March 6, 1997

Dear Mr. Doig,

I have been wanting to write to you since the night I finished watching AT THE Rascal Fair. Each night, for a little while I would visit with Angus, Bob, Anna & Joan and all the other people at Scotch Heaven.

We had recently travelled through Northern Montana on our way to my husband's family reunion outside of Baker Mt. We gather with about 50 other "Turkeys" on the original homestead which is still owned by Ralph's marriage.

Your book was beautiful. One night towards the end, I sat in bed weeping because Anna had died - mostly because Anna had died.
Without Angus being able to tell her "goodbye."

Thank you for giving me such pleasure & escape after fighting the fight all day & Mariners & Seahawks.

I would love to meet you someday - the Statue on March 23rd might give me the opportunity. If not, it would be an honor to meet you for lunch or coffee in the district or downtown. My number @ work is 296-1801. km 368-0814.

Thank you again. Sincerely, [Signature]

P.S. My husband Pete quickly became captivated by your story too.
Dear David Runge---

Your card was certainly a grace note to us all the past. Herb n' Lou (as I think your mother's pronunciation was?) were quite splendid friends/neighbors to Carol and me when we were young newlyweds living on Hartzell St. in Swanston. You may know we carpooled for a while, and I think your mom was theoretically one of my secretaries during one of those overwork periods at The Rotarian when we were short an editor or two—her longtime honcho, Ainsley Roseen, probably had just retired and left the rest of us floundering with the jillion little tasks he and Lou had been doing.

As to Herb's CCC career, that had slipped my conscious mind, but in the novel I'm doing now (as in an earlier one, English Creek) the CCC lads make an appearance. I do hope you're able to convey that, and my longstanding affection, to your mother. You personally might be interested to know that this next novel is about Baby Boomers shouldering the needs of aging parents.

Thanks for trouble to write.

David Runge
1616 Fernwood Ave.
Louisville KY 40205
Dear Ivan,

You don’t know me although my parents, Herb and Louise Runge, may have mentioned me while you were with the Rotarian. My wife and I have just returned from Cleveland where we visited her. She turned 83 on December 4th, lives in a carecenter, and is in the second stage of Alzheimer. She does remarkably well in conversations by making short use of clichés and protocols. She speaks clearly and with assurance. One of her memory pockets includes you. She delights in recalling your command of grammar and language. She introduced me to your books. She no longer reads, as such, but we’ve discussed your progress.

I’ve enjoyed discussing your latest, Bucking the Sun with her because of the time period. She has distinct memories of the ’30s - high school, the Depression, marrying Herb. In 1934, just after graduation from ETHS Herb joined the CCC and was sent to Montana. Herb passed away in Florida, March 6, 1993. His body gave out but he was still mentally alert and opinionated.

PEACE AND GOODWILL

To all

One of my friends, Joe Ward, is from Chester, MT. He is a journalist with the Courier-Journal. He has enjoyed your work and seems to have shared experiences with you of the six degree of separation type.

After leaving the Air Force I eventually settled in Kansas, married a Kentuckian, Claudia. We
I have two sons in college. We're teachers, she is a portfolio consultant with the State Dept. of Ed. I teach art across the Ohio River in New Albany, Indiana. We're looking forward a few years to retirement. One goal is a visit with my aunt, Suzette Richards, of Anacortes.

Sincerely,

David Runge

It shouldn't hurt to be a child.
Help us to get to the heart of the problem.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale are donated to the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse.
P.O. Box 2866, Chicago, Illinois 60690-2866

©Yolanda Nave
When you are on your lecture tour with your latest book (May your sales be many, I hope you’re in Seattle in early Nov. together. It may be in Seattle too, yet I do hope you can come to Newport & lecture at The Redwood. I will show you a grand time there.)

Shirley Hazard have much enjoyed themselves. With thanks to great admiration,

Nicolaas Scherz

Dear Ivan Doig,

Or should I call you “Prince of Kindness” for you were good indeed to answer my letter about James G. Swan, with all its very useful information. And foolish me to talk about the Bear River when it was truly the Bear where Swan had his cabin. In any case, I’m very grateful.

I do know about youroolers other than “Winter Brothers”

18 Sept. 2011
and indeed I have a shelf of them in my library. But please don’t I’m like the dreadful Lord Melbourne who remarked at the death of poet George Crabbe: “I am always glad when one of those fellows dies, for then I know I have the whole of him on my shelf.” And Crabbe a beloved of Jane Austen & of him too Byron wrote that “he was nature’s sternest painter.” And though I have a shelf of you, I need two shelves before you put up your Admirable pen!
The Harrison Room
The Redwood Library & Antheneum, Newport, Rhode Island
The main room of the original 1750 Redwood Library is named for its designer Peter Harrison, considered America’s first architect. It houses the library’s original 18th century library and showcases 18th century fine and decorative art. Photography by Thomas Palmer.
As it reciprocal? I hear Isak Dinesen's words - "If I know a song of Africa... does Africa know a song of me?"

Two of my favorite and sustaining thoughts from "English Creek"...

"Life is wide - there is room to take a new run at it."

"We tell ourselves whatever is needed to move from one scene of life to the next."

There is a generosity towards life in those words.

S. Shelburne, VT

April 29, 2012

Dear Mr. Doig,

I have been a faithful reader of your work since "This House of Sky" found me in a small independent book store 25 years ago. That, and "English Creek" are books I turn to over and over again - old friends. Perhaps it is the nuggets of hard-earned wisdom I find in them or the voices that ring so wry and true. Too, the role of place in shaping a person has been a question I have pondered.
A chuckle at your father’s description of strong coffee – “float your gramma’s iron.”

Having just been rather dramatically bucked off my own horse – I love the story of Dode’s ride. When I needed a name for this horse that sounded like “Jake”, but wasn’t, my husband said, “Why don’t you call him ‘Jock’?” So Jockey it is. . . . Your words have meant a lot to me –

Jody and Pistol
by
Kristin Kenlan
2007

Sincerely,
Kris Kenlan
Saturday
February 24, 1993
248 Gregory Drive
Cheney, WA 99004-103

Dear Mr. Doig:

Hello ☺. How's your inl winter weather today? Cheney has been dreary thanks to steady rain all yesterday.

Well, to begin with... you once lived in Kalispell, Mt... the 1950's with your parents, Leo & Ruth, Mellette (Maliyet) and my older brother, Kay... and I'm Gadi. Kay graduated H.H.S. 5/54 and your book 'This House of Sky' keeps you moving there about there. Three in the 4th grade, we lived north of the cemetery about 3 miles... give or take a mile. I used to ride the Depuyer School bus to Havre's farm where Mrs. A. & My Mom backed. Visiting In A Club was there... probably knew you. I recall your school album photograph.

Yes, I really enjoyed your book mentioned above... especially about your White Sulphur Springs life... my parents & I also resided in Richart, Mt. after Kalispell life... for 24 years. (Then we relocated to Cascade, Mt. where I graduated 5/61) and [sic] about Mrs. Tillyman. We're!! Keep after Mrs. Of how she'd teach down her blonde-dress front for all sorts of paraphernalia!! Then see her as you apply. described her hair, special features and made a dress.
Page 230, the last paragraph, 3 x 4th lines from the bottom: "Butch or Kern or Helen... are these fellows Butch Lauffer? Kern Monroe? Who is Helen?"

Also, do you recall Patty Grotovic or Supreyer who freelisted Christians first of Yelit? They had a daughter Amy, now 31, who is a physical therapist in Cheney... She worked on my right arm/shoulder 1/3/97-1/14/98 and upon discovery of our mutual Helen, our interests got along fabulously!!!

Last July, in Helena for a Steak and Ale reunion of my Husband's Family, I visited Books West at 1st & Main. The owner said you often were there to sign your publications and kindly gave me your address.

Biographies are my main interest and as I read - I really enjoyed 'This Above & Sky'. (Especially as you are from similar residential areas).

Do you and your wife have children or pets? Religious pursuits (a Church)?

Thank you for your line, Mr. Dug. Kennedy, I would like hearing from you.

Sincerely,
[Signature]
1-509-235-8353
Dear Ms. Steele—

Excuse how shrimpy this reply is, but I'm deep at work on my next book and the only way I can handle my mail is through postcards like this one. Certainly I do remember the Mallettes of Valier—Kay, long, tall and crewcut blond(?), was the basketball star the year I lit into school there. I farmed for Jim Sheble one summer, and so your family farm was in my awareness...and yes, surely we rode the Dupuyer school bus together a number of times. (I spent 3 hours a day on it all through high school!) Glancing over your questions here: the other football player on p. 230 was Glenn Collins, whose mother I think tended bar downtown... I lived next door to Patty Jo in Dupuyer. In May or June of '29 I'll likely be reading/signing my next book at Auntie's in Spokane; collect Amy and come in and say hi to my wife and me, why don't you. all best,
January 11, 1998

Ivan Doig (author of DANCING AT THE RASCAL FAIR)
c/o Scribner Books Editorial Dept.
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, N.Y. 10020

Dear Mr. Doig,

I just want to say that I thoroughly enjoyed DANCING AT THE RASCAL FAIR. It was definitely a most interesting and a marvelous reading experience. Thank you.

Good success with your future writings and have a wonderful 1998!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

David A. Dewse
4584 Georgia St. #5
San Diego, CA. 92116
Dear Mr. Doig,

My name is Bradley Daines and I am a junior at Borah Senior High School in Boise, Idaho. My AP English class has, throughout the year, been studying various American authors. For my author, I have chosen you. At this time, I have read several of your novels, memoirs, non-fiction, and short free-lance writings.

You have a remarkable gift and I have found your work to be educational and inspiring. However, I haven't been able to locate any detailed biographies about your life. (The closest I've found is Earthlight, Wordfire by Elizabeth Simpson but its focus is on your writing, not your life.) I realize your memoirs, This House of Sky and Heart Earth, relate much about your life and experiences, but I want to fill in the holes.

I am preparing to write a major paper on how your life and experience has influenced your work. I would greatly appreciate help. Perhaps you have a short biography, which you use on book tours, or some other piece of writing I may not be familiar with that you could share with me. My mailing address is---

Bradley Daines
3122 Edson Terrace
Boise, ID 83705

My email address is --- Brad007Daines@juno.com

I would appreciate your help and am looking forward to a response. Your work is truly great, and I am glad I picked you as my author. 4 March '98

Sincerely,

Bradley Daines

---

S, Bradley Daines

Excuse me for confining this to a postscript, but I'm deep in the work on my next book and can't get to much correspondence. There's no biography of me, maybe on the principle that I'm not dead yet. But if you've seen your name in CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS, New Revision Series, v61. 19, I'd suggest 2 pieces in the "Periodicals" list that might give you some insights—the Montana: Magazine of Western History one, and the Pacific Northwest Quarterly piece. Any info about me that my publisher's publicity stuff has is also in CONTEMP AUTHORS or WHO'S WHO IN THE WEST. Thanks for taking me on as a topic, and all good luck with your paper.

Sincerely,
January 13, 1997

Dear Mr. Doig,

I received an autographed volume of your “Bucking the Sun” novel about the construction of Fort Peck Dam and the Duff family as a Christmas present from my sister. She had attended one of your book sessions in Portland and even had the opportunity to speak briefly with you. Both of us grew up in Fort Peck and knew all of what I have come to call the “local legends” of the project. You then can imagine the satisfaction both of have gotten from reading your book.

As a kid I remember that everyone determined whether they were an old or new hand on the project as defined by their employment either before or after the “slide.” It was the defining moment in a lot of lives including my Dad’s. He was a fireman and was one of the rescue workers who searched for survivors in the mud and debris of the slide. I was a classmate of Julie Tourtelotte who’s father was the driver that made that wild reverse drive off the edge of the slide to save the Colonel’s life.

Your inclusion of some of the technical details of the construction of the dam were of great interest to me personally as I spent most of my working life in heavy construction. In all the years I lived in Fort Peck, I had never considered the real purpose of what we called the “slough” until you told of Owen’s use of the initial operation of the dredges to construct the boat basin.

Well, as you might expect, I could spend hours going on about stories from old FP but it would be better for me to just say how much I enjoyed your writing and how happy I am to include your book in the Montana section of my personal library alongside Bud Guthrie’s “Big Sky.”

In great appreciation,

Bruce J. Ruckman

P.O. Box 224
Libby, MT 59923
Dear Mr. Paig,

I have been hesitant in writing to you. I've thought about it many times, but at my age (93) thoughts run wild, but writing doesn't.

I grew up in "This House of Sky" country. (On a ranch between Fairbanks and White Sulphur Springs.) But that was during the years 1905-1908. I fondly remember the log house we lived in, the creek (Spring Creek) that ran by, the old coral, and the white clover that grew everywhere.
That valley was not sheep country then. The cattle ranchers did not welcome sheep. White Sulphur Springs was a small town then. A place to buy necessities and watch the train come in.

I visited those special places a year ago. I sat in the Stockman’s Bar and visited with old timers, stopped by Checkersboard where Clyde Durand once had a Dude Ranch. (He and his Buffalo) and the old Castle on the hill in White Sulphur Springs.
I thank you so much, Ivan, for bringing back memories when reading "This House of Sky" and "Heart Earth." They are beautiful memories.

Incidentally, this coming month, July, I am giving a book review of your book, "This House of Sky" for our Book Club here at the "Willows." (We are a great retirement complex.) Our book club is very active and I'm sure the club will enjoy reading your books as much as I have.

From an admirer and a good friend,

Genevieve Garnon
9 July '98

Dear Genevieve Cannon—

Thanks very much for taking the time to write to me about my pair of books—I'm glad we share that "home country." You're not far off in age from my father's, so you would have shared some growing-up years, at opposite ends of Meagher County. It pleases me to think of my books making connections with lives such as yours, and I hope "The Willows" book group enjoys my work, and the country you and I came from.

best wishes,
January 29, 2004

Dear Mr Doig

Been meaning to contact you ever since I got your address from Charlene; wanted to tell you how much I enjoy your stories.

By way of introduction, I’m Charlene’s dad, Charlene being Dr Porsild who runs the Montana Historical Society down there in Helena.

She sent me your last book, *Prairie Nocturne* and I have got it started, finally having time to do so. Before I was many pages in, I had to go find *Dancing at the Rascal Fair* to check out Susan Duff’s background, and spent almost an hour riffling through this book, reliving the adventures of “McAngus” and his friends and relatives. (It’s been a year or two since I read that one) So having got her early story, and that of her father Ninian, I’m prepared to read the rest of the book.

Just wanted to say how much I have enjoyed all your efforts, starting from *The Sea Runners* which was lent me by Charlene’s husband Clark, and which he would not let me keep. Your writing style and expert story telling is just great and I can’t wait for your next one.

I live in the craziest area of Canada, British Columbia (sometimes known as British California) where most of the crazies are kept. The province, or more accurately, its west coast and Vancouver Island is home to the ex-hippies, the environmentalists, the pseudo environmentalists, the greens, and the animal rights activists. Greenpeace originated here; we have large chapters of the Sierra Club and our own Western Canada Wilderness Committee. As a conservative redneck, I sometimes feel like Attila would have if he’d been thrown into a Soviet society. The only reason I live here is that the precip is easy to shovel, unlike the bullshit. I was raised and spent thirty years in the Yukon, then twenty in Northern Alberta before I discovered that you could live in Canada and still not have to own a pair of mukluks or a parka! Here we often golf in the morning and ski in the afternoon.

Anyway, sorry to prattle on like that. I just wanted to thank you for the books you’ve done and hope there are a few more upcoming.

Your ardent fan,

AM Porsild
October 19, 2003

Dear Mr. Doig:

I've just finished your novel, Mountain Time, and I am writing to thank you for it. It made me cry in that good way that's about remembering and grieving, and having things viscerally brought back in the full force of their love and beauty.

It is one thing to remember, but details of the senses fade over time. Your book made things real for me—things that I remember all the time but haven't felt in too long.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lisa Hill
729 S Bernard, Apt #65
Spokane WA 99204
Ivan Doig  
17277 15th Ave., NW  
Shoreline, WA 98177-3846

December 8, 2010

Dear Mr. Doig,

I am writing to say thank you so much for writing. I just put down Ride With Me, Mariah Montana—well, let me start from the beginning. My book group read The Whistling Season in June. "Ivan who?" I said. "How do you spell it? Okay, that's why I like book groups, to read writers I've never heard of."

Well! What a perfect book. The characters are wonderful and real, the dialogue true, it's laugh-out-loud funny and the story called to me, I couldn't put it down. I am in library grad school but I have 20 years writing and editing, much of it for magazines, and the one thing that was hammered into me was, narrative, narrative, narrative. You have that in spades. It all folds together seamlessly in a way that feels effortless (I'm sure it's not) and smooth. I read on your website that you are trying for the poetry under the prose, well, this is poetry, lovely and true. I recommend it to everyone.

After Whistling Season I had to read Work Song, which fortunately had just come out. Excellent. And everyone in the group talked about Dancing at the Rascal Fair, so that was next, but when I realized it was part of a trilogy, of course I had to read English Creek first. I had a brief moment of, these are not the sparse works that the first two are, they're denser, epic, long. But you start off with that great supper scene, and Jick, what a great character! This is one of those great books where I feel like I know him, his parents, Stanley, Alec, Leona. When I moved on to Dancing I was a little reluctant to read about Scottish homesteaders—maybe I was afraid it would be a little too Laura Ingalls Wilder; well, hardly—but that opener with the horse is compelling, and Angus is so lovable, the dialogue in that book so sharp and again, funny, and the characters so vivid, that it was another one I couldn't put down. Jick had so many questions, and I loved that the series now took a step back, and I could hear about Stanley, and Jick's grandparents, and his parents as children, and how they almost didn't come to be, which would have been disaster! Too bad about the flu epidemic, but thank goodness for the flu epidemic.

And then Ride with Me, which I just finished, as I say, tears welling up as Jick—you—ties up all the loose ends, does the right thing by his ranch, sticks it to the Double W—certainly his ancestors would have heartily approved—and ends up with Leona, another almost-relationship that was probably better not to have happened, her and Alec. A friend defines literature as that which tells you how to live, and that's what I've learned from these books. It resonates in me now, how much of me is my ancestors, my roots, how much I am made from my environment, how living in my daily life helps me make the big decisions.

I'm pretty widely read but if I had heard been introduced to you as a Western writer I would not have know what that is, and I bet I would have been reluctant to read these books. I am an East Coaster, for better and for worst, with roots back to early 17th century Massachusetts, and other than a 20-year spate in Brooklyn, I've lived here most of my life. I've traveled around the country a bit for work and fun, but I've never been in the west, Colorado, or Wyoming, or Montana. Well, I feel like I have now. Aside from just great writing, great yarns and characters, you have made this place come alive to me; I feel like I understand our country and the people who settled much of it much better. It's a big damn place, isn't it, and people just keep streaming in and bringing all their stuff with them, my father from Budapest by way of Germany in 1948 among them, so I am of both parts. We in the east think we own it, but we really don't. It's a wonder we're still a country.

I looked you up on whitepages.com and felt I must write directly to you; I hope you don't mind. Thank you so much for these stories, this extraordinary writing, these evocative portraits of people and places that explain and illuminate so much to me on so many levels. Reading your books is inspiring as a writer and as a person and explains life to me in some ways I had only glimpsed. I thank you for that.

Sincerely,

Sasha Nyary

89 Marian Street  
Northampton, MA 01060

413-584-0844

sashanyary@gmail.com
Greetings Dr. Doig,

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Marci Gunnell. I am proud to admit that I am the second daughter to one of your biggest fans, Gary Brodock. His excitement about your books has led me to explore *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*. It only took me a few pages to understand his passion for your literary work. I look forward to reading *English Creek* next; however, the only print I read now are the textbooks required on my journey to becoming a teacher.

My father’s passion for your books stems from his upbringing in Montana. He was born in Great Falls, but has lived all over the state. The setting in your books draws him in because he recognizes the landscape you draw your stories from. He relates to the characters and can picture what they see because he has seen them too.

My dad’s favorite book is *Dancing at the Rascal Fair*. He has purchased the book about thirteen times, because he keeps giving his copy away and then buying a new copy for himself. If you ever find yourself in the vicinity of Fairfield, MT, I know my father would be honored to meet you. My dad has many great stories about growing up in Montana and may inspire a new character for you.

The reason I am writing to you today is because my dad has a very special birthday coming up in February. You see, he was diagnosed with stage IV rectal cancer last spring and has been fighting the disease ever since. So far he has done well with the chemotherapy and his attitude has remained positive and hopeful. Every birthday he celebrates from now on will be a testament of his strength and positive attitude in this battle for his life.

My dad means the world to me. His motivation has helped me achieve unachievable goals. I don’t know what I would do without him. I want to do something special for him for his birthday this year, but I need your help. I would like to purchase an autographed book from you as a gift...
for my dad this year. I live in Great Falls and I cannot get to a book signing before his birthday next month. If you could help me with this, I would be forever grateful. I have included my contact information at the top of this letter. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything you need from me.

I truly appreciate your time.

Thank you,

[Signature]

Marcie Brodock Gunnell
February 24, 2011

Mr. Ivan Doig
% Harcourt, Inc.
6277 Sea Harbor Drive
Orlando, FL 32887-6777

Dear Mr. Doig:

I write to tell you how very much I enjoyed *The Eleventh Man*. While I was a lousy football player (too small and without compensating speed) and never served in the military, I nonetheless saw a bit of myself in Ben. Thanks for a great read!

Thanking you very much, I remain,

Yours very truly,

ALBERT & SLATER, P.S.

Gary R. W. Slater

GRWS:kew
GARY:Doig022311.wpd
Dear Mr. Doig,

I just finished *Prairie Nocturne* and simply had to write to tell you what pleasure your novel gave me! I've read most of the books you've written, loved them all, but this was my favorite. Thank you, Mr. Doig. Thank you! There is however a down side to reading such a well written book; every other novel I've picked up is a disappointment in comparison.

Everyone I know will be receiving *Prairie Nocturne* as a Christmas gift this year. I realize this isn't so new & perhaps my family & friends already read it, but they'll just pass it on and make you a new fan!

Reading about Montana while I spend summers in North Dakota is as perfect as life gets. You've made a 73 year old woman really happy this summer. Thanks, Katherine Haynes
Dear Mr. Doig,

I discovered your writing just 3 years ago, and consider it a quite fortunate discovery. I had been reading one of Wallace Stegner’s books (another recent author find of mine) and your name was mentioned as an important western writer. I stumbled across ‘English Creek’ soon after at a used book sale and your books have begun to reside on my bookshelf ever since. Unfortunately I still haven’t read all of them.

My interest in your books is a personal one. In 2008, after more than 5 years of camping and hiking our way around Wyoming, Idaho and Montana for 3-4 weeks each summer, my husband and I bought a small piece of land outside Ennis Montana. This began my own deep appreciation for the wide open western landscapes and interest in learning about the history and people of Montana. Even though I can now only be in Montana in the
Summer—my husband and I are teachers—reading your book helps me feel like I'm becoming a part of Montana, even though I'm still in Maine. I'm 56 so Montana is no idle daydream. I've enjoyed all Maine has to offer for the last 35 years, and now I'm ready to do the same in Montana. So thank you for writing so wonderfully of Montana. I'd been to Butte twice and both times I didn't care if I never went back again. Now after reading 'War Song' I'm ready to go back to explore the museum and history of Butte. However—I guarantee it won't be during Evil Knievel days—I've made that mistake! I hope I don't offend you but I am writing to ask a favor. If I send you my copy of 'This House of Sky' and an addressed stamped envelope to return it in, would you sign the copy? That book is my absolute favorite and I will be reread yearly.
The area where we live in Ennis is next to what used to be a sheep ranch. Huge flocks of sheep are still grazed in the Sidreely Mountains which are behind us. I have no idea why, but learning about sheep herding and mountain grazing of sheep fascinates me. In your book you write about the black sheep being a marker sheep and only needing to count your black sheep to know if any were missing. I think I understand that the sheep would bond to the black sheep and follow wherever it went. What I don't understand is how the sheep learned to bond to a particular black sheep to begin with. Can you help me understand this?

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you. Is there any chance you are working on another book?

My email address is travis@kidsrus.org.
Mailing address: 43 Oatway Lane, Winthrop, ME 04364

I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely, Travain Ravis
Dear Mr. Doig,

Your writing has been a vital force in my life — a source of comfort, reflection, and exhilaration. For years.

It's not that your books have encouraged me to pursue my own writing — though maybe I should have tried harder to make that happen! — it's that your words and your stories are so damn beautiful: so felt, so well-crafted, so real. Your characters are my friends, and I have to visit them often. Some of their language trickles into mine, an interesting mix I have no cultural right to. Their lives, even when stormy, even when pain-filled, are comforting, grounding, and nurturing to me.

Thank you the world, thank you for writing and thinking. I'd like to say "may you be blessed," but I know you already are.

With gratitude (obviously),
Sincerely yours,

Wendy Katz

A fan since first reading Winter Brothers in the early 80s.
September 11, 2013

Dear Mr. Doig,

I’ve read most all of your books (I expect all “fan letters” start that way) and was a bit apprehensive when I first perused “Bartender’s Tale”. It lay on the table for a few months as other pressing items kept getting in the way. Hell, every time I started in on it I had to deal with Arizona and that didn’t fit at all. Last week I finally had a chance to dig into it and slowly, very slowly it bloomed into one of your best efforts – ever.

Having grown up on the east coast, salt watered from birth, I drove straight to Montana on my first of many, many walkabouts, in 1961. Silver dollars for change in a bar in Miles City, a month on the Lame Deer reservation and a chance job with an outfitter in the Gallatin Valley shook the east coast off me in a hurry. Shortly after my wife and I married we looked at Montana together. We did some cowboying south of Bozeman at the same ranch where I had previously worked for the outfitter and both of us decided it would be a good place to start a family.

I tried to convince the folks in Billings that my talents as a sea captain and general maritime expert were sorely needed. They said there might be a summer job selling bait and pumping gas at a new marina on Flathead Lake – that was 1967 I think. Basically, nothing much doing in the maritime field in Big Sky country so we ended up in Seattle in 1970 where we could at least be closer but more importantly, I could use my seagoing skills to better advantage.

We still have friends in Montana and usually get over there often.

You have captured it, old days and new, perfectly time and time again.

Thank you for all the unimaginable pleasure you have given me over the years.

Life is mighty leisurely over here on Marrowstone Island. If you’re ever nearby we can dig some clams or oysters off our beach and share a Dungeness crab or three with you -

[Signature]

Chip Hoins
Box 76
Nordland, WA 98358
February 22, 2014

Dear Mr. Doig:

I'll be blunt. You, sir, are a National Treasure.

Your body of work proves the above statement. My life has been enriched by the gifts of your stories. Thank you.

Lucky for you, I'm too cheap to become a stalker. But, admire your talent I do. There is one thing I need from you, besides more novels. Where can I, and other California fans, find out about your appearances and any writers' workshops you may grace with your presence in 2014, especially on the Left Coast?

I've checked your web site and talked with staff at Elliot Bay Books, to no avail. Please consider posting your appearances on your web site and/or your publisher's site.

Sincerely Yours,

Julia Dahl
71 Aruba Circle
Sacramento, Ca 95823

purrplsage@frontiernet.net
Dear Mr. Doig,
This is (oh, not another one) a fan letter, a quasi love-letter!

I was visiting my son and his family on Bainbridge last October, one day milling rapturously around in the lovely local bookstore with my daughter-in-law, who is the example for her voracious reading-daughters aged 7 and 9. On the display cube in the middle of the store were the hottest new books. I spied The Bartender's Tale. That name Ivan Doig. Ivan Doig. Ivan Doig. How do I know that name? Sounded so familiar. The owner of the store, a bright young man, heard me and said that Ivan Doig was his father's favorite, that he had read ALL of his books. When I got home I looked up on the shelf in the library in my home, in the beginning of the alphabet in American literature. There it was, next to Annie Dillard - This House of Sky. Right! Right!

Back up - My husband and I fell in love with Montana back in September, 1991. Two great friends of ours embarked with us on the adventure of our lives, paddling our canoes 7 days (backwards from Lewis and Clark's excursion) 150 miles on the Wild and Scenic route on the Missouri from Fort Benton to Robinson Bridge, the most delicious vacation of our lives, camping here and there on the banks, glorying in the landscape, eating like kings (maybe as well as if Stanley had been with us), sleeping like logs in our tents after fighting with the winds, etc. (I began the trip with the plan of reading out loud to the gang the appropriate geographical section from the L/C diary I found in the library but they fell asleep on me one by one that first night of recitation and I abandoned my noble educational cause). You surely get the picture. After the canoe trip we drove up towards the Continental Divide to lovely Snow Bank Lake. I kept a diary myself à la Lewis and Clark and created a little book when we got back, a copy for each couple. Looking at it again today - the photos, the daily entries, the snippets of map with our course marked in color - brings it all back and melds with Ivan Doig.

We had all been living in New Jersey at the time and my husband was nearing retirement. We said at the time, Montana is where we'll resettle. It didn't happen. We found Vermont instead, which is also "God's country." I guess you found Seattle instead. I have since lost my Harry pal to cancer - November, 2011. I wish so much that I could share with him this new discovery.
So, back to the present. After that Doig moment in my own library I high-tailed it down to our little public library in Randolph and took out The Bartender’s Tale. That was early October. I have since devoured This House of Sky (apparently again), The Whistling Season, Work Song, The Eleventh Man (I am an NFL freak. Watched that last awful Seahawks/Patriots game at CenturyLink field with my son), Prairie Nocturne, Mountain Time, and last night I reluctantly came to the final page of English Creek.

You have so captured me. I can't get enough - your exquisitely beautiful writing, your characters with real blood coursing through their veins, the gut-wrenching human relationships, your page-turning situations, the perfect local color, your lovely sense of humor. The other night, while reading English Creek in bed I let out a guffaw over some passage or other and my snoozing cuddling cat jumped a mile. Real people, real situations, your uncanny remembrance of what it's like to be a young boy, your love of that amazing state that you paint with the most wondrous watercolors on just about every page.

I want more. This is why I am writing to you. I only have 2/3s left of your McCaskill Trilogy (why doesn't your publisher bind them into one volume?) and then I'll be bereft. I hope you are sitting there looking out at the Sound right now, pounding away on your keyboard, because I am waiting. And I have become so loony about your writing that there is a backlog of requests at that Randolph public library for The Barkeepers Tale and The Whistling Season because I just can't keep my mouth shut. That Bainbridge Island Bookseller's Dad knew what he was doing. I bet he is waiting, too.

Be well, be inspired, and thank you ever so much for taking up the pen. Or buying a computer, or whatever device brings your genius out to us all.

Warmly,

[Signature]
Dear Ivan Doig,

I hope this finds you—and finds you well.

I am writing to you because I just want you to know that in the last few weeks, you have really given my life—(mind)—a lift. Want to thank you for it.

You see, I recently came into contact with a book written by you—"Mariah Montana". It was a little different, and made me wonder if you'd written anything else. So—due to the Inter-library loan system at our little library, I've read "Dancing at the Rascal Fair". (Which I really dragged on, that what a good book I'd missed). Then—"Thin House of Sky". A book I sort of "lived in". Next, real quick, was Heart Earth, followed by English Creek. Right now I'm in the middle of Winter Brothers, & decided to write awhile.

The reason I love the books you've written—(the ones I've read)—is that I love Montana. I was born & raised in Ohio. Married a man from W. Va. whose grand father had homesteaded on the Kootenai River in 1911 when he was in his 60's & died in 1943 at age 103. We went to Montana in 1950. We 17, with a 10 month old baby boy. In Nov. there was very deep snow. An old, low, log cabin, kerosene lantern, etc. The cabin down the Kootenai River from Rayford 7 miles. No car. No neighbors. No nothing.
Wolves, deer, moose and later, bear. Sure was a different world than Ohio!

Now, the water from Kauausa Dam is 200 some feet over where that little cabin was. We lived in Montana 4 different times. My husband wasn't very big either, but was very tough. He loved to fight and never could hold a grudge. Had red curly hair & red beard. He loved to work & was the hardest worker I knew when he was working. Off work he played & enjoyed life just as hard. He worked for the Forest Service several times. He worked on a sheep ranch one winter by Havre, Montana.

(Before I met him, he worked on a sheep ranch near Great Falls, Mt.)

We worked one winter on a cattle ranch near Deqgo, Mt. plus getting out Christmas trees to take to Eureka, Mt., the Christmas tree Capital of the World. Many times he worked cutting timber on working on Re-Mills. J. Mills Company from Libby even in that country then. In 1951 I was cook at 18, for a lumber camp - 17 miles to nearest store & Post Office at Fortiec, Mt.

The first time I was in Montana, your change from buying anything was in silver dollars. My husband rolled his own cigarettes - mostly Prince Albert. But sometimes Bull Durham & a nickel sack of Bull Durham - after empty, would hold exactly 20 silver dollars.
Several times forest fires had to be fought near where we lived. So scaring to have to wait and worse to see near one.

The books you have written have brought back a lot of good memories. I hope you had great pleasure in writing them.

My husband passed away a year ago Feb. 16 '73. They say time will help, but so far it hasn't done much except help me get older. I sure do miss him. We lived near Roseburg, Ore. for two years, had adventures there. We often had to go to the airport in Portland to pick people up off their flights, and so I got to visit Seattle several times. So I've seen the area you & Carol live in. (Isn't Carol a pretty name?)

Never could write a short letter, so probably won't mail this. But if I do, please know I have enjoyed reading your stories greatly.

Thanks. May God bless you.

An Ohio Reader,

21, April '74

Sincerely

Mrs. M. Hammons.

Dear Mrs. Hammons--

I'm not really able to handle correspondence any more. I'm keeping up with my book writing, too, but I wanted to dash off this card just to say how glad I am that my books are giving you some reading pleasure. The next one will be a sizable novel about the Depression, and construction of Fort Peck Dam. Thanks for sharing your memories of Montana.

regards,
MEMORANDUM

From: SUE BUSWELL

10-26-80

Mr. Doig,

I apologize in asthma and emphysema. The description of your parents' death, particularly your father's, was an emotional experience, even for me. Congratulations on a most sensitive task. I'd love to meet you sometime.

Richard S. Buswell, m.d.

Compliments of CARROLL COLLEGE FOUNDATION
and HELENA LETTER SHOP
Dear Carol & Ivan:

During the past few weeks I have heard several pieces of news that I thought would be of interest to you.

A couple weeks ago, Alice and Maynard visited Marjorie Hogg in Philipsburg. You must have known her in Ringling or at least remember her as Prof. Hogg's daughter. The past year or so she lost most of her vision when she suffered a high fever. Someone in her family had tried to talk her into getting books on tape, but she was firm in that if she couldn't see to read she didn't want any of that. Well, they brought a cassette player to see if they could have her try it out, and the book they brought was "This House of Sky". She became so excited when she found that it was about the area where she grew up and all the familiar names! And now she and her husband are fully launched in their reading program.

As a volunteer at a local nursing home here, I work with the talking book program for those who can't see to read. We have one young-middle aged man who had a stroke which affected his vision and also his speech. He goes through six or eight books a week -- we have trouble trying to keep up with him! I took "This House of Sky" cassette to him even though the records showed he had already read it. I asked him how he liked it and his face lit up as he nodded his head.

Then today at church, in the absence of our pastor, John Board preached the sermon. He is President (?) of the Mont. Education Assoc. and a very good speaker. He read your story of your experience with the sheep during the storm. (P. 217-222) He used it to show the many emotions and feelings, the nature of sheep, and your arriving at a turning point. I talked with him afterwards, and he told how excited he had been about your book -- he wrote you just after he first read it. He also said he is anxious to meet you.

I hope everything is going well for you both. Are you planning to visit in Montana this next summer? It would be good to see you if you have time in this area.

As ever,

Edith M. Brekke
Dear Edith--

Thanks so much for passing along those lovely incidents. The Marjorie Hogg story is particularly heartening; a writer is never sure if the hours and effort add up to much, but an incident of that sort is a lot of reward.

All is well with us. Carol and I were in Missoula the last week of March, doing research for this next Montana book, and I had intended to spend a further week in the Helena-WSS country, but had to cancel out because of a gimpy leg. We do plan to spend some time around Choteau this summer, again for this book, and will be through Helena whenever that happens. We'll certainly hope to see you then. I hope you and all the other Brekkes are thriving; I never say so sufficiently, but I think of your family a lot.

all best wishes
Dear Ivan,

You outdid yourself this time with English Creek.

My husband and I live on an old homestead in s.w. Montana, and your writing is classic, if not right on the money. The best part is that it is part one of a trilogy.

There are a few people in this area that knew your family in White Sulphur. The Doggett's and a Zil Hawthorne that said she knew you as a kid.

You are more than welcome here anytime. Our good friend Russell Martin gave me your address.

Thank you again for that wonderful book.

Dolly Carroll
Star Rt.
Twin Bridge MT.
September 3, 2000

Dear Ivan Doig,

Thank you very much for inscribing and sending *Bucking the Sun* to me. I will always cherish the copy that bears your autograph and will forever be in Patty Limerick’s debt for paving the road that brought it to me.

I’m not sure whether Patty told you that I have been indulging in your work at virtually every turn this summer— it’s been a veritable summer-long Ivan Doig celebration. *Bucking the Sun* was the novel I chose to mark the end of the semester-imposed fiction ban in May. It was a more than satisfying choice and a good transition, too: the human drama fed my emotional needs while the stunning historical details satisfied my intellectual predilections. Later in the summer, Patty and I found ourselves weeping over Skip’s euthanasia while convince a student intern to put down whatever she was reading in order to pick up *This House of Sky*. I’m sure you can imagine what an impression it makes on a graduate student to experience a shared moment of humanity with an established scholar. Yet another milestone marked by Ivan Doig!

I spent the month of August in Bozeman, my first real experience of Montana. Your words were with me then, too. My boyfriend and I love to read aloud from your books while we drive. This time we were preoccupied with what I would choose to read at the Center of the American West’s annual Words to Stir the Soul event, a public reading of excerpts from Western prose and poetry. Fittingly, I closed my summer by taking the stage and almost succeeding in remaining poised while I read the passage from *This House of Sky* describing the storm on the Blackfeet Reservation in 1954.

I suspect your work will always be with me. I should confess that I am most attached to a region of northern Vermont called the Northeast Kingdom (Howard Frank Mosher is its best known voice). There is nothing western about it, except perhaps its location relative to Maine and New Hampshire. I feel its stories and its landscapes bubbling up in me, in a way that I imagine the northern Rockies have captured your imagination. One day I’ll be ready to write them... For now, I’m busy with the history of the sagebrush country of northwestern Colorado. In all cases, you, in the company of Wallace Stegner, John McPhee, and Annie Proulx, inspire me to keep struggling to craft meaningful stories about the connections between families, communities, and places. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Julia Hobson
May 13, 1987

Ivan Doig
17021 10th NW
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan,

The 29th annual convention of the Montana Wilderness Association is scheduled for December 4th & 5th, 1987, in Helena. We would very much like to have you address the convention.

MWA's convention has become the principle gathering of Montana conservationists, and is always well attended. It's an exciting event with many interesting presentations and workshops along with good times and reunions and confirmation of goals.

The program is traditionally a series of panels, workshops and speeches, beginning Friday afternoon and continuing all day Saturday. There is an evening program on Friday, and a banquet on Saturday. We try to present a mix of information and inspiration; we are asking you for the latter.

Your writings of your ties to the lands of Montana have endeared you to many of us. That special sense of place, be it along the Front or in the Smith River country, is something that our membership certainly would delight in hearing from you. I believe we feel as you do about this place and these people, but your ability to write of it is very special.

At this point the program is completely open. If you would like more information before deciding, please contact me c/o MWA.

Sincerely,

Cedron Jones
MWA Council member
Dear Cedron--

You and the MWA flatter me, thinking that I'd have anything useful to say to people who are on the actual front lines in the fight for wilderness. But the sad fact of the schedule is that I'm already booked into an Oregon bookselling trip--I've just finished a Montana novel called Dancing at the Rascal Fair which will be published in Sept.--at precisely the time you inquired about. Instead of me, I wonder if you might consider Gretel Burlich, the poet and essayist and about-to-be novelist who lives down in the Sheridan, Wyoming country and writes passionately about the western land. She in fact lives on a ranch in the Bighorns, is very much a working-on-the-earth westerner; her address is simply Shell, WYO 82411, and her book The Solace of Open Spaces would give you an idea of how she commands the language.

Anyway, my best to you and the MWA membership; maybe we can coincide some other time.

regards
Mr. Day,

As I recall, Winters Brothers is known for being there for over ten years. Being from Montana, you must know about Andrew Garcia — who was hoping to see. Anyway, after reading through Dard's trip through Paradise, it was added to the story. At the time I lived in the Yakima Valley and vacated in the Kittitas every summer for several weeks each year with my wife Duth & our six kids. After trying to find out more about Garcia for quite a while, we learned about because his son, Trinidad (Cookie) was in the Messina paper for running the laws off his place with a rifle. We found out where he lived & went to visit him. He met me at the base of his 12x12 Taupairr's shack with a gun. He was ungrateful by police & held himself up by the chockoro. His clothes hung off him in tatters of filthy clothes. He had no phone or car or anyway to get help or go anywhere or communicate. A welfare worker brought him a little food & water every Wednesday.
To make a book real start, I ended up going back to visit him several times a year until his death. His brother Jack who's pushing 90 still lives in Rivulet & we write back & forth. Anyway... there's a whole book of the real Garcia that would be fun to write & would be, if done right, required reading in Missoula as "Tough Trip" at least use to be for Montana History & Montana Writers (which is how I got turned on to your work, starting with This House of Sky - I have a lot of information from Cookie & Jack you're welcome to, should that time ever come). I knew also where some of Garcia's diary as today that Stein never reviewed when he paid Cookie's nephew to steal them. They're mostly in pencil & hard to read.

Lastly we want to thank you for "Manch Montana" as it helped me thru some tough times with a teenage daughter. Really, thanks.

Mary Byrnes
PO Box 526
Pacwood, WA 98361

360-491-4067
Mr Ivan Doig  
Atheneum Press  
597 Fifth Ave.  
New York, N.Y. 10017  

May 30, 1985

Dear Mr Doig:

I can not begin to tell you how much I enjoyed "English Creek." It just happened that I saw a review in the Chicago Tribune Book review section of the Sunday issue. The book arrived the morning I had to go to bed for three days with an old back problem that first hit me in 1939 while in Missoula working in the music dept. of MSU. So---- I had three beautiful days reliving that beautiful experience of being in Missoula for two years with a great bunch of unmarried young faculty members who all loved to explore the area from Glacier to Yellowstone, to the BitterRoot Mts, the Swan Mts. the Teton, and especially the Mission Mts.

The episode I will never forget was while on a picnic on the Clark Fork my friends picked 78 ticks off of me during the day. They claimed it was always the same tick, but I must have had an attraction for them. It was a disaster when the war came to a head on Pearl Harbor Day and I decided I had better get back to Illinois.

Now my problem is, how will I know when the sequel is published unless I happen on to a review again? The Tribune is not always that reliable. I hope Atheneum Press has a mailing list to keep people informed.

Thank you for a great book.

PS. My wife and I went so far as to return to Montana when our boys were small with the idea of finding a location to build a cottage, but our parents were failing and it became
imperative that we stay in this vacinity to look after property that we inherited. Montana is just too far away and we do not like to travel that well. We finally settled on a cottage in northern Michigan in Leelanau County.

Dear Mr. Huff—

12 June '85

How grand it is to hear that ENGLISH CREEK sounds right to someone who went through 1939 in Montana. The next book, about the era of homesteaders, is due out in autumn 1987; the final book in this trilogy is intended for late 1989, to coincide with Montana's centennial. Probably your best bet to keep apprised is to have your local bookstore watch BOOKS IN PRINT for my stuff. You might, incidentally, like...
July 28, 1995

Ivan Doig
17021 10th Ave., NW
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

I just finished Dancing at the Rascal Fair, my introduction to your writing, and was blown away — a tremendous achievement! I'll be reading down your other titles in the coming months.

I've been wanting to write a story (novel) of migratory beekeeping in the U.S., focused on Montana beekeepers, but your writing has made me realize that I don't have the necessary tools (Tolstoy had a similar inhibitory effect on me years ago).

There's a tremendous Montana-bee story waiting to be told and you're the only one I know of that could do it justice. Montana is the bee state (in my opinion) because it puts out a tremendous product — quality honey*, and because it has an interesting mix of individual beekeepers.

I operate an almond pollination service and contract with a number of Montana beekeepers: Doyle Anderson, Chinook; Morris Dahle, Sidney; Boyd Dahle, Fairview; Jeff LeFore, Rapplesje; Harry Rodenberg, Wolf Pt.**; Wade Taylor, Stanford, etc.

The May 1993 National Geographic has a good bee story (although written in pedestrian NG prose). Also enclosed is a copy of a flyer from a recent book — written with enthusiasm but sans poetry (I can send you this book).

I'll be at the Montana bee convention at Great Falls in October (schedule enclosed) and could introduce you to beekeepers at that time, should you be interested.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

*about 10 years ago I put out a gourmet honey (failed venture) under the name Kodiak Honey; the honey was from White Sulfur Springs, MT (brochure enclosed).

**also a fan of yours, and one that would give you a good reception (see enclosed copy of recent letter).
Mr. Joe Traynor, Mgr.
Scientific Ag Co.
P.O. Box 2144
Bakersfield, CA 93303

Dear Joe:

I read your recent newsletter with interest. I am interested in the Varroa research that you mentioned in Minnesota–Ohio. Is this in conjunction with a University? If so could you provide me with the contact person.

The honey producing season has been late in coming this year due to cool temperatures, an numerous rainy periods. In addition it is an off year for sweet clover. Bees are in good condition though and some honey will be made from alfalfa.

It is good to hear that you are a fan of Ivan Doig's. I have read every book that he has written. Growing up in southwestern Montana, I personally knew an uncle of his who died in a horse accident. He mentions this person in his book House of Sky.

Very truly yours,

Harry Rodenberg
To: Ivan Doig,

I have recently read "Heart Earth". I am sure you receive "Fan Letters" in great numbers, but I wish to add my plaudit. Your book "This House of Sky" gave me such pleasure. Your writing about the same area and your return to your unique and special style of writing reassures me that you have again given us a very excellent piece of Western literature.

I am particularly interested as Valier was my birthplace (1915). My father and his brother were co-owners of "Harrington Brothers Jewelry Store".

When I was five years old we moved to Eugene, Oregon where my father died. My mother, my sister and I returned to Valier and I attended school there from my 4th grade through Sophomore in High School. [I graduated from Teton County High School in Choteau. A.B. Guthrie Senior was Superintendent then.]

During the years spent in Valier my mother worked for the Water Company. At that time Jim Tidyman, George Ebner, Mr. Atwood, Mr. Speir were all familiar names to me. (I even worked one week or so in my mother's place during her vacation) Mrs. Tidyman I believe was still Miss Frances (?) Carson. Later my cousin, Helen Harrington, as well as her mother, taught at Dupuyer. Helen became Mrs. Ross Loney, raised seven children, and until fairly recently was County Superintendent for Lewis and Clark County. She still lives in Gl. Falls.

Please, what I hope you will do is to continue to mine this rich field.

Write of the Valier which my parents knew. I have three or four treasured pictures of young couples putting on a talent show, one which had to be of an operetta. I know there was a Men's Glee Club. This small town surely was unique in having attracted so many young people who were fairly well educated. Many of the town's leaders were engineers who worked for the water project.
Do you have a copy of "Harvest of Memories"—historical events of Valier, Montana? Here, gathered together in one book, are the stories of people whom I knew. I can think of no other author (perhaps Wallace Stegner?) who could properly treat of this place and time.

Because we now spend our summers on Flathead Lake and winters in Arizona, we have lost touch with Missoula friends. Our home there was at 659 So. 5th East where we raised our four sons. The house has been purchased by the University and is now The International House. I mention this as had we still been there surely I would have been able to meet you as I believe you were there at some conference. We were so close we were able to attend many University programs.

* Please write this book!

With great admiration,

Rae Larsen
(Mrs. H. Kleis Larsen)
August 14, 1995

Dr. Ivan Doig
Penguin Books, USA, Inc.
375 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10014

Dear Ivan,

Excuse the informality, but I feel like I know you after having read the following books:

- The House of Sky (my favorite)
- English Creek
- Dancing at the Rascal Fair (second favorite)
- Ride with me Mariah Montana
- Heart Earth

I was introduced to your books by Dr. Michael Kammen, Cornell University. He was here and we were talking about my newly discovered interest in the West and he mentioned your books. I read the above one right after another and thoroughly enjoyed them.

I was born in Scobey in March, 1936, moved to Culbertson in 1937, where my dad bought the New Evans Hotel. We sold it in 1945 and I moved back to Scobey with my mother after my parents separated. Graduated from Scobey High School in 1954, and have been on the road ever since. Four years in the Air Force, professional student ending up with a Ph.D., 21 years as an American diplomat, retired in 1986, and came back to Brazil where I am currently the Deputy Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission until December this year, and then on to other ventures somewhere in Brazil.

I was not raised on a farm, as you were, but I spent lots of time working on my uncle’s farm in Scobey and on the farm of my “adopted” grandfather (no blood relative). So some of the tales you spin bring back thoughts of my growing up in Northeastern Montana. As Addison Bragg said, when you stand at the end of main street in Scobey you can almost see the end of the world. To go along with the isolation and lousy weather, the wind blows at least 400 days of year. You may know Larry Bowler, the editor of the yellow-page Daniels County Leader.

I will be taking off on a 17-lecture university swing though the States starting September 1st. From what I gather from your books, you live in Seattle now. I will be close as I will be lecturing at Pacific Lutheran University, University of Puget Sound, and Oregon State, where I got my MS. I spread the word on what’s happening in Brazil.

My interest in the American West is a recent interest of mine. I guess when you grow up in the middle of the area, only writers like yourself, see what a great place it is in spite of some of the climatic problems we all endured. I am going to try to write something on the comparative frontier experience in Brazil and the US.

I have a topic for you. My great uncle Prosper Raymond Gorham (P.R.) was truly one of the colorful characters initially around Sunburst where he was in the oil business, and later in Scobey where he built the Gorham Hotel in
the 1920s, and at that time it was the finest hotel for miles around and is still standing. Later he moved on to Silver Gate and Billings where he got into the chalet and taxi business, respectively. He was a notorious gambler, businessman (shark), and just a plain Bser. He died in the 1960s. My dad was going to tackle the subject, but he died rather young in 1968, so never got around to it. There are very few relatives around that remember his shenanigans, but the Daniels County Leader is probably as good a source as any.

This was a long-winded letter to just let you know how much I enjoyed your books, and I will be on the lookout for those books I don’t have.

Continued success, and maybe some day we will cross paths. The very best to an excellent writer.

Um grande abraço,

Terry V. McIntyre
Dean,

Every time I have read one of your books I’ve been prompted to call across the room or write. Mariah did it, I read out of order, as our daughter is with the Missouri Children’s Theater traveling Montana to other states. But let me explain.

What is it you see in your writing is your gift for capturing in a few words the whole feel, the area, the emotions, the way the people think, how they talk, how they dress, act, etc. I know of no other writer who can do this. I know you write a whistledisk or come up with a phrase like absconding lately & then have you in tears with the bonds of lineage & history. Huguenot is probably important history to those hard in the northwest but you are the magnetic pull of Montana. Therefore, I have the audacity to suggest a different angle.
I have the same affection for the people & place & never even was there until 17. But I sensed the pull at a very young age. My grandmother Pella was raised in the territory, one of eight young Kowas 16 miles out of Pughyev. Early photos show her astride a horse with a six gun that wasn't for show. She met my grandfather, an orphan from Springfield, also who praised his sisters after their folks died in a flu epidemic when he came there from Montana as a player on a semi-professional baseball team. He drew her back East but not her heart or her grandchildren (me).

How was she different? Dutch grandmother Braden/Bradars were loving but strict. Every function had tradition, manners, protocol, etc. Mommy Ben (grandfather's Burt & Ben) was open. There weren't any particular rules; just love
& cookies & cakes & what ya been up to & sure you can climb the apple tree. Uncle Ed, her brother, was always there—a real grouchy but boy did he love his kids.

Well it didn't take a whiz kid to realize there must be something different about those people out there & how they do things. At 17 I got my first look at a shoebox of trees to this day! We didn't have trees or forests like that in the midwest. When I first got a glimpse of the Rockies in the distance I thought they were an approaching thunderstorm.

What I found in family delighted my soul. Instead of engineers & young uncles & aunts & farmers running the Flathead pike driver, the machine shop, the laundromat, the town dance band & other things keeping Folson running.
I found thick T-shirts pan fried, lively evenings when even
the women staged together if
the men wouldn't get off their
duffs. I found genuine love
for neighbors & friends wept
pretense. Up at the ranch
in Dupuyer I found Uncle
Tommy & Aunts Billian, Eunut
Ford, & I became a real
live Indian, staying
together. I had never seen
so much food. Morning noon
& night everything in the world
& a guy wants to put in his
stomach. How did they ever
cook so much for each meal
& still have time to attend to
the next.

Well you know all this—but it
was new to me. It was like
coming finally to a home that
had a way of beckoning & finding
it was better than I had
ever imagined—real people?
The years went by & experiencing
a lifelong designing airplanes.
other asundry DEFENSE (offense) matters in Seattle with the best I could muster. But, we took off for Montana. Lake Mary Ronan, Glacier Butte Conrad, Bolson. Mommy Ben whenever we could. Later Arizona as old age set in on the ranch but always letters about writing in a turnoff while Red was trout fishing. If the same; how’s it going—terrible, what ya Ben doing—nothing, any plans for the summer—hope, well that sounds like fun. Mommy Ben & Florence all over the kids & cakes, baking pennoocks (??) with the ladies until I couldn’t stay awake any more & then they would be up & at them at 5:00 am.

I miss them all now but the generations must pass some kind of thought, process or feel or something off. Our daughter got herself a job on her own driving refrigeration buses up Going-to-the-Sun
highway in her third summer at Whitman. Before Mom & I knew what was happening we were camping in the old tent trailer at Two Medicine. Running up to Polsebridge to see a old tavern that looked just like Nyla's (our) beach house, eating great food at an outdoor barbecue. Meeting her friend the manager of the old roadhouse where Stephens (also of Panama fame) wintered for fall. Boy it sure drew out old memories for me. How did this continuity happen. Next thing we know Nyla's graduated & working in Missoula. Actually lived of all over the state & seeing more & experiencing more & more attached than I ever was. How did this happen? There's more than a place. More than the beautiful scenery, the wide open, the forests, the rivers, etc. There is something there that draws us back succeeding
generation in turn & no one but you can find a way to express it. Tell folks that there is a better place than L.A. & the coast. A better place to live, a free open future. Oh well, get my jest. That's your line of business!

If I don't hear from you, OK, at least I feel better for getting this down on paper.

Good luck,

[signature]

(DICK)

842-4514
7781 N.E. NORTH ST.
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA.
Dear Mr. Dorg,

I recently read your books, English Creek, and Dancing at the Kaasik Fair, after hearing small excerpts on the local public radio station. I enjoyed the books very much, especially "Dancing." The people, the land, the whole story seems very real, on actual history.

My mother was born and lived her early years in Morton's of Spring Creek Antleite Colony near Lewiston. She told stories about her father herding the colony's flock of sheep in the nearby hills, pelting off the lyme and coyotes with a dog, a fire and keeping the flock nearby at night. They did not keep guns at the colony in those days.

The images of Morton's in my mind from those early stories, I find again in your stories but more developed and focused in your books.

"Dancing at the Kaasik Fair" tells a story that comes alive with truth, authenticity and a feeling of sharing the pioneer experience so briefly past.

Thanks you for the chance to read, learn and enjoy. George Mannel.

Freedom, Maine.
Dear Mr. Daig,

Just a note to express our appreciation for the House of Sky. This address was obtained from the Fierce County library. As a young child, I spent some summers on a ranch eleven miles west of Augusta, MT. My Scotch grandparents settled there. You may be acquainted with the Chehalis name or ranch as the Kj. The ranch has since changed hands.

My mother taught several years in the Augusta Schools before moving to Circle, Montana. Here she married, taught for 35 years in the McLeod County School system. She still lives at home, by herself, at 87 years old. We've been returning each year to be some assistance.
But that independent pioneer spirit is alive and well!

Many of the descriptions in the "Hand of Sky" were a part of my childhood environment. I was raised in Circle. It is still a thrill for me to return to Montana.

My husband and I have also enjoyed your other books. Thank you for the lot back!

Sincerely,

Mrs. William Horn
1/31/89

Dear Iva:

I am a retired pediatrician and a very close friend of a unique fan of yours:

Mrs. Ruth Holland
Suite 15-D
Panorama House
1100 University St.
Seattle, WA, 98101
PHONE: 621-7230
teach near Lake
Doran - 1913 - Fortyt

Ruth is a most charming and very intelligent 94 yr. old "young lady" who grew up in your Montana. She is a real historian and through the years that we have known her, told us so many interesting stories. As she tired of answering our questions she gave us her house of story to read so we could have a data base.

At your convenience, I am, it would be very gracious of you to call her. She would be thrilled.

(over)
Vernon Christiansen is a friend of Andrew Prentice; an historian; a pal of mine. Vernon helped him win his Ph.D. in history at the U. of W. If any event Vernon was kind enough to help me get in touch with you.

Very Sincerely,
Bob Prentice
Dear Jerry—

OK, send a copy of Bitterrootus Magnum Opus to me and I'll try say something so nice you won't be able to look at the back cover without blushing. I warn you, though, I don't know why anybody interested in plants would give a damn about what I have to say.

Carol and I are just back from a 5-week trip, through MT (saw Dave & Marcella) and on down to Santa Fe, Mesa Verde, Four Corners...saw lots of good stuff. Hope you and Karen are both thriving. Pretty sure we can't get to Montana this summer; will try through on a bookstore trip in Sept., but probably be next year before we can get sociable.

22 May 93

Dear Ivan:

I have written a book about bitterroot, the Montana state flower. It's due out in July or August and I write to ask if you would consider reviewing it. If you would review it, and if the review were favorable, could I put an excerpt with your name on the back cover? Aside from Hampton, you are the only famous person I know.

The book has five chapters; Traditional Use, History, Classification, The Plant, Cultivation and Modern Use and two appendices. My thought is that this book (120 pages or so and with 30 color illustrations, maps, etc.) will tell anyone everything they want to know—and more—about bitterroot.

Karen and I are in Nevada for a month. I am doing a sensitive plant survey for the Forest Service in exchange for a place to stay. Remote country about 100 miles from Ely and the same from Tonopah. Mountains up to 12,000 and high desert with no people. We are having a great time.

Regards to you and Carol.

Sincerely,

Jerry DeSanto

Until June 14—
c/o Uhalde's, Hoyt Mail Box
Lund, NV 89317

Then—
Box 91
Babb, MT 59411
February 11
Last Chance Gulch

Dear Ivan,

Forgive the salmon paper, although it might be appropriate for a letter to the Great Northwest, it may be kinda tough on the eyes but our office is moving and damn me, I packed all the white typing paper. Your tax dollars at work.

At any rate, the reason I'm writing is because during a recent month-long stay in Utah, I had the opportunity to read Dancing at the Rascal Fair and I wanted to let you know how damn much I enjoyed it. Perhaps not being here in Montana when I plowed through it may have had some affect upon my appreciation, but I don't think so. I do think that it is one of the finest works that I've read in a long time. You did one hell of a job describing that Rocky Mountain Front country and after doing some recreational field work there (mostly horsepacking and hunting) I can see the characters that you drew very vividly. I usually pick and choose read—that is, pick a book up at night and then choose to read it for a bit before hitting the racks. Rascal Fair, however was a Can'tput'erdowner. I shot through it in two days but found myself reading it slowly. I can usually read fairly quick but I really took care to savor each page. I'm glad I did. The characters were definately Scottish and reminded me all too much of some of the folks I've run into at Booby Burns Nicht at Miles City. Incidentally, your grasp of Burns' poetry really is fine. I was particularly tickled with the Burns/Doig and the Doig poetry. After working for the last five years on cowboy poetry, I've become very much attuned to stylistic qualities in rhyme and you hit ol' Bobby's style right on the money.

I also wanted to tell you that if in the future I or the Folklife Project can be of any help to you in research, just say the word. We've got a jillion miles of recorded interviews with various occupation types here in Montana and have cut a pretty wide swath culturally in the state. Let me know.

Meantime, thanks again for your great work. Hope to see you in Montana again soon.

My best,

Mike
Michael Korn
Montana Folklife Project
Dear Mike--

My gosh, if Rascal Fair sounded okay in UTAH!!...

It's particularly nifty to hear good words about the book from somebody who works the folklore beat. Achieving the Scotchness of the style was not, as you know, easily done. Also, to do the mimicking of Burns I had to read all of the Collected Burns—maybe the first to do so since Burns.

On my list of good intentions is to come by the Folklife Project and see what I can loot. Your kind invitation underscores that. Carol and I will be in Montana for one quick blurt this summer, and probably quite a lot of next year as I dibits the centennial stuff. One time or another, I expect we'll cross paths with you. Thanks, truly, for taking time to write me about R Fair.

best,
May 27, '79

Dear Susan Leephart—

I think I would agree with E.B. White, but perhaps on different grounds: simply that writers hardly ever are as interesting as their books, and I know I'm certainly not.

Be that as it may, I'm pleased that you enjoyed the book, and am flabbergasted that it ever was a portion of any sermon. Convey my amazed respects to your minister, please.

As to the invitation, I'd be game to do it—most likely a reading, with questions after, if you'd like—if the schedule ever presents a chance. I don't foresee being in Helena any time soon, and I do know I will be holed up here at home virtually the rest of this year, meeting a Dec. 31 deadline on my next manuscript. I have considered, however, trying to make a brief set of Montana appearances next March or April; I was invited by a number of Montana Libraries for Library Week this year, and couldn't accept because of the writing schedule. Perhaps I can accommodate some of them in 1980.

So if you would nudge me, perhaps in January, I may have a better idea of the prospect. In the meantime, my thanks to you and your congregation for thinking enough of Sky to invite me.

best wishes
May 22, 1979

Dear Mr. Doig,

If I were to heed the words of author E.B. White, I would never pen this letter. For he is none too keen on those who write letters to an author, either in comodation or in criticism. He was, and probably still is, too bothered by almost anything else to be mailing responses to curious readers. Or so he suggests in The Letters of E.B. White.

I, who am perhaps, of a relatively contrary nature have chosen to disregard his warning. So, I am writing this letter to you for two reasons - the first is solely my own and the second is one of a community nature.

Having finished reading This House of Sky, I am left with the pleasurable remembrances of those chapters. It has been such an awfully long time since I've read a book that captivated me so easily and entirely by the simplicity of its style, the eloquence of its expression. It just seems to me that you sacrificed nothing and wrote your story to satisfy no one other than yourself - no editor, no publisher, no critic. The poetic quality that filters through your prose is elegant in its unassuming posture.

I suspect what you don't need is another book review, particularly from one who is not professionally qualified to critique. So perhaps, it is best that I simply say that I do treasure your book and did enjoy your comments on Rankin (I walk by one of his houses every day on the way to work and in Court, we deal with the Rankin estate on a number of occasions) and I am sorry I missed the opportunity to take part at the Montana gathering in Missoula in mid-May.

Although that basically concludes my portion of this letter, the letter itself is not concluded.

How awkward I feel in composing this second portion - the idea is a bit far-fetched and I feel rather presumptive in my asking. In essence, I am extending an invitation to you to address a "smallish" group of people here, in Helena, at any time that you might be in Montana between the last part of October and the last of April, 1980. Because the group sponsoring your address is a committee of the Congregational Church, they can offer no monetary compensation. Not because the desire does not exist - it is the
"monetary" aspect that tends to remain elusive and always just slightly out of reach.

You may find such an invitation peculiar. Perhaps it is. But it is through the church that so many of the congregation have discovered you and your book. Whether or not you are aware of it, (and probably you are not), the minister of our church has read and shared portions of your book with all of us at one time or another. Little did you know that you were writing for Sunday morning sermons when you wrote This House of Sky.

That is just about the sum of it. The format followed is a simple one. One Sunday evening each month, the educational committee along with other members of the church and community assemble for an hour of perhaps an hour and a half. There is generally a presentation of some nature – a talk on historic Helena, a reading, or a slide show dealing with energy or perhaps a discussion on some topic that rarely relates to church or to any religious topic.

If the invitation sounds impossible and you have no plans to travel to Montana during this time, I still thank you for you consideration of such an idea. We well realize that it would be sheer chance that you might return to Montana again so soon and only our good fortune if you could volunteer that amount of time in Helena. But if you foresee a possibility of this happening, I hope you'll let me know – you choose the time convenient to you and we will accommodate. If nothing more, I can promise you a reasonably good Chinese dinner on Last Chance Gulch and the company of several This House of Sky fans. There are worse things. Unless, of course, you hate Chinese food.

Not in the spirit of a last-chance-bit of flattery, I thank you for taking time to read this and for writing your book in the way that you did. Such a book is uncommonly rare.

Sincerely,

Susan Leaphart
411 North Ewing
Helena, Montana 59601
Dear Mr. Doig:

A first for us - a "fan" letter to an author - but we do wish to inform you that we have received much pleasure from reading both your books. We are familiar with and fond of both locales. We have spent considerable time in the Northwest, seeing it by foot, motorcycle, truck-camper and cruiser. As for Ringling, I spent much of my youth there. You mentioned my maternal grandmother, Betty Harder, in "This House of Sky," relating her reporting to the sheriff that sechs boys from Sechsteen were tearing down her hotel. Furthermore, we have a mutual cousin, Eddie Doig, Jr. My aunt, Christine Harder, was Eddie's mother. Another point of interest, we sold our home in Ringling to Angus Doig when we left there in 1937.

Recently a Helena television station presented a documentary of the Doigs' alcohol operation in Ringling. We were delighted to see Uncle Ed as the patriarch of the Doig family looking very dapper at 85 years-of-age and speaking very articulately. His well-remembered Scottish burr was a pleasure to hear again. He supplied background information of Ringling's early days and reported that during Prohibition some of the natives produced alcohol also. However, he concluded that they couldn't have drunk in ten years what his nephews will produce in twenty-four hours.

Thank you for sharing your experiences with us through your books. We feel that we know you and your wife well. Our best wishes for continued success and happiness.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

(Mr. and Mrs. Harry L. Mertens)
5 Sept. '81

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Martens—

Thanks so much for the kind words about my books. I was interested to hear about the tv show, as Gordon Doig had invited me to Ringling to see it made but I couldn't manage to be there. I did see the alcohol plant a few days before that, though. Maybe you knew that the other Doig brother, Jay, this past year has built a new house in Ringling and I think he's using it as a bunkhouse the one you sold to Angus.

I haven't seen Ed for a couple years, but he was sure going strong last I did see of him. Also, I liked his "new" wife very much.

Maybe our paths will cross sometime when I come through Helena. Until then, my best wishes and thanks.
Mr. Ivan Doig
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
New York, N. Y. 10017

Dear Mr. Doig,

During the '40's and '50's, my young brother said to me, "Don't tell anyone about Montana -- we want to keep it just the way it is." Well, I have not followed his advice. In the small library where I work -- way down here in Texas -- we have a start on a Montana Fan Club, partly because of your books and partly because I love Montana and will tell anyone who will listen.

"Dancing at the Rascal Fair" was my introduction to you, and I have gobbled down the preceding books in a backward fashion, each one touching a response: Oh, I remember the summer of a forest fire like that -- OR -- Yes, the mountains are really that blue.

That depression year that you were born, my professor father brought his small family to Missoula where the offer of a teaching position at the University sounded like the answer to "work-without-pay" at Nebraska Wesleyan. I was 10, the war had just started in Europe, and we four felt very much the adventurers as we made ourselves a new home in the Garden City. Many years later, after making my own home in other interesting parts of the United States, I STILL call Missoula and Montana -- HOME!

The nostalgic description of your composite town of Gros Ventre brought a smile as I read about the Eddy's baker sign in the store window and the old Northern Hotel -- familiar to all Missoulians. I can smell the bakery now -- it wasn't but a few blocks from our first house on Hill Street.

And there were more memories as I went to the old photo album my Mother kept to find a snapshot of me huddled along with cousins and aunts and uncles on the beach rocks at Neah Bay during a particularly cold, damp day of summer beachcombing. Visits we spent in nearby Forks where my Uncle George pioneered a general store to cater to the needs of the loggers. We cousins were fond of posing in front of the huge cut-away log which almost filled the front of the lot next to the store over which the family lived. That has been 35 years ago, and I imagine that Forks and Neah Bay have grown into non-recognition for me -- maybe the log is gone.

It was fun to see acknowledgments made to familiar names, those whom I remember from years at the University -- Ross Toole, Dorothy Johnson who knew my Mother, Rich Roeder whose former wife Janet is a close friend.

So thank you for renewing memories and at the same time providing me with such superb prose, unforgettable similes, and authentic, warm people who have become literary friends. I am looking forward to another book from Ivan Doig.

Yours truly,

[Signature]

1100 Shady Oak Drive
Dickinson, Texas 77539
August 1, 1988
18 Aug. '88

Dear Peggy Hannigan--

Thanks for taking the trouble to send me your good words about my books. The next one is on schedule for autumn '90 publication--so far so good.

I've never lived in Missoula but it continues to be a special place to me; my wife and I have a number of writer friends there, plus others who teach history or journalism at UM. Indeed, on a research trip to Montana in June we had supper on the banks of Rattlesnake Creek with James Welch, Bill Kittredge, Rich DeMarinis, Mildred Walker and Ripley Schemm, gifted Missoula writers all. If you don't know Mildred Walker's 1940's Montana novel WINTER WHEAT, you might be interested in a look--not a great piece of work in some ways, but her portrait of a girl coming of age in the Montana of then has always chimed with me, even across the lines of gender! all best wishes
Crows Holy Men gather in a medicine lodge for prayers. Offerings of food and tobacco visible on the altar in the foreground are gifts from tribal members for prayers on their behalf. Note chant drums and bundles of eagle wings, used in the ceremony. About 1870-80.

Dear Joan & Carol,

Don't think we're putting you off; we're putting our lives off. Our break is Mar. 15-24 but we still don't know if we're going to Calif. But no children are home, 2 dams are free & we'd love to have you stay with us during your break. Feel free to leave it open if moment (the only horse we ride) Bill & Juliette

POST CARD
ADDRESS

Ivan & Carol Doig
17021 10K N.W.
Seattle, WA
98177
Dear Bill and Juliette--

Spur of the moment sounds like a horse we can all bet on. Your offer to take us in sounds great, so long as you let us pay for the food and booze that week. Unless winter comes back for the next month and we opt for California (it's snowed more than once out here and we feel abused all to hell), we'd plan to hit Missoula either on Sunday, March 21st, or Monday the 25th, and probably head home on Saturday the 30th. Our notion is pretty much social this time--I have maybe a day to spend in the UM archives, and might go to Helena for one--so we'd hope to be out and around and not in your professorial hair(s) too much. How about if we give you a call about March 11-12, see if any of us have made up our minds about anything. Those guys down at the Oxford probably couldn't spell tergiversation, but they'd recognize it on the h of us if we walked in, huh? (If we could decide tomo walk in...)

All is well here. Penguin bought the paperback rights to English Creek the other day, changing the message on our kitchen blackboard from a fretful week of "will Peng-win it?" to "Peng-won it!" The father of Scott Reeburgh, the Alaska college kid you shared this house with a few spring breaks ago, reports that Scott has a job as a bush pilot this summer. Anything else we can think of, we'll tell you in March. (If...)

luv
March 18, 1979

1536 Dickinson
Missoula, Montana 59801

Dear Mr. Doig,

Julie at the Fine Print Bookstore in Missoula gave me your address so I could write you a sort of "fan" letter - actually it's a double "fan" letter, as you will soon see shortly.

Last fall I read a review of "This House of Sky" in Time Magazine. It has been a great many years since a book review with quotes from the author has electrified me to the point of actually rushing out and buying the book. In fact, the only other time that has happened was when a Kurt Vonnegut quote so stunned me that I ended up reading all his works.

Anyway, I knew I had to get your book, and lo and behold, the next time I was downtown and in the Fine Print, there was your book along with a notice that you would be showing up in person to autograph copies. I was ecstatic until I found out that the day you would be in Missoula was the day I would not be. Julie, however, said that she would save me some copies and have you autograph them for the recipients.

As the daughter of an author (and a very minor one myself), I know how nice it is to get unsolicited "feedback" from readers. I gave your book to my husband, Martin, and to Ted and Jane Raph (dear friends) for Christmas. I just received a letter from Jane last week, and I thought what she said about your book was so lovely, that I wanted you to share it too. Before I quote from her letter, let me first explain that Jane is a professor emeritus from Rutgers University where she was chairman of the Ed. Psych. Department, and taught graduate students in developmental psychology. She is one of 4 or 5 people in this country who is considered an expert on Piaget's theories. She had had several books and many papers published. Her husband is now retired so they live in Phoenix where she teaches part-time at the University and continues to give workshops around the country. Here is exactly what she wrote (punctuation and all):

"I suddenly realized I haven't acknowledged the marvelous book. I haven't been so moved by a book, so involved in its story, or so impressed by the writing in a long time. The fact that the biographical dates coincided with my growing up, approximately, made me realize how poor my geography lessons had been, and how little I knew about life-styles other than our own, which was urban mid-west and later small town, but not in such vast, lonely country, and so close to the elements of bitter cold and snow, and even the heat of summer -- and there was such scarcity -- and yet the people had a sense of what was right, many of them, and outlasted each disaster... incredible. I think the moving part of the book was the development of the character and strength of the boy -- granted his father showed a wisdom and beauty beyond what many men are capable of, I suppose, but there wasn't an ounce of sentimentality on the pages. A grand book, and marvelous gift. Did you meet the author? If so, how? If I were still teaching developmental psychology, I would include it on a list of novels I developed which was an option I used to provide for part of the course requirements."
My husband was also moved by your book in a special way. He was raised on a ranch just east of Rapid City, South Dakota during the dust bowl and depression era. His father was similar to yours in many respects, and he too died of emphysema—a result of the years of dust and toil. I might add that Martin, who is now a banker, doesn't often get through an entire book—he's frequently too tired from reading fine print and government documents at the office to read at home. That he read all of your book in record time is silent testimony to its power.

I hope you are happily immersed in writing another.

With very best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Ranney Moss
Dear Ranney Moss--

Yes, it's one of the bonuses of writing when a reader is thoughtful enough to pass along appreciation of a book. I'm glad you liked Sky. I've heard from quite a number of Montanans, and so far there hasn't been a complaint in the lot, which only goes to prove how generous a people Montanans are.

I was quite interested in Mrs. Raph's response to the book. My main notion in writing the book was simply to tell the story, in the best language I knew how to manage, and I'm gratified if other values accidentally were carried in that cargo.

Perhaps we'll meet sometime in Missoula. I seem to have a standing invitation to give a reading at the U, and I'd like to do so. I've been much impressed with, and have much liked, the Missoula writers I met when I autographed at Julie's store. But likely I won't make it to town until the spring of '36; I intend that my next book will come out later that year, and it would be a good time to do some Montana speaking before that happens. For now, my thanks to you for writing—and the news which may interest you, that House of Sky has been nominated for a National Book Award.

All the best,

[Signature]
Dear Jack—

I don't know whether this is a New Year's resolution coming early, or a last summer's resolution coming late, but at any rate I'm about to tap your historical lore. I should have done it in person last summer but the time got away, and I arrived home without ever having asked you what you know about Benson English, and/or any descendants still living.

Here's what I'm up to. I'm writing a novel about Montana during the Depression years, and I intend to use a setting somewhat like Dupuyer's. Geographically, that is; I'm making up a Choteau-sized town called Gros Ventre to put on the site, and the characters are figments, as it's said, of my imagination. But I'd kind of like to call the creek flowing past the town English Creek, mostly because I'm so taken with the ring of the name "Ben English." At some point in the novel I'd probably have an explanation of the creek's name, and that's why I'd like to know whatever I can about Ben English.

I've of course read the piece about him in BY GONE DAYS AND MODERN WAYS, and it's helpful, and I've also come across a few newspaper mentions of him in the Acantha collection in the Choteau Public Library. But when I tried the Montana Historical Society library they had no material on Ben English, and when I asked at the Conrad Public Library they referred me to you as the Dupuyer historian. If you know of descendants, that'd be a great help; but I also simply need to know what Ben English looked like, any stories about him, anything to help bring him into focus. Any suggestions?

All is well here. A novel of mine which came out this fall, full of cussing Swedes escaping from the Russians in Alaska in 1853, has sold okay, and Winter Brothers came out in paperback. If the state of Washington wasn't such a financial disaster area, things could hardly be better.

Regards to Harriet, and best wishes for '83.
Dear Carol-

I'll be at Polebridge 4 July, but my schedule after that is unsure now. We can discuss it over a beer at The Northern Lights Saloon at parade time. Tentatively, I want to do in Bozeman "night of 07.45" but not yet confirmed.

Karen is in Oregon (as you may know) teaching her aged father. Unless things change drastically, she will be there on the 4th. I am going out today and will return to MT/MTI about 26th June.

Regards,

Jerry

P.S. Perhaps we could meet in Whitefish for supper 3 July - or are you booked?
Dear Jerry—

I've consulted with Ivan and his backbreaking schedule (he's been on the bookstore trail, coast-to-coast, for 2 months) and it looks like the best time to get together with you is indeed over a beer at Polebridge on the 4th and at dinner in Whitefish the night before, if you can conveniently join us. After Ivan's book signings in Kalispell there on the 3rd, we'll head for the Stuptown Station in Whitefish for supper about 6:30-7.

As to getting together after the 4th, and our hope of having you show us some of your Chief Mtn. country, probably another time is better, hmm? Please do go ahead with your Bozeman plans, as it turns out we're going to stay on with Dave and Marcella at their place on the 5th (as well as the 4th). We can try over dinner to divine a future time when you, we, and maybe Karen are all available for a day or two of roaming, okay? Looking forward to seeing you. If you need to reach us on July 2-3, we're at the Duck Inn in Whitefish, 862-3825.

best from both of us,
Box 91
Babb, MT
59411

Carol Doig
17021 10th Ave. NW
Seattle, WA
98177
Dear Karen and Jerry

This is an historic document: the first letter written on my first computer, which I've resorted to in order to straighten up 29 years of teaching files. I shall practice by seeing if I can get it to print two copies of this, so you can each have one. Is this a great country or what?

Ivan's tour-of-Montana plans are now advanced enough that I can confirm that he plans to finish up by July 3, and that we plan to spend the 4th and 5th with Dave and Marcella, at their place north of Polebridge.

Should you be available, we'd gladly spend the next couple of days under expert tutelage, seeing Jerry's part of the world, including the Chief Mountain area. We'll be driving and could meet you wherever you'd like.

This will be the first vacation time that Ivan will have, since the book touring started up coast to coast in late April. We'll head home from Montana with all that completed, and he'll be able to get started on the next novel.

If this shouldn't fit with what else you're doing, we'll understand, but it would be great fun to see you, and travel the territory a bit with you, if possible.

Please feel free to call us here, collect, if that's easiest: (206) 542-6658. We'll be around through June 14, after which we head for the big booksellers' convention in Chicago. Then we'll be back home June 20 through 23, after which we leave for Missoula and other points.

July 2 and 3 we'll be staying at the Duck Inn at Whitefish: 862-3825.

Our best regards.
Dear Mr. Vichs--

I'm the person who called you about a month ago during your bout with the flu, saying that Mike Hardy suggested you as a source on some Forest Service details for a book I'm writing. As I mentioned then, I'll be through Missoula this summer and will get in touch with you, but I wonder if you could help me out with a few quick points in the meantime.

The book I'm writing takes place in 1939. If you go back that far in the Forest Service, can you tell me--

--whether the correct term is "alternate ranger" or "assistant ranger," or whether they were separate jobs? What was involved in the job(s)?

--what were the living arrangements for a ranger with a family? (That is, a wife and a couple of kids.) Were the living quarters separate from the ranger station, in your experience?

--where would an alternate ranger be stationed? Same place as the district ranger, or some place else on the district?

--would there be more than one alternate ranger per district?

--Mike said you were District Ranger at Powell. Can you tell me the personnel—that is, their jobs, not their names—you had under you then, whenever that was?

Sorry to bother you with this, but the only way I can be accurate is to ask someone who knows. If you happen to see Mike, give him my best.

regards

[Signature]
May 16, 1983

Dear Mr. Doig --

Sorry for the delay in answering your letter but I have still been under the weather. I will try to answer your questions to the best of my ability.

My Forest Service time was 1930 thru 1970.

The terms "alternate ranger" and assistant ranger" are both correct. An alternate ranger was a individual who had worked his way up thru the ranks. An assistant ranger was a professional who had received a degree in usually forestry. Both did the same kind of work.

Usually there was living quarters for the ranger and his family. Some districts closed for the winter which required the range and his family to move into town. The living quarters were part of the ranger station compound.

In most cases the alternate ranger was stationed at the ranger station where the ranger was. In some larger districts the alternate may be stationed in another part of the district where there an usually amount of work.

On large districts there would usually be two alternate rangers. During the 1960's I had two alternates on the Powell District and then on the Sandpoint district I had an assistant ranger and an alternate. Usually the alternate ranger was the fire fighting specialist.

At the Powell district I had the following that is to the best of my memory: 2 Alternate rangers, a fire dispatcher, a headquarters guard at Elk Summit, (this was at one end of the district and he would do about the same work as an alternate. Station fireman at Powell-his first responsibilties was to be ready to go to a fire in a moments notice. Road foreman, in charge of the road maintenance crew. Three packers. About 10 to 15 road, trail and telephone maintenance crew members. Also on the district there were 29 lookouts.

I hope the above will help you and I am looking forward to meeting you. Please excuse the typing, since I am not a typist and still feeling under the weather I don't do a very good job.

Regards

Henry J. Vich
Dear Henry--

Thanks greatly for your informative letter about the set-up of ranger life. It answered several points for me. I'll look forward to seeing you this summer, likely late July. Hope you're feeling improved by now.

best,
Dear John—

I'd hoped Carol and I would make it to Dupuyer and Valier this summer and take you up on your invitation to visit the ranch, but it didn't pan out. Another time, we hope. Anyway, I was pleased to get your letter and to know that my writing has had some reverberations with you. I very much remember when you moved to the Valier country and showed up on the schoolbus, and in retrospect it is a bit dumbfounding how much was enclosed in each of us who rattled together in that bus so many hours. Maybe it was a mark of our Montana upbringing, that we tended to tough it out instead of talking things over with somebody else; I especially think sometimes of Charles Trafelet, whom I was around every day for years and yet never ended up really knowing what went on in him. As was the case with others with me, obviously. One of the bonuses of This House of Sky has been the lasting chord that Frances Tidyman struck with readers and those who knew her.

There's just been a book published of reminiscences about great teachers and there on the cover is Mrs. T, next to Einstein's favorite teacher, Margaret Mead's favorite teacher, and so on. If you remember Mrs. Tidyman's youngest son, Bill, he was hugely helpful to me in providing details for my description of her in Sky. Bill's an FBI agent, in the Los Angeles area; saw him when I did a booksigning there last fall.

I'm encouraged that you've managed to stick to the land, to ranching, as I never managed to; glad somebody could. Well, enough until we cross paths. I'm pretty sure I won't be back to Montana except for a quick in-and-out to Bozeman and MSU in late October, but maybe next year. Thanks for writing, and regards to Linda, whom I think I met at a Valier class(es) reunion.

best [Signature]
Dear Juan,

I was re-reading your "This Home of Thy" the other night and got to thinking about some of the similarities and things we had in common in our early years. Tom Chadwick had your address so I thought I'd drop you a line or two.

You probably remember I was raised at Townsend just over the hill from 16 mile country. Your cousin Marvin was in my

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Registered Angus Seedstock
Mammoth Jackstock and Mules

The Performance You Want and the Pedigree You Need
class there. My father knew your uncles.

Your cousin Gordon was a fraternity
brother at Bozeman. We moved to
Valier about a year after you moved
to Dupuyer. Mrs. Tidyman's brother
was our neighbor at Townsend. My
Dad leased the Jensen Place for
5 or 6 yrs. (1964 & 1970). I guess
what struck me about your book was
that, although we knew each other
in high school, I never really had
considered all the trials, tribulations,
and triumphs that you had been
through. I don't remember ever
meeting your Dad or your grandmother
or for that matter Mrs. Chadwick.

We had a tough go making it
at Valier. I guess at that time
of life I never much thought
about what the other guys
problems might or might not be.
Everybody is a product of their background and environment. It shows in your writing. I guess I identify more with your literature than some people because of its setting and our similar back grounds.

You have a unique way of using the skills of writing. I enjoy the way you put words together. I haven't got around to reading your last book yet. But I will.

I really have no ulterior motive in writing. If you ever get out here again, stop in.

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The Performance You Want and the Pedigree You Need
We are in the Registered Cattle business as you can see. We've done well at times and darn near went under in 1985-86. Nothing pencilvery well in Ag right now unless you've got quite a lot of equity and do your own work. It's been a good life for me and a good place to raise a family. The climate here is tough enough to keep us from being over crowded with people.

Anyway this grew into more than 2 lines.

Take care,

John Golden
Tran,

I just noticed the enclosed article in the Tribune about your relatives, so thought I would send it to you.

Time and society have changed Montana. The Flathead and Bitteroot areas are receiving a big influx of out-of-state people. We have outsiders trying to tell us how to manage our state and its resources. One thing about the area where I live is that the climate is too tough for most of the environmentalists to live here year around anyway.

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The Performance You Want and the Pedigree You Need
I just noticed that the letter I got from you was dated 24 Aug. last year. That's how long it's been sitting on my desk.

We have had quite a drought up here up until the last 10 days when it started to rain. I've never seen people as uptight over the weather as they have been with this last dry spell. I think most of them must have greater financial pressure than I realized. Agriculture is a tough business from a cash flow standpoint now. Most of Montana's banks are owned by Bank of America from Minnesota now and they really don't care about how some farmers in Montana are doing.

Did I tell you that we run a few sheep here now. I have Montadale's they were started from a cross between North Country Cheviots and Columbians.
After I got your letter last summer, I was in the store in Dupuyer, and Maurice Trafelet walked in. He is a school custodian in Salt Lake City. I had an insanity attack and got back on the Valier School Board. One of our teachers in the grade school in Fred Trafelet. He is Alberta's son. Any way we had a sexual harassment charge brought against Fred. It didn't turn out to be a valid charge. Fortunately, but my mother said there is no way that Zella Trafelet's grandson could be involved in anything like that. She had it figured out.
no matter what the evidence would have been. My mother is 79 and dad is 80. They are still living on the ranch. My oldest son manages the place for them.

I see Jack Hayne and Tom Chadwick quite often. Tom goes to our church in Dupuyer and to lease pasture from Jack and Harriet.

Well, this is enough. Stop in if you get up this way.
May 27, '79

Dear Mr. Board—

Thanks for taking the trouble to write me about Sky. I'm much flattered if it brought to mind any comparison with any of Alan Paton's work, certainly.

Your mention of Rankin interested me. I'm quite surprised at the enthusiastic response I've had to the very brief mention of Rankin in my book. At a conference in Missoula a week or so ago, I was astonished to be introduced to an audience with specific praise for my depiction of Rankin, and afterward people began coming up to me and telling me Rankin stories I had never even dreamed of. I do hope someone will write the Rankin story sometime, although it probably won't be me. Someday, though, maybe I can hear your own experiences with the Rankins. I get to Great Falls occasionally—have very close friends in Wayne Arnst of the Tribune, and his wife Genise. In the meanwhile, I appreciate your interest in my writing, and I had better get on with them next book.

best regards.

[Signature]
Mr. Ivan Doig
C/o Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
757 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Doig:

I have just finished reading *This House of Sky, Landscapes of a Western Mind* which, I believe, is one of the finest written books that I have ever read. When I first started reading it, I told people that it was the most beautifully written book that I had ever read since reading . . . , and I was unable to finish the sentence because I was unable to call to mind another book by which to compare it. (Perhaps one of Alan Paton's books would come closest; I not sure.) At this point in time, though, your writing remains singular and is without comparison.

You must know that your choice of words constantly amazed me. Your power of description is certainly unique and the impact of the deep, powerful emotions which your writing relates is beyond my ability to describe.

One of the things your book did to me was to evoke so many memories of my own about my parents (my father also died of emphysema), friends, people who have had a great influence on my own life, and one of the people who you mentioned in your book. That is, I was especially interested in what you had to say about Wellington D. Rankin who I met several times and interviewed once or twice while doing research on his sister, Jeannette, for my master's thesis. (As a personal aside, the image that remains is close to the description of the judge that Thomas Wolfe pictured in the opening chapters of *You Can't Go Home Again*.)

Please know that I am appreciative of your work and that I wish you the very best in your future endeavors.

Most sincerely yours,

John C. Board
Nov. 10, 1984

Dear Ivan,

Many thanks for your letter and the Washington Post review. To be compared with Robert Louis Stevenson is really something! At the rate you are going I feel strongly you will surpass A.B. Guthrie as Montana's most renowned author. I personally think you are a far better writer than Bud. I cried when I finished English Creek...I had grown so fond of Jick and his family. The one saving grace is that more of Jick and his family can be expected in your next two novels of the trilogy.

It was great to see you and Carol twice within the last month...once in Seattle and here in Great Falls. I thought you might like to have the enclosed photo. I thoroughly enjoyed having you on "Today in Montana" and was thrilled you had such a successful autograph party at the Little Professor Book Center here. Joanne Horst was walking on air for days afterward. You have an open invitation to be on my show whenever you are in town. And let's hope the next time you are here we can at least have lunch or you and Carol can come to our home for a dinner and an evening of conversation.

I would love to see any other reviews you might get for English Creek. I did see the rave one in USA Today. I think you have a real winner on your hands my friend. Congratulations. I personally loved the book and will never forget the story. Keep in touch.

Warmest Regards,

[Signature]
December 23, 1986

Dear Ivan:

The staff and I enjoyed more than I can tell you the strangely living Christmas message. I posted it on our bulletin board for a time. But I think my wife enjoyed it most.

Forgive my oversight in misspelling Carol's name. I am having all the bookplates corrected.

Our best to you for '87.

Cheers!

Sincerely,

Richard Gercken

RG/gc
27 May '87

Dear Richard—

Just a quick note to let you know (a) a trio of books is on the way to you for the library, from one of my cleaning-out impulses around here, and (b) that I'm evidently not going to get to the GF area this year until around the end of Sept.; if there's any reading or anything I can do for the benefit of the library then, let me know this summer and we'll try work out when and how, okay?

Everything is just terrific here; Carol and I are just back from the American Booksellers convention, where there was much hoopla about my next novel—Dancing at the Facebook Fair, pub date in Sept., 50,000(?!) first printing. Startin' to have fun now, Richard; see you...all best

P.S. If you know Jo-Ann Swenson, formerly of the Trib, could you sometime pass me her address so that I can direct a copy of this next book to her? If it's unhandy, don't—I can do it via the Trib.
November 25, 1986

Dear Ivan:

Many thanks for the excellent copy of Cadillac Desert by Marc Reisner. The bookplate reads: GIFT OF IVAN AND CAROLE DOIG IN MEMORY OF CHARILIE DOIG AND BESSIE RINGER.

Forgive this late response to your grand September letter which did so much for me. I am delighted to know that you might be speaking on the glittering hill for the Montana Library Association and am more than pleased to learn that you might be interested in a Great Falls Public Library appearance in April, May or June. Per your suggestion, I will write you in early '87 to see what date we might agree on. I hope nothing happens to alter your plans.

We need you.

I love your new RASCAL title.

Hold the good thought.

Sincerely,

Richard Gercken
Director

RG/gc
September 16, 1986

Dear Ivan,

Many thanks for the H.L. Davis and the A.B. Guthrie. I suppose you know that hardcover copies of THE BIG SKY are not always easy to come by.

How's homesteading? I keep wondering about that.

Did you travel this summer? I had my first vacation in seven years. I went back home to Florida. Unfortunately I had to go alone. But I made peace with my mean old mother and found out that I can't make peace with my brother (I found myself thinking of that last telephone conversation between Jick and Alec). I enjoyed driving up through Georgia and reuniting with my wild and woolly Caroline cousins. Charleston was a shock. Swirling freeways and smog, smog, smog. A lot of good preservation, too, though.

In some ways being alone worked out well. I did things I had always wanted to do: drove out to Key West on the overseas highway, hiked in the Everglades.

Have you read any good books? I am reading THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS for the first time. It knocks me out.

Great Falls plods along. As you know, that's what Great Falls does.

I trust all is well. Thank you again for the books.

Sincerely,

Richard

I enjoyed your piece on the Rockies in the NYT travel magazine.
Dear Richard--

Liked your letter, its newsiness and its "feel" of how life has been with you. If you haven't noticed, you sound pretty good, whatever the vicissitudes of Great Falls and Montana. It just may be that I'll steal your line about how Great Falls is along, sometime—
with utter ironclad anonymity guaranteed, of course.

Couple of things: you mentioned once putting bookplates in honor of Carol and me in a batch of books I sent, and that's greatly gratifying to both of us. If you have any that are still unbookplated, or if there are now in the future (as I hope there will be, whenever I find time to sort shelves here), I'd like some of those to read in commemoration of Charlie Doig and Bessie Ringer, okay? Your gesture of bookplates is not only appreciated, it's downright classy.

Next, I'm still hoping we're going to have major stints in Montana next year, possibly at least April and June. If I can usefuly do a reading on behalf of the library, let me know. April in particular is going to need some sorting out; I think I'm to speak at the Montana Library Ass'n shindig in Butte, but neither side has firmed that up yet; and I think the Missoula public library has something in mind for me, too. If you're interested too, why not drop me a line early in '87 and we'll see what happens.

You asked about the homesteaders and me: we're trudging toward the
downstairs. Much of the year, I've had to work around a minor but nagging eye problem, so the schedule is tighter than I'd like by now; but it still looks as if this book--DANCING AT THE RASCAL FAIR--should be in print about a year from now. Spread the word from the rooftops.

I'll look forward to seeing you in '87.

Be well.
May 23, 1986

Dear Ivan:

As a Montana man writing to a Montana man, I hesitate to embarrass you by relating that I burst into tears on receipt of your letter and check. So much for a six-month pent-up strain and the sympathetic gesture that punctured the dam and opened the flood gates.

I recovered quickly and shared your letter with the staff to whom it has meant a great deal. The generous donation from you and Carol will help us buy for our patrons two or three expensive items we could not otherwise have afforded.

I am glad you are hunkering in on homesteading for this summer. We will miss you both but look forward to '87.

Thank you for everything.

Sincerely,

Richard Gercken
Director

RG/gc
May 29, 1985

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 10th Avenue Northwest
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Ivan:

I had a call late last week from a school librarian friend I like and admire. She requested your address. She is a member of a group who wanted to invite you as speaker.

I don't like giving out the address of anyone without permission. I had misplaced the telephone number I had for you so I couldn't call. I went ahead and gave her the address because she had mentioned a possible honorarium, and I didn't want my scruples to be interfering with that. I hope it was all right.

I also hope I am not helping set up a rival audience for your appearance at the Library. I said nothing about your travel plans, figuring that to be your business.

Sincerely,

Richard
Richard Gercken
Director

RG/fc
4 June '55

Dear Richard—

I don't mind at all when someone of good judgment provides my address upon request. Who knows—with luck, maybe the lady will provide me enough money to bring me to Great Falls so I can perform at your library for free!

Speaking of my coming to the library, as you and I have talked over in the past, I've tried hard at this summer's schedule but haven't managed to make it yield. It now seems that Carol and I will be in the St. Falls area only around the 4th of July, and I know that's no time to try anything at the library. We have complications, the main one the health of Carol's father, which is going to cut our expected time in Montana this summer. So what I would much like to do is defer any reading or speech at your library until some occasion brings me to Montana again—perhaps a Library Week, perhaps something else—and then we can do the occasion up right.

As ever, my best to you and your staff, and thanks indeed for providing the lady with my address.

regards

[Signature]
March 8, 1985

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Avenue N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

Please accept a belated congratulations on your NEA grant. That is good news for Washington - and Montana. I posted the article from the NEW YORK TIMES on our staff room bulletin board. Did you see the article? You were identified, of course, as from Seattle. We did doctor the clipping and added White Sulphur Springs and Dupuyer.

Sincerely,

Richard Gercken
Director

Dear Richard--

21 March '85

You saw my good news in the NY Times, and the grant does indeed make the writing life more pleasant. Not incidentally, it was an excerpt from English Creek that won me the grant, and the book has done well in other respects too. I'm at work now on the homesteader novel.

I haven't forgotten our discussion about my doing a reading or something of benefit to the library. It'll be a while, maybe May, before I can work out my schedule of Montana weeks this summer; I'll let you know then, and if you'd like, we can see if a Mt. Falls reading can be worked out. Meanwhile, my best to you and your staff.
February 16, 1988

Dear Ivan:

Long time no hear and all that stuff. Sorry about the delay.

We have reserved a coach seat on the Delta 7:15 a.m. flight from Great Falls on April 22.

We have reserved a room for you at the Rainbow Hotel for the night of April 21.

Following are car rental agencies in Havre:

- Avis
  - 800-331-1212
- Budget Rent
  - 406-265-1156
- Oldsmobile
  - 406-265-7865
- Rent-a-Wreck
  - 406-265-1481
- Ugly Duckling
  - 406-265-1132

My understanding is that you would be arranging your own train ticket at your end. We will cover the price difference. (Thank you.)

I'm running out of town. I'll reply to the rest of your letters on my return.

Thank you for everything.

Sincerely,

Richard

Richard Gercken
Director

RG/gc
Dear Richard—

Just a bit of bookkeeping: a copy of my Amtrak ticket, for eventual reimbursement—when I hit Great Falls will be perfectly okay.

On reflection, I've decided to hang on to the Rainbow Hotel room. Convenient to the library, gives me a place to hole up and rehearse the talk, etc.

I hope you're thriving. See you in April.

all best,
TO: GREAT ESCAPE TRAVEL
16 SIXTH ST. NO
GREAT FALLS MT 59401

FOR: DOIG/IVAN MR

22 APR 86 - FRIDAY
AIR LV GREAT FALLS 710A DELTA FLT: 1877 SPCL COACH
AR SALT LAKE CITY 831A NON-STOP SNACK
AIR LV SALT LAKE CITY 916A DELTA FLT: 1731 SPCL COACH
AR SEATTLE TACOMA 1020A NON-STOP SNACK

PLEASE RECONFIRM PRIOR TO DEPARTURE
VICKI***GREAT ESCAPE TRAVEL
THANKS MR. DOIG**HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR VISIT TO GT. FALLS
March 31, 1988

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

Dear Mr. Doig:

Enclosed is the itinerary that accompanied your airline ticket, as requested. I have included also the brochure for the 1988 Speaker Series, with the insert describing your presentation.

Your Great Falls fans are eager to hear your thoughts/ideas on the topic of "Main Street, MT." What a marvelous way for us to end our 1988 Speaker Series!

Please let us know if we can be of any further service to you. We are awaiting your photo so that the Tribune can do a story. Thank you in advance for your expeditious response.

Also--a room has been reserved at the Rainbow Hotel for you for the night of the 21st.

Sincerely,

Sandy Hinz
Speaker Series Coordinator
Dear Richard—

Not only did my return trip to Seattle go okay, but the Delta flight actually arrived a bit early. A fitting climax to the Great Falls visit that I, at least, was very pleased with.

A few stray ends, which I either forgot to ask you about or didn't know about at the time:

—Could you kindly provide me of the Billings and Bozeman phone book Yellow Page listings for Recreational Vehicle dealers? Carol and Inneed to rent an RV briefly for this summer's research, and to my dismay I couldn't come up with anything adequate in Ft. Falls; McCollum's on 10th Ave. S. only sells them, doesn't rent, for instance.

—Would you like me to write a note of appreciation to Mrs. Cordingley? If so, send along the name and address.

—Personal matters! Not that you can ever be replaced, but is it known yet who's going to succeed you in the Great Falls job? And who ought I to contact on the reference desk there if I need some quick help—Sister Marita was great, in the past.

—Finally, I trust the train ticket $$ is in the pipeline somewhere. I think I provided a copy of the ticket—$$308 worth—but if you need any other paperwork from me, let me know.

I guess that's it. The only thing wrong with last Friday was its valedictory overtones. All best wishes, truly, to you and your family in Masillon.
December 17, 1987

Dear Ivan:

Forgive another long silence on my part. I have not thanked you for the recent excellent additions to our book collection. I do appreciate the extent to which you look out for us. So do our patrons who are beneficiaries.

It was good of you to enclose the review from the Washington Post and to tip me off about the NYTBR. And, say, I thoroughly liked the interview in Publishers' Weekly. I hope you did. It seems to me that you saw to it that she did a good job.

It was a major disappointment to me not to hear you at the so-called cultural congress in Billings. It made up for it somewhat to be able to talk with you at Paris Gibson Square and to hear your presentation. (I think you drew their largest crowd, ever.)

Thank you for staying in touch. It has meant a lot during the most difficult year of my life. I wish you and your wife a happy holiday season and the best that the new year can bring.

I am dancing about the success of the Rascal Fair.

Sincerely,

Richard
February 27, 1988

Dear Ivan:

How's the best guy?

Thank you for your patience with the lack of information from this end. Right now we are retaining your reservation at the Rainbow Hotel for the night of the 21st until I hear differently from you. Is it acceptable if we hold your flight ticket here or would you rather we send it to you?

The librarian at the Toole County Library in Shelby tells me that Theo Bartschi who was 12 years old at the time of the Dempsey-Gibbons fight takes care of the local museum. There are apparently a lot of fight memorabilia she would be pleased to show you. If my information is correct, Mayor Jim Johnson, one of the fight promoters, is alive in a nursing home in Spokane. If you want me to pursue that for you, let me know. What you really wanted was someone, I think, to walk around with you and say "there" and "there"; and I haven't really come up with that. Let me know of anything else I might try to do.

Addresses you might want:

Heidi Alford
Librarian
Toole County Library
229 Maple Avenue
Shelby 59474

Ms. Theo Bartschi
P.O. Box 670
Shelby 59474

Did I ever send you the enclosed brochure? When we have prepared an announcement about your own program, I will send it on.
I gave a talk to a book club in town this morning. There was considerable excitement when I announced your April program at the Library. One member of the group had heard you, when her daughter graduated from MSU, accept your honorary degree. "The other recipients were mundane. Mr. Doig was eloquent."

My best to you and your wife always.

Sincerely,

Richard

10 March '38

Dear Richard, just quickly--

Sure, hang on to the plane ticket there, although please photocopy it or otherwise send me the exact schedule info, please. By April 1 will be fine. The stuff in your Feb. 27 letter is a great help—thanks a million. I think I wrote you I've decided I want the Rainbow hotel room.

Let's see, what else. I am gone to take questions after my talk, and to mingle generally, but no real reception this time, please.

best,
Dear Richard—

I took a hopeful look back into the Montana Historical Society paperwork about my "Welcome to Gros Ventre, Pop. 1,001" talk, but alas, no crystallizing description there; I'm just going to have to think aloud to you here on paper, and you make it into what you need, okay?

The slide show and talk are to convey what I began in English Creek, the creation of a fictional Montana town of the 1930's. A town of Montana-ness, so to speak. And now with Rascal Fair, there are some antecedents—the early version of the town, and a bit about what my young Scots immigrants were accustomed to seeing in Scotland. My fictional places of "Gros Ventre" and "Nethermuir" (in Scotland) are meant to typify to some extent, so in an amateurish way I've used some architectural history, gathering pics and details of buildings in various northern Montana towns, for instance, for my invented one. Some cultural geography is involved here, too; cultural geographers, when they say "landscape," don't mean just the raw forces of the physical environment but institutions, design preferences, systems of spatial order—for instance, making the main street of my invented town coincide with Highway 89 means it's a different town than if it was off a freeway ramp somewhere. In short, I'm trying to make up a town that's interesting historically and geographically, and the slides and commentary show and tell how I went about it. Building a fictional landscape, as one of my book-jacket blurbs says, the way Thomas Hardy created his Wessex and Faulkner his Yoknapatawpha.

Well, render that sensible in any way you can, Richard. Did I tell you over the phone the train ticket would be $208? When I called Amtrak back to make the actual reservation, they quoted me $308. (The better news is that the price evidently includes meals.) Anyway, you gauge how far you can stretch your budget in this railroad ticket matter. I am (a) of course game to have the whole $308 paid but also (b) willing to split the difference with you on what was evidently an Amtrak misquote to me or even (c) amenable to the original $208 quote if you're strapped for travel money. You decide, and let me know what to bill you for, after I pay for the ticket in about a month. Couple of details; if you possibly can, please pay my speaking fee and my expenses in separate checks, so that it doesn't all go into the new of the IRS computer as income, okay? And inevitably, I guess you need my Social Security #: 516-bb-bb10.

See you in sunny April.

best,

p.s. Don't strain over this, but if the library happens to have a 35mm. slide of the now-gone Gt. Falls smelter stack, I'd use it in the show with appropriate "cultural geography" reference.
137 Douglas St.
Rocky Mount, NC 27804
August 15, 1991

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

Dear Mr. Doig,

Recently I received a two shoeboxes full of photographs that were taken by my grandfather, Jesse Green. My grandfather homesteaded in the Horseshoe Hills northwest of Bozeman in 1912. Browsing through my new treasure I found the enclosed photo labeled, "Chas Doig Place SW of Robersons Aug 14, 1959". The Robersons were grandpa's sister and brother-in-law. Many of the other pictures labeled with the Roberson name include mention of "Trip to Sixteen". As a disinterested child I'm sure I was taken to the Roberson's and Sixteen to visit, but now as an interested adult I couldn't begin to tell anyone where the Roberson's homestead was located. As I look at the picture I can't help but ask the obvious, Are you the son of this Chas. Doig? Is this scene a source of inspiration for your writing? Anyway whatever your answer is, looking at the picture still makes reading English Creek and the other books in the trilogy more fun.

I have enjoyed your books. Though hard to find, they are a special joy in this place called North Carolina.

Dear Nancy Anderson--

Many thanks for the photo. I'm quite sure it's the homestead/ranch of my great-uncle D.L. Doig in the Tierney Basin near Sixteen. I haven't been there since 1978, when 160 of us--Doigs and family friends--held a reunion there at the D.L. place; at that time the house still was in pretty good shape, though abandoned. I wrote a bit about D.L. and my grandfather (who homesteaded on the adjoining acreage) early in my first book, This House of Sky. And certainly the Roberson name is familiar to me, through my dad, who indeed was the Charlie Doig descended from those homesteaders in the Sixteen country.

all best wishes and again,

my appreciation

[Signature]