwhile.

I certainly understand your position and wish you the very best of luck with the novel you’re currently wrestling with. I look forward to reading it when it releases and if you’re doing signings at any local shops, I’ll make it a point to stop by and introduce myself. And of course, should you ever find yourself searching for a favorite book only to find it’s fallen out of print the invitation is always open.

All the best,

[Signature]
Dear Mr. Doig,

I am enclosing a copy of my album, "That Evening Sun" as a way of saying thank you for your wonderful books. In our media world of stale, cluttered mediocrity, your work is like a breath of fresh and sustainable air.

Your publishers are very kind to send this on to you. I thank them.

I have "The Sea Runners", "Dancing at the Rascal Fair", "Bucking the Sun", and "The Whistling Season." I look forward to collecting the others as well.

I'm sharing my music. You would not find me easily as I am very "under the radar." My music is somewhat thematic and is inspired by this region of the Blue Ridge in Southwest, Virginia. If you take the time to read the liner notes you will see how my tunes came to be. The title comes from my favorite William Faulkner short story as well as my favorite time of day.

Sometimes titles come from stories that I hear or even just the turn of a phrase. "Fresh on my mind are your wonderful words: "Spring flirting on the tattered arm of Winter"...." the wind practicing for Winter"...."the tinted light of memory".... These connect viscerally with me.

I hope this is not an intrusion. It's a bit daunting to write to you but I wanted to send this gift.

Thank you for giving us your people and their stories.

Thom Moore
Jan 27, 2014

Dear Ivan and Carol,

I hope 2014 is treating you and your loved ones well. Quite a few changes have happened in our lives.

Kathy took all of us to Ukraine in July and studied her parents' country. We had a terrific time and K plans to go back to get more material for her book. My favorite places were Odessa, Chekhov's house in Yalta, the site of Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade."

Kathy's mother died Oct. 19, so much of the fall was spent planning two memorial services. Kathy's siblings have kind of dropped out, so she was on her own. Both the service in Portland and the second in Maryland went well.

Elena came back after nine months in Tunisia and she got a job at Princeton University working for the Woodrow Wilson program in an office that deals with emerging countries—their economies and governments. She will travel two weeks each to Malaysia, Morocco, Serbia, Palestine and Estonia.

Kira is working at Starbucks and going back to Portland State for an MA in History. Elena finished her MA in International Studies at Rutgers.

I have been teaching half-time for Pacific University but have cut back winter semester due to an accident two days before Christmas. I fell down the basement steps, conked my head on the cement floor and spent five days in ICU and the Trauma Unit. Fractures to the skull, bleeding on the brain, a bad right shoulder and left ear hearing problems. It's going to take me a while to get back to speed, but I've got good doctors and therapists.

Anyway, that's why you didn't hear anything from me at holiday time. I still sleep a lot (the brain healing itself) and don't drive. Have therapy—speech and physical 3 per week.

Kathy helped Elena settle in at her new job and Kira filled in as my attendant, chief cook, and bottle washer. We're fortunate to have two wonderful girls.

We enjoyed hearing from you and catching up a little. Look forward to a get-together before too long.

All the best, Craig and Kathy

I'm still planning to do the workshop for David. Imagine I can hold up for a day by then. Hope all went fancy with the new book. Bryce Andrews, a student of mine at Whitman, has a new book out "Badluck Way." Hope your tests keep coming in good. Your friends—Craig Kathy
Ivan,

Enjoyed meeting you and Carol at the Stanford Seminar this summer and meant to write earlier to say thanks. Now I've read *This House*, and my thank-you becomes fan mail. Don't know when I have enjoyed or have been touched so much as I was by your book. Makes me want to read *Silent Spring*, because, if your book finished second to anything, it must be worth reading.
I did a lot of my growing up in the high desert of Eastern New Mexico near Tucumcari at a lake formed when my dad and the Corps of Engineers dammed the confluence of the Canadaree and Conchas rivers. Sixty miles from town, 6-8 families in land that had been part of the Bell Ranch – then one of the largest cattle ranches in the country. I lived with surrogate grandparents – old country folk from Tennessee who had found jobs when the dam was built and Aegid.

Many, many wonderful memories of Aunt Katie and Uncle Delmar came back to me.

Thanks — Hans Kramer
Tom & Carol -

Thanks for letting me invade your home for another picture of the Beach. Also for being so patient on the end talk. The show is coming beautifully I will have more time soon.

Bob
Sunday 4:30pm - 2am
Monday-Saturday 11:30am - 2am

Hours

Fax: 206.623.8267
tel: 206.623.4450

Seattle Washington 98101

1401 Third Avenue

WILD GINGER
asian restaurant & satay bar
Follow to 3rd Avenue: Take Union Street exit.

From 520: Head west to Seattle, exit onto 1st Avenue. Follow to 3rd Avenue.

From I-5 Southbound, take Union Street exit.

Turn left, follow to 3rd Avenue.

From 1st Avenue.

Follow to 3rd Avenue.

From I-5 Southbound.

Turn left, follow to 3rd Avenue.

Follow to 3rd Avenue.

From I-5 Northbound, take 1st Avenue.

Follow to 3rd Avenue.

Driving directions:

206.623.4450
Seattle, Washington 98101
14th and 3rd Avenue
Dear Mr. Doig,

Not knowing if you will ever see this letter, I will not go into a lot of detail. I have been wanting to write to you for over two years. However, your address has been difficult to come up with. (Hope this address gets this letter to you.)

I have enjoyed your books immensely. Because of your books, a visit to Williamsburg and Monticello, my wife, Evelyn, and I took a tour of your state of Montana. In fact, we visited many places you have been. I was hoping to run into you during our trip out west in July of 1999. We were at Valier, spent the night at Conrad, back tracked to Dupuyer and met a Mr. Jones at Choteau. Mr. Jones informed us his son was a classmate of yours in high school. We also met an elderly lady at Charlie Russell's home who knew you. She was a tour guide and knew you in Seattle when she lived there. We also had a wonderful tour guide at the State Capital who spoke very highly of you. She mentioned you read stories to children at the library when you were in town.

From your writings I have concluded we are the same age. In fact, I had Osgood– Schlatter disease as a youth, like you. The big difference between us I grew up a city kid. I did spend a few weeks each summer between the age of six and sixteen,
on my great aunt's farm. However now as I look back, I should have spent more weeks and more years on the farm.

We kept a journal of our trip that summer. It is full of a wonderful vacation. I could go on and on. It was the best vacation we ever had. Three days in the Black Hills with my former minister and eleven more days in Montana and Wyoming.

If you do receive this letter maybe we could correspond. I would consider it a real thrill to hear from you.

Very truly yours,

Paul C. Burrier
1728 Delano Road
Chillicothe, OH
45601 - 8440
December, 2001
Seattle, Washington

Dear Carol and Dean

SEASON’S GREETINGS! May your holiday celebration be a happy time and involve those who are near and dear to you. I look forward to receiving your greetings.

We are anticipating another family reunion. Ruth Jean and Bob Shaw are flying down from Anchorage and their son Doug is flying in from Washington, D.C. and they will be staying with me. My other grandson, Shannon Inkpen and his wife Rita will also be flying in from Washington, D.C. to join his parents Mary and Rob in Renton, Washington.

My lifetime partner is missed in so many ways. I’m very thankful for the joy and happiness Ruth brought to the family and me during our many years together.

The Shaws invited me to come and visit in late May. While Bob made a field trip on the Memorial Day weekend, Ruth Jean and I visited Denali, Fairbanks, and Copper City by automobile. We went through two passes where there was snow on the ground and no foliage on the trees and brush. We visited a museum on the U. of Alaska campus in Fairbanks with its prehistoric animal relics. Shaw’s yearling moose entertained us by its various appearances including when it bedded down on their green lawn.

The tragedy of September 11 still haunts me! It certainly leaves us with many questions and the dilemma of how to effectively handle and respond to the provocation. Certainly there is no easy solution.

On September 12, I awoke with eyes that no longer worked together and I was seeing a double image. I saw my doctor the next day and then cancelled my Holland American cruise to the southern Alaska ports. The cruise involved church friends and was to start on the 16th.

My doctors recommended MRI brain scan. The MRI did not define the cause but indicated that everything was in proper order. The double vision problem disappeared in six weeks. I’m very glad to be seeing a single image and to have normal depth perception again.

Reading has always been one of my pleasures and it has been nice to resume this activity. I enjoy participation in two book clubs. I play bridge on Mondays at a senior center and I’m working on improving my bidding ability.

November rains have helped to replenish our water and hydroelectric reservoirs. There is so much to be thankful for. How lucky I’ve been to see the complete development of the automobile, the airplane, the refrigerator, the computer and many other things.

Shannon and Rita received their Masters degrees from George Hopkins University this year. Doug continues his work on his Doctorate degree at Georgetown University. I’m very proud of them.

May the New Year be a time of contentment and happiness for all of us.

With love,

Jerold
June 22-63

Dear Mr. Doig,

I first read "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" for the story -

then, I read it again, for the words -

now, I read it, as a poet, for it's beauty -

"Beauty" has been an operative word
for a long time
and for me - a mysterious, mystical
word - the words are close to
one definition of "beautiful" -

I will read it again for the story -

Thank you - Thank you - Thank you!

Gwendoline Young
Dear Mr. Dog,

I just finished, for the second time, the reading of your extraordinary book, "This House of Sky." I'm sure many famous and eloquent people have praised your book. But I can only say that you have touched my heart with your story.

To have known strong, resourceful, and loving people who allowed you to grow up and be your own person is rare. I think you can ask for more in life. How fortunate you are to have loved it.

You may be interested to know that my husband and I read your book out loud to each other. I could not finish reading the book (I was crying) so he read the last few pages for me.

I look forward to reading your other books.

Best wishes,

Bobbie Sternke
September 28

Dear Ivan and Carol,

What, you might ask, ever happened to the Ackermans’ trip to Seattle.
In a word, it’s been detoured.
Two events have intervened.
First, our daughter Laurel (the oldest), who lives in Cambridge, has decided to leave her husband. We were not surprised this marriage did not last and wondered all along why she decided to marry him. Leaving that aside, however, we felt that we needed to be in place – and not 2,900 miles away – to give support as necessary. There are two children, ages 3 and 1, and a helping hand from Grandma and Grandpa, even if only to have everyone come stay overnight and go look at the boats in the harbor. The stress level is fading, but we still feel we should remain on call.

Second, Carol’s brother, in west suburban Chicago, has contracted pancreatic cancer, which as you probably know has a very low survival rate. We’ve been out to see him twice in the past couple of months and will be going again, I am sure. United Airlines wins, either way.

We still do have West Coast plans. Son Steve is in San Francisco and he and his girlfriend are all but expecting us toward the end of the winter. We may go to San Diego, where we rented a Mission Beach cottage for a week in March three years ago and really enjoyed the Pacific breezes. If the same cottage is available, we may do it again before heading to San Francisco. I’m not sure we’ll have stamina left to hit Seattle on the same circuit, but it’s a maybe, if the timing is right and your kind invitation is still open.

On other matters: I agree with the paid critics that Whistling Season is near the top of the Doig pyramid. If I had to vote for all-time winner I’d still stick with House of Sky, because I feel I have a place in it. But there’s plenty of contention, and I still think Bucking the Sun is a movie in waiting.

My mantra (shared) during my last years at the Globe was that I might be slower, but I was better. Going back over clips (online) I see that I was right. Now I seem more often to be a wordsmith for hire – although the pay is quite good on the current job, for a group at MIT that promotes entrepreneurship, and funded by the Kauffman Foundation.

Excuse please my reverting to Microsoft Word, but with my handwriting more deplorable than ever, it’s a lifesaver.

We’re still hoping to see you – sometime.

Thanks again for your invitation, and stay well....

Jerry and Carol

P.S. I never met the word “teacherage” before. Nice one.
4642 Mulberry Woods Circle  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
July 19, 2006

Dr. Ivan Doig  
c/o Harcourt Inc.  
6277 Sea Harbor Drive  
Orlando, FL 32887-6777

Dear Dr. Doig:

After relishing every page of your most recent work, *The Whistling Season*, and regretting there is no more of it to read, I am inspired to send along my gratitude for your latest creation. This is done with humility, for how can one have the nerve to try to express individual feelings to one so gifted with the English language as you?

The pervading thread of the love of language, both English and Latin, so resonated with my own fascination (even though trained as a chemist), that I felt a communion at this level. Another factor, however, is my having been the youngest of three brothers, although thankfully raised by both a mother and father. Even though we grew up in suburban Chicago, my older brother embarked on a life of cattle ranching in western South Dakota at the age of 18. Being several years younger, I spent my summers with him, first when he was bachelor. The bond between us is the strongest I have experienced in my 70+ years with any other male, and I felt you conveyed so poignantly that kind of unspoken intertwining of spirits between Paul, Damon, and Toby. Montana isn’t all that different from the canyon/badlands area of South Dakota, so I drank in—and relived—every succulent reference to sky, wind, cold, and heat.

Then, there is the matter of the teacher, the impostor (I never knew that spelling before). Having spent my life teaching, I was cheering at every step for him and marveling at his imagination and impetuosity to meet each day’s challenge.

Thank you for providing this latest gem to the reading public. I have read all the others and can only say the next one will never come too soon.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul R. Jones
Dear Mr. Daig:

Just a note of thanks for your wonderful books!

I discovered "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" at our local library. What a find!

I have bought copies for several gifts and have several of your other works. I do hope you will continue to produce. I feel that I know you, your family and Montana.

Yours truly,

Hannah Step
June 10, 2006

Ivan Doig
17277 15th Ave. N.W.
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan,

I finished reading The Whistling Season a few days ago and I am still smiling. It is seldom that a serious book also is a "feel good" book. I had a fifth grade teacher Miss Dahl, a really mean lady, who was determined to make us suffer as she had the parents of some of my fellow students. Unfortunately, she was not a candidate for elopement like Miss Trent but was a Christian Scientist who contracted pneumonia and, by refusing treatment, missed the remainder of the school year. Her substitute was a female Morrie, a very creative and pleasant person.

Morrie's brother throwing the fight was not an uncommon occurrence when I was a kid. I was reminded of my favorite boxer Jake Lamotta inexplicably losing a fight. A few years ago, in his biography, he admitted throwing the fight as the price of getting a championship match. The characters in The Whistling Season are surprisingly universal and I can identify them with characters from my own citified upbringing. But I won't bore you with details.

Thank you for the book. It's Katharina's turn to smile.

John

[Signature]
Dear Mr. Doig,

I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate you and your works. Your writings have had a tremendous effect on my life and I just wanted to tell you thank you.

I grew up in White Sulphur Springs, and had to move away when I was in the fourth grade. I have returned often, since it is the only place that I consider home. When I first laid hands on This House of Sky, I was moved tremendously. (Especially the description you gave of the school house. That school house is home to my fondest memories.) Seeing my feelings printed on paper by a stranger was overwhelming. I am still moved whenever I think of the book.

In reading Dancing at the Rascal Fair, when Angus realizes that he will never have the love of his life, I could relate to the overwhelming grief that he experienced, as I experience the same grief in knowing that I will never have the love of my life, which is to live at home in Montana again. (Pardon the fragmentation.)

I am not a sentimental person, with the exception of Montana. I am deeply grateful that I can relive some of those moments through your works. Perhaps one day I will be able to go home again, until then I will continue to read your works. Perhaps one day, I can read one of your books without tears. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,
Debbye Scroggins

P.S. Please forgive the nonsensical letter, but I just finished Mariah Montana this morning, and my feelings are still a bit askew. God Bless

Also, please keep the books coming. I now have read all of your publications and anxiously await the next.  

Debbye Scroggins
Dear Ivan Doig: Thank you very much for your generous response to my letter. I shall be thrilled to share it with our Club.
I'm enjoying this House of Huya anew with clues of that in the Whistling Season. I shall guard what you sent me, and let you know how the meeting goes. Best wishes,

Joan Reitz

Ivan Doig
17277-15th Ave. NW
Seattle, WA 98177
PHEASANT AND YOUNG PINE TREES ON A HILL OF SNOW
Utagawa Hiroshige, Japanese, 1797–1858
Woodblock print from the series Birds and Flowers, ca. 1832
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
The Howard Mansfield Collection, Purchase, Rogers Fund, 1936 JP 2539
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11-09904-1
Printed in Singapore

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Dear Mr. Doherty,

Thank you for writing The Whistling Season. It has been a while since I read such a warm and loving story. So many books today are full of violence and other nasty goings-on. It's nice to read a peaceful story.

My mother whistled all her life. The skill passed me by but my daughter can do it.

I hope young Paul and his brothers had long and happy lives. And I'm glad Rose finally found where she belonged.

Thank you again.

(Mrs.) Kathy Howe
HOME

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March 2011

Dear Mr. Doig,

Thank you for bringing your writing and books into this world. I particularly enjoyed Dancing at the Rascal Fair a few years back, and was moved to compose a waltz (which is called Rascal Fair).

I'm enclosing a CD of Hogwire Stringband, in which I play bass. Track 2 is the waltz. I hope you get a kick out of hearing it.

And thank you for sending a card to my husband a few years ago for his birthday -- at my request. It made his day!

Dance & Sing,

914 Eastside Dr.
Bloomington IN 47401
Marielle Abell
Fiddle, vocals: Brad Leftwich
Banjo, banjo uke, vocals: Linda Higginbotham
Guitar, vocals: Joel Lensch
Bass, vocals, feet: Marielle Abell

1. Rabbit in the Lowland (3:03)
2. Rascal Fair (3:17)
3. Sally Johnson (2:45)
4. Shout Lula (3:03)
5. Lost Indian (2:37)
6. Let Me Fall (2:46)
8. The Last of Callahan (2:15)

9. I've Got a Bulldog (3:09)
10. Big-Eyed Rabbit (3:05)
11. Hell up Cole Holler (3:02)
12. Fall on My Knees (2:53)
13. Susan's Gone (2:41)
14. Say, Darling, Say (2:32)
15. Sun's Gonna Shine (3:47)
16. Death's Dark Train (4:29)

All tunes traditional, except "Rascal Fair"
(Abell & Higginbotham / Gordon Rush Music, BMI)
Artwork and graphic design by Joel Lensch
Photography by Greg Clarke
Recorded by Chip Reardin at Airtime Studios, Bloomington, Ind.

DARK TRAIN RECORDS / DTR CD-001 © 2011 Hogwire Stringband
www.bradleftwich.net www.hogwirestringband.com
RABBIT IN THE LOWLAND- Our arrangement of George Roark’s song of love and rabbits. Lead vocal: Brad; harmony: All.

RASCAL FAIR- Marielle was moved to write this beautiful melody after reading Ivan Doig’s book *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*. Linda added the words. Sung by Marielle and Brad.

SALLY JOHNSON- Many fiddlers and years of fiddling contributed to Brad’s version.

SHOUT LULA- Garry Harrison inspired us to go back and listen to Joe Birchfield again.

LEAD vocal: Joel; harmony: Linda, Marielle.

LOST INDIAN- From Ed Haley.

LET ME FALL- A Tommy Jarrell classic, sung by Marielle and Joel.

WHO’S ON THE WAY?- From Dan Tate of Fancy Gap, Va. Linda wrote two new verses.

THE LAST OF CALLAHAN- An eastern Kentucky tune.

I’VE GOT A BULLDOG- From Fields Ward’s Buck Mountain Band, with extra verses inspired by workers recorded on Lomax’s *Prison Songs*.

BIG-EYED RABBIT- More love and rabbits, from Tommy Jarrell.

HELL UP COLE HOLLER- Ken Pertman steered us to Alan Jabbour’s recording of *Henry Reed*.

FALL ON MY KNEES- Joel and Marielle’s fresh take on an old Round Peak chestnut.

GONE- From Emma Lee Dickerson (thanks, John McCurley). SAY, DARLING, SAY- Brad and Marielle sing another song he learned from Tommy, with a few extra “Mockingbird” verses.

GONNA SHINE- Keith Little revived our interest in this Carter Family/ Flatt & Scruggs favorite.

DEATH’S DARK TRAIN- Hogwire’s arrangement of Dock Boggs’s “Little Black Train.”

LEAD vocal: Brad; harmony: Marielle, Joel.