Other than college and the army I was a lifelong stockbuyer and sheepman (who outlived four faithful working Border Collies).

I didn't start recreational reading until retiring 25 years ago. Of the hundreds of books I've enjoyed since then only one hit me so hard I couldn't stifle my sobbing;

Ivan - "What did you do with ***Spot****?"*

Grandma - "We had him done away with."

Ivan - (I locked myself in the bathroom and turned the water full on to obscure the sound of my crying).

from ***This House of Sky***

Since then I've tried to read all your books.

Would you please autograph this copy?

October 2003

To Doug Chambers

Ivan "Skavinsky" Doig

8215 Fowler Lane
Bozeman, Montana 59718
August 30, 1999

Dear Mr. Doig:

Thank you for your passionate and eloquent presentation at the Wallace Stegner Lecture Series at the Museum of the Rockies recently. I laughed and cried and held my breath as you shared your beautiful tale about makings, that of yourself, your path, and your language. Best of all I loved your use of language that created the images that kept those of us in the basement classroom spellbound and, finally, applauding the soundless screen.

I just read *This House of Sky* - after beginning it and putting it down many times over the years. Only now that I am over 60 am I indulgent in the remembrances, both yours and mine. I turned my back on the honyokers at one time and felt as if I divorced that part of me and the past along with our old cabin and the bedbugs. Knowing what I know now, integration with the past rather than separation is the only way to resolve all those old ambivalent, but for me, mostly negative feelings. Reading *This House of Sky* made me relive all those wooly sheep dying on our place, bloated to hell on a few mouthsful of alfalfa on a hot summer day. I can still hear dad yelling keep the goddamned gates closed. I was probably off reading somewhere when the sheep got out.

Since your presentation and book aroused many memories, I would like to share a bit of my makings and how these might have intersected yours at some place or in some way. I grew up in the log cabin along Old Highway 10 between Three Forks and Morrison Cave (now Lewis and Clark Caverns). The old cabin you've no doubt passed on many occasions is now the Parker Homestead State Park. My resistance to going back in memory somehow has to do with that cabin. I sometimes feel proud of the humble origins, even boast an affiliation with it at odd times. I loved best the twenty head of horses coming in for water at the horse tank, milling and rearing and fighting as my mother pumped water and several of us kids clung to her apron. My present home is filled with nostalgic photos of the cabin dressed in all seasons. Part of me wants to be affiliated with the uniqueness, the romance, the education in life that it provided. More often, I distance myself from the grinding poverty; not necessarily the lack of material things but the lack of intellectual stimulation, the poverty of speech in thought and language, the unutterable boredom of having "nothing to do and no place to go." I teared when you spoke and read so beautifully, and it wasn't the subject so much as that out of a similar time and experience, you rose to the distinguished and honorable position you occupied as lecturer at the Wallace Stegner Series.

From there to here, I thought, knowing the silences of herding and the distinctly **un**uplifting talk about honyokers! I think I cried inside because with the language and insight and observations you triumphed in rising above it all. (I know, though, that we could not be where we are now if not for the origins we experienced.) I completed my doctorate in Clinical Psychology late in life, maybe in an attempt to understand myself and my family and how we could be so similar yet so different from each other. The language, though, was never my strong point. I desperately wished for Latin or Spanish or any foreign language in highschool and none was offered at Willow Creek Highschool in 1950-54. I begged my parents and the Willow Creek school board to let me attend highschool in Three Forks where I could choose from more course offerings. Politics of districts took precedence over my educational needs. So did politics of basketball and we often played WSS! So I completed enough credits to graduate as Valedictorian in three years and left for Montana State College on several meager scholarships at age 16. For so many years I thought nothing good comes out of Willow Creek, and it was then that I divorced my former self, married, and lived in California for twenty years. I even have a nickname, a term of endearment endowed upon me as first child of a doting father, and it embarrasses me even now to hear someone calling me Skeet or Skeeter!!

Despite all this, maybe I am finally coming home to some kind of integration. In Jungian terms, I continue in my sixty-first year to "hold the tension of the opposites," as you did so profoundly in relating your personal story. For me, it was the plodding endurance of my parents as poor farmers against my aspirations born of reading Greek and Roman mythology over and over as I herded cows in the lane in my junior high years. I would look up from some engrossing tale and no cows would be in sight. I would gallop my horse off in a panic to find the herd charging its way through the ripeness of old Tom Karns' field. I reflect on your book as holding that tension throughout: Spot and Tip. Father and Grandmother. Life and death. Fear and courage. Freedom and lack of. I, too, made the decision to leave the homestead at an early age, knowing in my heart that I was stifled by the lives we were living. Besides the yearnings for knowledge and travels, I sensed that there were a world of men out there, even in Malaysia or Taiwan or New York or California that I had never met! And I knew they would not be like the men in my family of origin.

Strange how I see you coming out of the cauldron in the images of Kalhil Gibran despite the bitterly cold, desperate winters that in reality contributed to the molding. I felt most touched when you spoke of the poetry of the language in prose and your efforts to work out the rhythm that gives it depth and volume. I was excited, too, when you alluded to the progression of the narrative to the metaphysical, the level at which psychology even begins to be understood. Then there is the metaphorical level. Our symptoms are but the metaphors for the inner struggles in our lives. Children in therapy teach me how profoundly the metaphors are the reality, the literal reflection of our psychological makeup. All, I believe, relates somehow to a metaphysical context which excites me endlessly.

My 85 year old mother attended the lecture with me. She is as spy and sprightly as she was years ago, but she suffers total short-term memory loss and considerable long-term memory loss and confusion. However, she was delighted with your stories. She relates most vividly to the old days, especially that old cabin we lived in and the life she loved so much there. Also the time she spent sheepherding! Mom is with me a lot, thankfully, and she is teaching me how to live joyfully in the moment. But the tension of the opposites here, the joyful moment and the deadening repetition due to memory loss, sometimes leaves me as numbed as I felt in my early life. I fled her company for the moment at the Museum of the Rockies and let the lecture wash over me. I yearned once again for the thrill of academia with its bright exchange of ideas. I turned home that night holding the tension of the daughter mothering the mother like the role reversal you experienced with your father.

Thank you for holding that tension and the other opposites so honorably and respectfully from the position of participant observer, loyal son and grandson. I am so grateful for having had the chance to hear you speak, and to have lived along with your written words the times we lived in years ago.

Sincerely,

Jan Elpel

nee Jewett

5/11/89

Dear Mr. Daig,

This is an early morning rancher's "Yep, it sounds pretty good" phone call in letter form.

I'm a school librarian who attended your presentation at the MLA/MEA Conference in Billings two weeks ago.

In one of your sentences you spoke of lines from research echoing in a character's words & then re-echoing back again into a discussion of those words. "Circles of murmers" was the phrase I caught. This letter is a retelling of such a circle. At times I guess each of us can say, "I hear. I hear."

I have shared my library these last three years with the teacher of ~~the~~ "gifted & talented" students in our school. We both work part-time but our schedules occasionally overlap, and we have developed a tentative friendship ~~with~~ the bridge of which is a mutually felt tenderheartedness and the breach the expression of that feeling. She, with her bright, quick mind, most often →

covers the feeling with layers of reason, & I, with an inarticulate emotionality, am equally often left exposed with a tongue-tied silence.

In February my friend returned to the library during one of my tours of duty and told me she needed to ready some lessons for a forthcoming absence as her mother-in-law had just died. (For she & her husband this had been the last living parent.) Unable to voice more than a syllable or two, I stood on the other side of a grief I recognized but could not claim.

General minutes later we both responded to a late winter fire alarm. Once outside we found it was our principal's efficient way of calling us all to witness a blanket of wool proceeding down the highway to new pasture.

"Oh, I love pictures of such scenes in Europe," Louise exclaimed," and here it is now at my own school & I don't have a

Barbara A. & James K. Benish
1302 Highland Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

camera!"

"Louise, remember that Ivan Doig book about sheep that you read last year. The last chapter begins with a sentence that I memorized several years ago because it seemed to show such genius of organization to me. That chapter is about his father's dying & is called "Endings." It goes something like this."

'Split the tongue of the silence that beats in you when a parent is first dying & it will begin to recite to you everything it said across a lifetime.'"

And the tongue was split that moment and tears and sheep and ~~bridges~~ circles of words all ran together.

Thanks for your words.

Sincerely,
Barbara A. Benish
Mt. City School Library

29 May '89

Dear Barbara Benish--

What a delight to have your story of you and your teacher friend and the sheep and my House of Sky words. I never could have dreamed, when I was writing that book, the resonances it seems to have.

And I want to apologize for being such a dodo about Montana City when we crossed paths at the Billings librarians' gathering. I surely know of Montana City, because much of the rodeo scene in English Creek I wrote in a borrowed house near Clancy. I'd say that school is greatly lucky in having someone so attentive to language and books, running their library.

Thanks, truly

25 Sept. '80

Dear Gerry--

I hope you haven't emtirely got over that New Orleans idea that you were a poet, because it reads to me as if you are one.

Your letter was very fine, and the horse story meant more to me than you could have known. It's in the same range--pasture?--as one which was told me about my father since House of Sky appeared, and which I'm using in the book coming out this fall, Winter Brothers. So I thank you doubly, for getting in touch once again and for doing it in a heartfelt way.

Yes, Carol is well, and doing well. Maybe even doing some good, she thinks sometimes when a student begins to percolate. We spent last weekend hiking with another voice from the past, Frank Zoretich from your summer at the Institute. Frank is a feature writer for the morning paper here, the Post-Intelligencer, and is about the best at it north of LA. He asked me to pass along ~~your~~ his address: 4023 Meridian N., Seattle 98103. Frank in turn recently heard from Dennis Cowals, also of your time, now of Anchorage.

Am launched now, almost literally, on a novel: a mid-19th century story of a great escape by canoe, based on an incident which happened on this coast. Seems to me to be okay so far, but I'll see what the agent and the publisher think of the manuscript sample, next month. The upcoming book, Winter Brothers, is a first-person excursion as Sky was, a kind of journal of the winter of '78-9. Probably be my last personal stuff for awhile. Sky has not at all made me rich--sold 17,000 in hardback, a zero short of real financial success--but it's being taught in western lit courses and takes me back to Montana next month for a writers' (Norman Maclean, Jim Welch, Richard Hugo) conclave, so I have all the prestige I can eat. Which, as the man said, at least is better than crow. My trips to NY are scanty, on purpose, but I'll try reach you whenever I make another one. Meanwhile, keep at that writing you mentioned. Best to Jane.

51 W. 16th St apt A
NY 10011

Sept. 4 80

Dear Ivan:

I have no idea how it came to be the summer of 1980 before I crossed paths with a book called This House of Sky. Not that it matters; long before I'd turned the last page-- turned the last page, not finished the book, because it's not the kind of book that's finished just because you've read all the words-- I knew that my problem wasn't going to be apologizing for having missed your work before, but adequately expressing how I feel about it now. I was trying to figure out a way to do that when I suddenly remembered a line my brother Patrick quotes, and it seemed to fit, and I thought you might enjoy the story.

A few years back, Pat bought a horse, a thoroughbred racer. It was a proud moment for our family, not so much because of the horse's quality, but because for what was almost certainly the first time in history an Anders, a horse, and a legitimate bill of sale for that horse could be found in the same place all at once.

I never saw the animal and don't recall much about it except that it had a name unpropitious in the extreme: Tragic Error or Fatal Mistake or something of that nature; also, that it had shown some speed here and there, mainly to misty-morning clockers and now and then for a piece of a race, but never enough speed over enough track to win much of anything or to impress anybody save an old trainer named Goodrich, on whose advice Pat purchased the beast

and into whose tutelage he delivered it.

Now, this old man Goodrich was, and is, a one-of-a-kind character, counterfeit-proof. He wouldn't look an inch out of place in your house-of-sky country, Ivan, and probably has passed through there more than once since running away from his West Texas home at the ripe old age of twelve. All of his life has been lived on or around horses, working as cowpoke, broncbuster, ranch foreman, race rider, race hustler, trader, trainer, you name it. Nearly seventy now and still as tough and full of fire as a pine knot, he seems never even to have noticed, much less been slowed down by, the fact that he was born with a withered and handless right arm.

People qualified to judge such matters tell me two things about Goodrich: first, that he knows all that is knowable about horses; second, that he long ago would have risen to the very top as a trainer if his character were clouded by the slightest wisp of tact or diplomacy. It isn't, however, and since the kind of people who buy expensive racehorses are no more conformable than the rest of us to being told that they are dead wrong and damn fools, the old man's career has fallen noticeably short of being a serene and uninterrupted climb to the heights. That he still works for my brother I ascribe partly to Pat's never making a suggestion of any kind concerning the handling of horses, and partly to the

fact that Pat addresses his employee as Mr. Goodrich, while Mr. Goodrich calls his boss Pat.

One further thing about Mr. Goodrich I've learned from personal experience: He is the windiest, most eternally garrulous man on earth. He simply never shuts up. He will talk nonstop about any subject whatever for as long as you care to listen, and if the subject is horses, for a good deal longer than that. His style is as rambling as an old farmhouse built a wing or a room at a time over the long decades, and ten times as full of detail.

For instance, he once told me about a trail drive incident: Two bulls got to butting heads, and one of them slipped and fell two hundred feet down an almost sheer mountain face. Sure that the animal was dead, Goodrich and the other men moved on. That night, miles down the trail, they were amazed to see the broken and bleeding bull come staggering up to rejoin the herd. The bull died during the night.

It seems a bare enough anecdote, but by the time he had fleshed it out with a discussion of the habits of cattle in general and bulls in particular, along with the life histories of two or three of his men, and descriptions of the terrain and the weather, and any number of other embellishments, Mr. Goodrich had created a saga a solid hour in the telling. And if it had been a horse that fell off that cliff, he'd probably still be talking.

At any rate, this was the man who set to work on Tragic, or Fatal, or whatever, changing the animal's exercise schedule and diet, tinkering with its shoes and leg wrappings, running it in a few cheap races, watching it finish in the remote background each time. (These setbacks seemed not to trouble Mr. Goodrich. The horse was only running for the work, he claimed. He didn't bother to mention that each loss bumped the odds higher by ten or fifteen to one on his entry's next trip to the post.)

Finally a day arrived when Mr. Goodrich pulled Pat aside, mentioned a trustworthy third party, and passed a chunk of money to be funneled through that party onto Tragic and Fatal's nose. Pat didn't need a crash course in deductive reasoning to add a big bet of his own. He watched the wagers down and made it back to the paddock in time to hear Mr. Goodrich telling the jockey to let the horse run its own race. This, of course, amounts to about the same thing as a baseball manager telling his pitcher not to give the batter anything good to hit, the principal difference being that jockeys follow such instructions even less frequently than pitchers do. Mr. Goodrich, however, has a way of making his meaning extremely apparent, and when the jockey climbed aboard, his eyes held the light of understanding that his sole

functions were to steer his mount between the rails and around other horses, and to be in the saddle at the finish.

The odds slipped a little-- some sharpie may have spotted the owner-trainer betting-- but still were plenty long when the horses broke from the gate. They raced tightly bunched through the first turn. Then, suddenly, the thing happened which only Mr. Goodrich could have expected, God Himself probably considering it no more than a distant possibility: Tragic came blasting out of the pack like a halfback breaking free from a clumsy jumble of clutching linemen. All down the backstretch and through the final turn he raced like another Secretariat, a superhorse, a horse from another planet. He thundered into the stretch thirty lengths in front, and though he flagged noticeably in the last furlong, nothing was going to catch him on that afternoon.

From the winner's circle, Pat went along while Mr. Goodrich led Tragic back to the stables. There the trainer hosed the horse down, blew the caked dirt from its eyes, did all the other basic chores that most of his colleagues would trust to an assistant. All the while, he spilled out his accustomed stream of talk: "Didja notice that five horse bear out so wide on the turn there? His daddy useta have that trouble too,

sometimes." Or: "Didja see that damn Mendoza drive right up under that gray horse's heels and then have to yank the brakes? Horse thought the race was over. That Mex idiot'll never ride for me, I'll guaran-flat-damn-tee ya that! Jesus God A'mighty!"

Finally Pat, new to the game, proud of his first win and of Tragic's dominating burst of speed, managed to slip in what seemed to him a pertinent inquiry about his horse: "How fast would you say he was going, in the backstretch there?"

Given the man he was dealing with, he expected not only an exact figure, but an elaborate discourse on the top and average speeds reached by this horse before, by other horses on other tracks, by quarterhorses, wild horses, cow ponies, Clydesdales-- by the wooden horses on merry-go-rounds, most likely. But the old trainer merely squinted up for a second as if to get a good look at the kind of fool who could ask such a silly and inconsequential question.

"Oh, I dunno," he shrugged before turning back to his work and his monologue. "However fast horses go."

However fast horses go.

However well writers write.

<u>This House of Sky</u>.

Except, of course, that your performance was strong

wire to wire, and that I'd bet on you at least to match it next time out.

A lot of liquid, not all of it water, has passed beneath a lot of bridges since I saw you last. No doubt you have noticed this phenomenon, and will forgive me if I short you a few hundred million details of my life over the past 16 years and just ship the bare framework.

I left the idea of doing journalism in late '64 and Northwestern in early '65. Went to New Orleans, where I thought for a while that I was a poet. Ducked the draft for a year at LSU in Baton Rouge, then for another year at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Came to feel that hiding in school wasn't the way to behave for a man as opposed to the Vietnam mess as I had become. Said to hell with it, went back to Louisiana for a while, then on to San Francisco.

On Jan. 8, 1969, in the Oakland induction center, I refused to take that one step forward that would have put me in the Army. The FBI agent said they'd be around to arrest me within three months, but nothing ever happened. I still don't know why. Maybe it was just that so many young men weren't taking that step in Oakland in those days.

After doing a whole lot of very little in San Francisco, I moved to New York in 1971. Here, in a matter of months, my unofficial six-year marriage to

a girl with the ineffably Southern name of Penny Lu Nichols came apart for the last time. It may have been unofficial, but it couldn't have gone any sourer if it had been certified by the Supreme Court.

The lady in my life today is Jane Brinker, a casting director for television, a lovely, dark-eyed, spirited little woman with an infectious laugh and a way of making people feel that the world looks better than it did just before they found themselves in her company. We've been together eight years. Jane shares my admiration of your writing, which is pretty strong testimony to your powers of communication, considering that we're talking here about a lifelong big-city girl whose idea of country is what she sees from the Garden State Parkway, whose concept of a wild animal is a squirrel, and whose experience with domestic ones extends only to the care and feeding of a wire-haired fox terrier.

For my first few years in New York, I worked as a freelance writer and editor in the textbook industry, but in the end the Lord relented; these days I make a modest living, if not a downright self-effacing one, as a photographer.

I sleep well enough most nights; toss and turn, some nights; and now and then there comes a night when the morning seems exactly where it is, thousands of miles away.

Par for the course, I believe.

I still work at writing, not well enough to suit me, not hard enough to suit much of anybody, but harder and with more enthusiasm lately than in a long, long time. I would be content someday to turn out work that could sit within a shelf or two of This House of Sky.

I gather from the book that Carol is well and doing well; my regards and best wishes to her.

Sincerely,

Gerry Anders

Cherub '62

Sunday -
1-22-88

Ivan, I just finished reading the article "Craftsman of Words" written in the Spokesman-Review here in Spokane. I've also read your Winter Brothers and House of Sky.

Not having your home address, I will attempt to send this via the Seattle Times news paper.

The reason for writing is not just to say that I enjoy your writing, but that we are also distant relatives through my great uncle.... Ed Doig... your uncle. (More on that later).

My mother + Father are both born and bred Montanians. I am a relation to McGAugh's (John McGAugh... if you know him and Others) ... Also, the Callentines + Harder's. They roamed Montana in your folks era.

Ed Doig is my great uncle through marriage. He was married to Christine Harder (2nd wife, now deceased). Their son is Ed Doig Jr. He lives in Livingston as does Uncle Ed. Arnold Doig lives out of Bozeman and is Uncle Ed's through his first wife.

(who was my grandmother's sister)

The Harder's (my grandmother's Family) lived in Ringling many years. My great-grandmother, Betty Harder and great-grandfather, Herman Harder, owned the hotel there before the

mysterious Fire that burned most the town down. My grandmother Betty Marie Harger went to school in Ringling. She married my grandFather Letcher Gibbs (recently deceased) in White *Sulphur 63 years ago. He was a retired Milwaukee Railroad Engineer. GrandFather Gibbs had grown up in Lewistown and Zorta near the Missouri breaks.

Anyway, my grandmother (now Gibbs) is 82 years old and very alert. She has many memories of Ringling, White *Sulphur, Maudlow, Malta and all that area.

If you should ever want to pick her brains for any book or future articles, it would be pleasing and exciting for her. With her passing will go a part of "Old Montana", that could be preserved if youire interested.

I keep in touch with Uncle Ed (and present wife Ethel). Uncle will be 92 or 93 in February. I last saw him about 4 or 5 years ago when I took my grandparents on a sentimental journey revisiting their old friends and relatives, hither and yon.

Uncle Ed is alert though he's had several strokes... what a fighter! His speech is affected of course.

My special memories of him while growing up includes his tavern + barber-shop at Trident: My brother and I could barely see over the bar. Our favorite pass-time while there would be staring at the famous Custer's Last Stand # reprint. (You know the one that show's the Indian scalping the soldier.) That was our drawing card as kids.

I remember Uncle Ed and Aunt Chris relating stories about the place they ran in Gardner and about the tourists putting their children on the backs of bears for pictures; about the early days when the tourist could travel through the Yellowstone park ~~only~~ by stage coach.

By the by... I am 43 - my brother 41. Our memories of Montana are still vivid. Our younger years were spent in Harlowtown + Three Forks while our Dad McGaugh worked on the Milwaukee road. (His mother was a Callentine) ~~and I~~.

We always lived by the tracks (sometimes the wrong side). I remember the fascination I had with steam engines (and still do).

The steam engines were used on the branch lines many years after the Little Joe (electric engines) and diesels appeared. So, I grew up with a flavor of them all.

Our 2 room house had been an old railroad building of some sort. We even had an out-house and took our baths in a corrugated wash tub.

Around 1953-4, low seniority on the Milwaukee forced Dad to transplant us in the Spokane area where he turned to barbering.

Summers were spent with my grandparents in Three Forks until they moved to Spokane in 1963.

Even after all these years, a trip to Montana makes me feel like a salmon swimming to it's spawning ground. There is an ancient energy that emanates each time I visit the old haunts.

Now years later, people still ask me where I come from. When I say, "Montana," they say, "thought so." It appears we are stamped with a brand as wide open as that country.

This is a bane and blessing. It seems I openly trust everyone, till it's too late. However, after talking with others who hale From Montana, it appears a common trait.

Well, Ivan, enough of my ramblings. Hello, to your wife, Carol also....

I mainly wrote this to tell you of my grandmother. Also, hope in your busy schedule you might call or stop for a visit someday.

I was married last June. We live on a small Farm 20 miles West of Spokane just out of Medical Lake. My husbands name is John, mine is Linda.

Appreciate your time.

Sincerely -

Linda Jett

Linda Jett
Box 534
Medical Lake, Wn.
99022.
phone - 1-509-299-7343

Uncle Ed's address if you don't have it is:

P.O. Box 55
Livingston, Mt. 59047

FROM THE DESK OF

5 March 86
Remember the Alamo
Hawkeye Hawes

Ivan Doig
c/o Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
1250 Sixth Avenue
San Diego, California, 92101

Dear Ivan,

I am about to finish a course in Great Plains History from the University of Iowa. I am a nurse anesthetist finishing my bachelors degree at the University of Iowa through the extension service. The Great Plains history course was lots of fun and taught me a lot about an area of the country I have always been interested in.

The final lesson is a book report. Out of all the books in the book list, I picked, This House of Sky. I picked your book for two reasons. First of all, I have a love affair with every square inch of the state of Montana and secondly If I could change my life, I would have been born in West-Central Montana in the 1930's.

I enjoyed your book. I found it difficult to follow but I found it enlightening and fun to escape into. I also enjoyed the write-up, on your collection of photographs, in Montana Magazine. (Sept-Oct 1983)

You were lucky to have a loving father like Charlie Doig and such a dynamic grandmother like Bessie Ringer. If I ever get to White Sulpher, I'll place a flower on their graves.

Wish me luck on my book report. It has to be 5-7

FROM THE DESK OF

Hawkeye Hawes

pages long. It'll be a struggle but I'll make it.

Have a good life, Ivan. Tell Carol hi and thanks for telling us about your family.

Sincerely,

James Lee Hawes

3.17.86

Dear Mr. Doig,

I finished reading This House of Sky just now. The words of the last page ended too soon an endearing story I will cherish and reflect on for some time.

I drove last week for ten days through Montana with a friend - and former resident of Billings. His enthusiasm for the land had intrigued me for months, so I spent my too-few vacation days roaming from Chico and Livingston to Billings, up through Glacier National forest and finally south to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. From the instant I marched into open fields and "crazy" mountains, and saw skies larger than the California ocean I live by, I wanted only to stay in Montana. My friend and I drove through each small town along the route including White Sulphur Springs. Each community, sometimes pitiful and colorless, could still boast the same endless sky for its roof. So now my enthusiasm for the land is identical to my

friends and, it seems, to yours.

I have read your book sitting here in my city apartment with the sounds of the rain and my neighbor's tv as accompaniments. And I still feel great. It was a wonderful piece of writing.

With thanks,
Andrea McNitt

Andrea McNitt
2161 De La Ribera
La Jolla, CA 92037

6 May '86

Dear Andrea McNitt--

It's good to hear that House of Sky lived up to Montana and vice versa--thanks for taking the trouble to write and say so. Two other Montana books that might interest you: Norman Maclean's great novella, title story of A River Runs Through It; and I've written, since House of Sky, a novel set near Glacier Park, titled English Creek.

best wishes

December 27, 1985

Ivan Doig
c/o Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
757 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Doig:

I had just recently finished This House of Sky when I heard you on NPR the other day, talking about this house of fog we now inhabit here in Seattle. Hearing you reminded me to write this letter.

I started reading your book as soon as my husband and I bought it, the last time you were at Arbur Books. It was so good that I put it down almost immediately. The writing was so clear and lovely; it couldn't be ignored. I went back to science fiction. And kept your book on my bedside table for another time.

Once, a few years ago, I got as far as Ruth's section. I'd built up some stamina but wasn't ready to go the distance. The book has remained by my bedside since. Galaxies and space heroes have come and gone, as well as Prince Andrei, Kristin Labransdatter and E.B. White. Once read, most was quickly forgotten. But your book, half read, was there every day, the lives and land and that wonderful clear language, percolating through my mind.

And now it's read, finally. I'm ready to start another book of yours, which one I haven't decided. But it won't be a quick read and it will live with me for a long time.

I used to write to sell things. Now I write, in a journal and letters, to understand myself and others and to learn how language works. When I sit down to my typewriter, you and E.B. White and John McPhee are there behind me. The room's a little crowded at times, but I couldn't ask for better teachers.

Best,

Pam Heath

Pamela Heath
746 North 80th
Seattle, WA 98103

Allyn, Washington
7/7/85

Dear Joan:

I wonder what there is about Montana. —
I was born there, in Helena, 1921. So were my mother, father and sister. Perhaps it was frequent mention of "back home" by my parents, maybe. We left when we were practically babies, so no home-land memories exist. Three or four trips back there at summer vacation were exciting ~~to~~ only as any trip would have been to a grade school child. — but there has always been Montana. Pleased I've been to state I was born there. Why did it thrill a bit when the auto license inspector asked "Birthplace"? Why do I like to say town names like 'Cut Bank', 'Deer Lodge'? I've never even been there. Why did I always like Chet Huntley and not David Brinkley? I feel I know the why of these things but find no words to describe. — but Joan, I think you know, so enough said.

The purpose of this letter is to thank you for "This House of Sky". The book was loaned to me by my sister. It's now in the hands of my wife's mother, soon to be passed on and on again. We will buy copies for Christmas gifts. That book just has to be read by all the beloved people we know. It is the most beloved book I've read.

I've now come to know you, your father and grandmother. I grieved at Charlie's tortured death and rejoiced with the 'lady' in her, as always, busy and active conclusion to her life

Now Joan, you've put me at unrest. You've given me untold pleasure with your marvelously descriptive book. You've enriched my life with your vivid account of your Montana (and a wee bit mine too), and I've met and come to love your family through your words. Is it possible that there is a picture? You mention snapshots and perhaps there are one or two for copy. I visualize Charlie in his stockmans hat (at precisely the correct angle), and 'the lady' with knitting at one of her endless garments or with one of the dogs she ran so well. Joan too. I come to like that young man mightily

I would so appreciate seeing you and your people. You are here in my mind but there is a need to be closer than this. It is now as it was when I was doing the reading— I just can't put the book down.

Sincerely,

John Lemel

E 631 Cronquist Rd
Allyn. WA. 98524

answered— M+T Mrs 9 Hrs net— 7-16-85

2/16/85

Dear Mr. Doig,

Having just finished your book, "English Creek", I felt inspired to let you know how much I enjoyed reading it as well as your previous work, "This House of Sky".

Both of these stories touched many times on my own personal experiences of growing up in Montana. Though I was born and raised in Missoula, I spent a good deal of time on the Grasshopper Valley, just south of the Big Hole. That is where my Grandmother was born and raised and like Jick McCaskill, I always had an intrigue for the past. Grandmother transports me to those early days with her numerous fond memories.

In my 29 years, I have aquired lots of Montana memories of my own including working on hay crews where beaver slides and temporarily dried out characters still build the stacks. I also had a couple of seasons work with the U.S. Forest Service as a surveyors' aid.

Anyway, your writing has touched my heart in the same way that Montana always will. Thankyou!

Most sincerely,

Jennifer Lowe

549 E. Babcock
Bozeman Mt 59715

17 July '85

Dear Jennifer Lowe--Appreciated hearing from you. A writer always wonders who's out there reading, and it's reassuring to hear that other Montanans are.

thanks, and best

J. K. ADAMS Co.
DORSET VERMONT 05251

1/25/85

Dear Ivan Doig.

I just moments ago finished This House of Sky and still am somewhat choked up. I don't read often, possibly because I'm slow at it and possibly because I never seem to have the time or make the time between my woodworking job with my 75 year old father, my part time sheep farm, hay farm woodlot maple syrup operation and new family (wife and son). However I do enjoy a book if I can get started and caught and when my wife, a ferious reader who I claim doesn't appreciate her scores of books as much I as I do my two each year, checked out English Creek for me after Christmas I was caught.

I intended to write you after English Creek but was handed House of Sky by a book collecting friend and have spent my spare moments reading instead of writing.

What can one say ~~to~~ to an author about his book? I have never written a to an author before and feel a bit foolish and intimidated since I am not as adept at this skill as the one I write but I decided even authors must not mind being praised, being told they have touched someone, moved some~~one~~person they never

knew existed. I suppose that might be one of many reasons authors write books, I only write letters.

English Greek flooded me with memories of years only a few years past yet seemingly ages ago and now gone for ever. I left my home and family in Vermont to do what I had been born and raised to do; attend college. I'm far away Colorado, mainly because that was the only college that accepted such a poor student, and secondly + thirdly because I loved to ski and thought 2000 miles might ease the academic pressure to succeed ~~from home~~.

All three of the above facts worked out. I remained a non committed poor student, skied from September till April and monitored my grades home to suit my fathers desire. Three years of that caused me to realize that I was wasting if not my time, lots of my folks money so I made a traumatic decision to quit, quit college, the sole reason for existance in my familys way of thinking for as long as I could remember. My dad a child of the Depression succeeded and got ahead by getting lots of education or at

least they both were there so he felt what worked for him would work for me. I quit.

Joined the forest service as a fire fighter/smoke jumper - helitack - hot shot. Risk, Romance and independence. New Mexico the first year then the USFS gave me some choices. I chose Eureka, Montana, tucked as you probably know up there along the Canadian border by Idaho. A different world for a New England prep school boy. Airlifted 50 miles 50 miles from a road to watch a fire outwit us And burn 3000 acres. Rodeos with brown bags hiding Jim Beam and having Franklin grouse for lunch every day for a month compliments of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Some more summers and winters spent around whitefish and Kalispell, riding the train east to NYC to see my family often not for 12 months or more. So English Creek brought back fond memories. I had little to do with sheep in those days but lots to do with the U.S.F.S and for the last half dozen years I have shepherded our little flock of 15 or 20 ewes through some rugged Vermont winters and pulled out some stubborn lambs so I could

appreciate that in both books. I so like the wooly creatures and we have two sheep dogs who would wish they could circle 3000 ewes on the CAMAS or funnel a couple of hundred for counting. And I couldn't restrain the tears when your Dad stood by Spot as he had him put down.

I seem to be writing more than intended but I can't sleep for a while with the emotional drain of Charlie and Bessies respective deaths still causing my head to ache. I've been reading your writing for 3 weeks now AND If I can figure out how to locate your address you can possible choose to read 3 minutes of my writing.

I might like to write about my Dad who certainly has influenced my life as much as Charlie has yours though I think Charlie's life is a better story. My Dad is a remarkable man and seems more so each day as he toils endlessly away in his 75th year wearing me and most

others out with is steady relentless pace. His peers, who don't seem to understand why he's still killing himself when he could have long ago retired, are dieing off from boredom and heart attacks. He and I, (40 years his junior) run his little woodworking business, clearly his favorite child. My poor mother died several years ago much like Charlie with lungs like charcoal and probably the knowledge that Dad would survive to keep the shop going. Unfortunately and ironicly I can't love the job as he does and wishes I could but he seems to understand, he has no choice. The irony is that I am the key apparently, to keep the legacy alive, and the family as an afterthought.

I'm ~~for~~ starting to fade and my wrist is weakening. I apologize for the poor penmanship, ~~and~~ spelling and general disorganization of this letter, ~~too~~. but if it is ever to be mailed I must do it now and not chance a second critical reading. Never have I written a note like this to a complete stranger, but actually you are not at

all a complete stranger are you. I, like hundreds if not thousands of other readers know a lot about you, which is surely not to know you well but when I closed the last page of your book and breathed a sigh of relief that you hadn't drowned in Ellen Creek I felt I knew you well enough to write and tell you I am glad you decided to put it all down on paper. I'm thankful to have known Charlie and Bessie and a way of life gone now. I'm thankful to have know the McCaskills also and the life they led on the Two Near English Creek.

Please accept my sincere compliments.

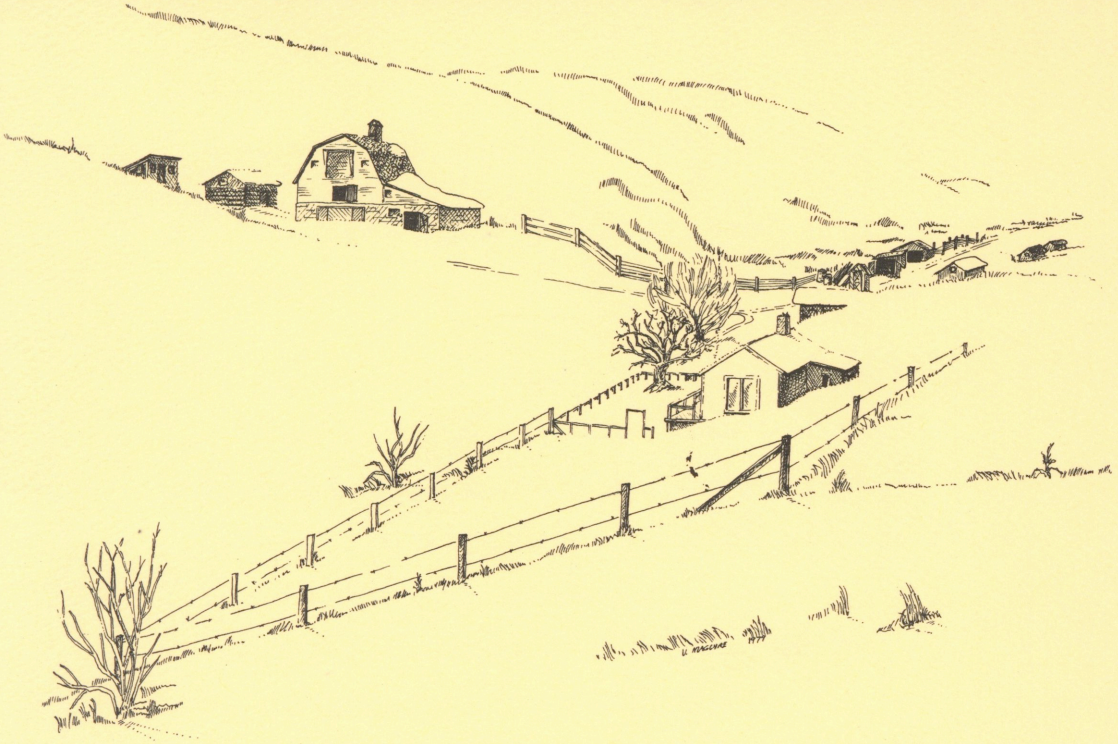
26 Feb. '85

Dear Mr. Cooper

Thanks greatly for your letter about my Montana books. Nothing gratifies a writer more than to know his work chimes with a reader.

Excuse the brevity--I'm tussling with the first few chapters of the next English Creek book, about Jick's grandfather coming from Scotland to homestead, and correspondence doesn't get much time from me. But I did want to let you know how impressive your letter was. Best of luck with your own endeavors.

Malcolm Cooper Jr.



"THE RANCH"

It was wintertime.
The wind was blowing from the plains.

And all new matters of ages to come
Arose as a vision of wonder in space.

And all thoughts of ages, all dreams, new worlds,
All the future of galleries and of museums,
All the games of man, the work of inventors,
The yule trees, and the dreams all children dream,
The tremulous glow of candles in rows,
The gold and silver of angels and globes,
And the splendor of a radiant dawn.

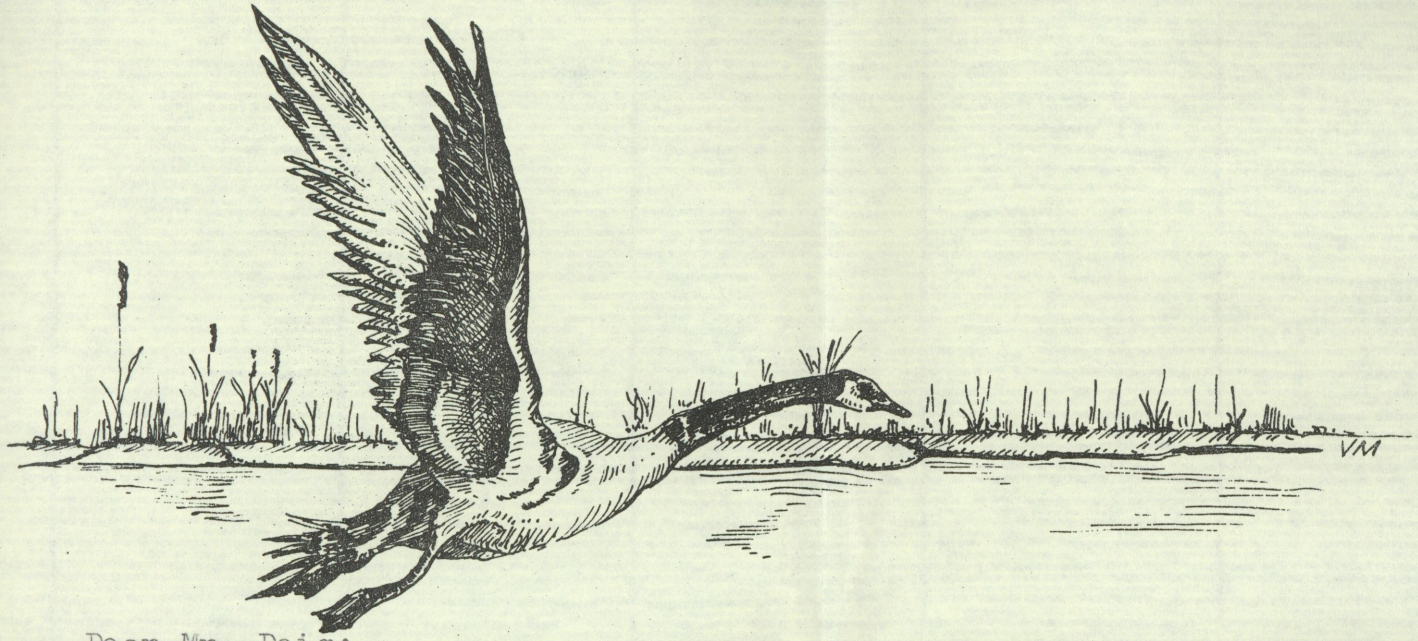
Pasternak

Trumpeter Design

Van Maguire



Drafting • Design • Structural Engineering



Dear Mr. Doig:

I am sorry I couldn't wait until two to see you, but found this chance to let you know how much I appreciated your returning my bookplate plus the unexpected note. Montana authors are great - everyone has included a note taking time out of their busy schedules.

I don't know if you noticed, but you wrote "House of Sky" on the "Book-lover's" book plate. The way the hands formed that corner gave the impression of the outline of the state of Montana. I thought it was great. I think I noticed it because my son had already designed a business card for himself using swans to make the outline.

Also, I am enclosing his sketch of my grandfather's ranch outside of Belt toward the Highwood Mountains. This is why I loved This House of Sky. All our experiences there echoed what you wrote - the hired men with their comments, the droughts, hail and the hard times that were still so enriching. The memories are still a central part of our life. *

My daughter gave me "Inside This House of Sky" for Christmas last year. I will be disappointed if I don't receive "English Creek" this year. She was going to try to get into Kalispell yesterday, so hope she did.

Just as a jogger, my request to you with the bookplate went via White Sulphur Springs before. I didn't want to bother everyone to get a Thank you back.

Very sincerely,

Wanda Maguire

* I have a portable typewriter that doesn't cooperate.

We are revolving around you. My niece is a book buyer for the University of Washington book store and was looking forward to hearing you in Tacoma. She gave me "Winter Brothers".

January 24, 1985
Mrs. Charlene T. Terrell
1050 Thrasher Way
Big Canoe, GA 30143

Mr. Ivan Doig
% Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
757 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Doig:

I have just finished reading your moving story and your words touched, refreshed and inspired me as no writing has ever done before.

You have truly used the genius you've been blessed with to create a beautiful thing in This House of Sky. Thank you for doing so.

Sincerely,

Charlene Terrell

Charlene T. Terrell

11-15-84

Dear Ivan,

I was the person that called you the other night from Anchorage, Alaska requesting an autographed copy of your book This House of Sky. After a trip to the bookstore I decided it would probably be best to get two books.

This episode with your book has been a rather curious affair. I went to Jim Milnes' ranch to work in the summer of 1960 after graduating from high school in Spokane. I spent a few summers and springs on the ranch for the next couple years. The last time I was in that country was 1969, helping get the ranch ready to be sold. Jim died in December of that year.

I have travelled a great deal and met quite a number of people since my days in Montana. The one distinct thing about these travels and people I've met is none were from Dupuyer / Valier area or even heard of the two towns.

A couple weeks ago I was teaching a mountaineering class and one of the students

is a doctor that practiced in Montana a couple years ago. To make a long story short he told me about your book that someone from Montana had sent him. He brought the book over a couple nights ago. As I went through the book it brought back many memories of those days on Birch Creek and the characters I had worked with over twenty years ago. Looking back I can say those were some of the best days I've ever spent at work or play.

I had another unusual experience when I went to the book store tonight. Waldens Book Store is in a large mall close to my home so I ran over there to see if I could get the book. They didn't have This House of Sky or English Creek. I talked to three clerks and they said they had not heard of either book and kept asking me if they were books about Alaska. Finally one of the clerks looked the book up and said they could order it but it would take several weeks. Probably wouldn't get to Anchorage until after Christmas.

There was one other book store in

mall and I had about five minutes before they closed. I ran down to the store. An older woman was the only clerk so I asked if per chance she had a copy of This House of Sky. Immediately her eyes lit up and she replied "You mean the book by Ivan Doig?"

She knew about all your books. Turns out she had been a school teacher in Valier during ~~Her~~ WW II. She and her husband lived there before the war then she stayed in Valier through the war and for a few years after. Her husband was born and raised in Valier. I believe her husbands name is Royal Brown.

I have enclosed a check for $18.00. Hopefully this will cover the cost of two copies of This House of Sky and postage. Parcel Post is sufficient. If you have the time I would appreciate it if you could autograph at least one of the books. I want to give it to Pat Milne, Jim Milnes' nephew, and my good friend that provided me the opportunity to experience Montana. Thank you for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Tim Neale

P.O. Box 6724
Anchorage, Alaska
99502

2884 Gallean Road
Pebble Beach, Ca 93953
October 2, 1987

Dear Ivan Doig,

Our son, Paul, who is a Ranger at Olympic National Park, suggested that we read your books. In quick succession I read The Sea Runners, This House of Sky and Winter Brothers. Now I'm waiting for a fourth book and hope that I will not have to wait very long!

I read the Sea Runners first — not the sort of book I read usually. I could hardly put it down.

Then This House of Sky which is one of the finest books I have ever read, and I've read a lot of them in my 70+ years. Unfamiliar country until you came to the Northwest but fascinating country and life. And told with exquisite choice of words and figures of speech. I loved every page of it, and when you

chose Job 38 for your father's funeral I could say with the Psalmist, "My cup runneth over", because Job 38 has been for quite a while one of my favorite chapters in the Bible.

As for Winter Brothers besides your beauty of writing and fine characterizations, etc., the setting was rewarding since that's Paul's country, and we have explored a lot of it with him. In fact, my husband was a volunteer ranger one summer a few years ago and spent the months on the Borgashed (he's not here presently to check my spelling). And he's been out to the digs and says I must go next time we're there. I have been to Neah Bay (wonderful museum).

So thank you with all my heart for your gift to us of these fine books. Please go on writing and writing and writing.

I hope that some day you and Paul may meet each other. I'm pretty sure that you would both find a meeting agreeable.

Forgive me for going on and on. I have wanted very much to express my appreciation.

Sincerely yours,
Mary B. Crawford
(Mrs. Russ. A.

5 Nov. '84

Dear Mrs. Crawford--

Many thanks for taking the time to send me your good words about my books. I won't be surprised if Paul and I cross paths in Olympic National Park sometime.

Also, your timing is excellent: about two weeks ago the first of my intended Montana trilogy of fiction was published; the title is English Creek and the publisher Atheneum. I imagine a review will show up sooner or later in the San Francisco Sunday paper, as they've reviewed my other books; in any case, it's a novel about the ranching and rural life I wrote about in House of Sky.

You know, there can't be an awful lot of us around who favor Job 38!

best wishes, and my appreciation

Culbertson, Montana
July 24, 1984

Mr. Ivan Doig

Dear Dr. Doig:

In June we attended our son's graduation from MSU at Bozeman. We were pleased to be there as you were awarded an honorary degree and thought your remarks were very interesting. Later that day we purchased the book Inside This House of Sky and in looking through it noticed the picture of the four white crosses along a highway.

I thought you might be interested to know that the white cross program was started by the American Legion of Montana in 1953 and local American Legion posts put up the crosses and maintain them. The highway department gives us permission to place the crosses but that is the extent of their involvement.

During my 1983-84 term as Department Commander of the American Legion of Montana one of the things I stressed was proper maintenance of these white crosses. So I was especially happy to see that you were impressed by the program and chose to include it in your books. I know that you would want to know the real background of this program.

Yours very truly,

Herman L. Jensen
Immediate Past Commander
American Legion, Dept. of Montana

3 Aug. '84

Dear Mr. Jensen--

MSU forwarded your letter to me, and I'm glad to have the background about the highway crosses--I never knew their history. You in turn may be interested to know that the photo of the crosses in our books was the photographer's selection--that is, he shot the photo and included it on aesthetic grounds, rather than any guidance from me. So, the crosses do make an impression.

I hope you're summering well, and that the Jensen family enjoyed the MSU graduation half as much as I did. Thanks for taking the trouble to write.

best wishes,

MR. L.D. ZIMMERMAN
9110 CENTRAL VLY. RD NE
BREMERTON, WA 98310

7-9-84

Dear Mr. Doig,

A friend brought and gave me "This House of Sky" written by you. Reading the book was the same as reviewing my life, because there are many duplications there. I don't know when I've enjoyed a book more about so many people I knew.

I was born in Townsend, Montana in 1907 and know many of the old timers in Montana. I left home when I was thirteen, went to White Sulphur Springs and worked on ranches in that area. If you are writing any more books and I can help

you with information I'll gladly do it.

My great-grandfather, Moses Doggett and his Mother were some of the first settlers there. He built the first irrigation ditch in Broadwater County. Some of the old-timers I'm familiar with are the Renglings, the Manger Ranches, the Fort Logan Area Gaddis and the L. B. Butts. There are many others I don't mention.

I would sure enjoy meeting you and giving you any information I could. I live in Bremerton, my

3/

telephone number is 692-8093 and my address is 9110 Central Valley Road N. E.

I think we would both enjoy a visit.

Sincerely,

L D Zimmerman

(Mr.) L. D. Zimmerman

1 Aug. '84

Dear Mr. Zimmerman--

I appreciated your letter. Doggett is a familiar name to me; I think my dad knew various of the family.

Maybe our paths will cross in Bremerton this fall, if I get over there to sign books this fall. I have to say, though, I'm now writing fiction about the Choteau-Dupuyer country, where I lived during high school, rather than the White Sulphur area. I wish I had encountered you while I was gathering information for This House of Sky, several years ago.

I'm gratified that House of Sky struck a chord with you. Montanans, whether or not they still live in the state, seem to like the book a lot.

all best wishes

Elizabeth Earnest
2423 East Belleview Place, #20
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211

May 15, 1984

Dear Mr. Doig:

I have meant a million times to write you about your books but I haven't found the exact moment to do so until now. I did telephone you when I was passing through Seattle on my way to Hawaii and spoke with your wife. She may have told you about that call.

In any event, this is a fan letter. While in Seattle in August of 1982, friends gave me "This House of Sky". I am absolutely swept away with this writing, the subject, the devotion to the land and its inhabitants. I have insisted that friends and family read it (in fact I bought out the stock of Websters Bookstore here and pressed the book on them). I have reread it a number of times just to experience the delicious usage and phrasing.

When I was able to find Sea Runners and Winter Brothers, I got them. They are wonderful books, particularly for me having been raised in the Northwest. I could just see you poking around in the library at UW, as I did when I attended school their. The Northwest Indian art which the university holds is remarkable and, now, displayed quite well. It is curious that, on a trip to West Germany a few years ago, I found in the West Berlin museum a superb collection of Northwest Indian art and understand that a greater collection exists somewhere in the USSR.

The ethos you express in your books of places I have and haven't been make them come alive for me again. There are no books or poetry that I have read recently that have rewarded me so much as yours.

I look forward eagerly to future works and hope that you might take a moment to let me know what is forthcoming (so I can spread the word among your growing fans here).

God bless you for sharing your wonderful talent with us all.

Most cordially yours,

Liz Earnest

4 June '84

Dear Liz Earnest--

I much appreciated your letter--and I'm sorry it took a couple of tries to hit our address.

You wondered about upcoming books. I seem to be writing a fictional trilogy set in Montana. The first novel, English Creek, will be published this fall by Atheneum--I hope as early as September. It'll be a couple of years to the next one, a novel of the homesteaders. But I think English Creek will have many of the things that people seemed to like about This House of Sky. I hope so!

all best wishes, and
thanks for writing.

[Elizabeth City, NC]

January 28, 1984

Dear Mr. Berg,

I have just finished reading This House of Sky Landscape of a Western Mind. I found your book in the library next to a book about Tom Dooley. I am writing a report about him for my ethnicity class at Norfolk St. Univ. where I am working on my MSW. You have written a sensitive and honest book. I am sure it was not an easy book to write, but I am also sure the rewards for writing it have been great. Congratulations!

Sincerely,

Linda B. Murphy

The town that was my town

To Valier, Montana, Population 750

Geese bark up the hardluck lake
of farmers and farms where
the first calves shiver skyward
on their hoofbeats.

In the flush and husky cloudbank
of the town that was my town, my stark
home to be old in,
all the children roughen in the wind.

And now I'm gone I'll go on dreaming willow
in a flare of ice,
leave this place to people who

sing out the mountain mirage —
the rocking farms upthrust and there
another rising in the light and early air.

Virginia Leinart

Christian Science Monitor
June 7, 1983

quantity of talent devoted to parliamentary or administrative work is larger [in Europe], relatively to the population, than in America . . ."

In the British election just held, 72.7 percent of the eligible voters voted. It is interesting to note that in the 1980 US presidential election only about 54 percent voted. (In each of the five latest US presidential elections, incidentally, the percentage has declined.)

Back in 1893 Bryce said rather unflatteringly that the American voter "likes his candidate to be sensible, vigorous, and above all what he calls 'magnetic,' and does not value, because he sees no need for, originality or profundity, a fine culture or a wide knowledge." He adds, rather discouragingly, that "to a party it is more important that its nominee should be a good candidate than that he should turn out a good president."

Right or wrong? It is a challenge that still exists.

Leatrice B. Hobbs

ports I've seen refer to Cmdr.
first US military adviser in El
he only adviser to be slain? The
t a widespread view that other
follow if we stay our present

Richard L. Kaufmann
Professor of Physics
University of New Hampshire

a selection can be published
edged. All are subject to con-
rs to "Readers write."

BOX 323
FINLEY, N.D. 58230
SEPTEMBER 22, 1993

DEAR MR. DOIG,

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I WAS ENCHANTED BY THIS HOUSE OF SKY; AND I PLAN TO READ IT AGAIN SOON, AFTER A RECENT TRIP TO MONTANA WHICH BROUGHT ME TO WITHIN A FEW MILES OF RINGLING AND ROXTEEN.

I AM ENCLOSING A POEM FROM THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR WHICH REMINDED ME OF YOUR DESCRIPTIONS OF VARIER. A LATER EDITION OF THE MONITOR INCLUDED THIS ASSESSMENT OF THIS HOUSE OF SKY BY DAVID HOLMSTROM:

"FIRST LOANED TO ME BY A FRIEND FROM MONTANA, THIS HOUSE OF SKY, BY IVAN DOIG, MADE ME STOP IN MY READING TRACKS. DOIG HAS WRITTEN A BITTERSWEET, HAUNTING MEMOIR OF HIS BOYHOOD IN THE MONTANA WILDERNESS THAT IS AN ANTHEM OF LOVE AND STRENGTH. DOIG REMEMBERS HIS RESTLESS, SHEEPHERDING FATHER, AND HIS GRANDMOTHER, BESSE RUNGER, WITH THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT THEY DID THE BEST THEY COULD.

"ALL THE UNIVERSITY OF LIFE – PLUS THE DIMENSION OF A MASTER STORYTELLER – ARE HERE LIKE A MONTANA PEAK SEEN AT SUNRISE."

MAYBE YOU HAVE READ OR HEARD ABOUT BOTH THE POEM AND THE QUOTATION; IF NOT, I HOPE THEY GIVE YOU A BOOST.

THIS HOUSE OF SKY AFFECTED ME VERY DEEPLY BECAUSE OF ITS HONESTY AND ITS BEAUTIFUL, SPARE, EVOCATIVE LANGUAGE. I HOPE TO RECOMMEND THE BOOK TO STUDENTS WHEN I TEACH. (I AM CURRENTLY AN ENGLISH, HISTORY, & LIBRARY STUDENT AT MAYVILLE, N.D., STATE COLLEGE, AND I WILL BE A STUDENT TEACHING IN NOVEMBER.)

IN JULY, AS I DROVE DOWN U.S. 89 TOWARDS RINGLING, I GOT GOOSEBUMPS ON MY ARMS AS I RECALLED SOME OF THE DESCRIPTIONS AND INCIDENTS YOU WROTE ABOUT.

THANK YOU!

SINCERELY,

Gay Frojen

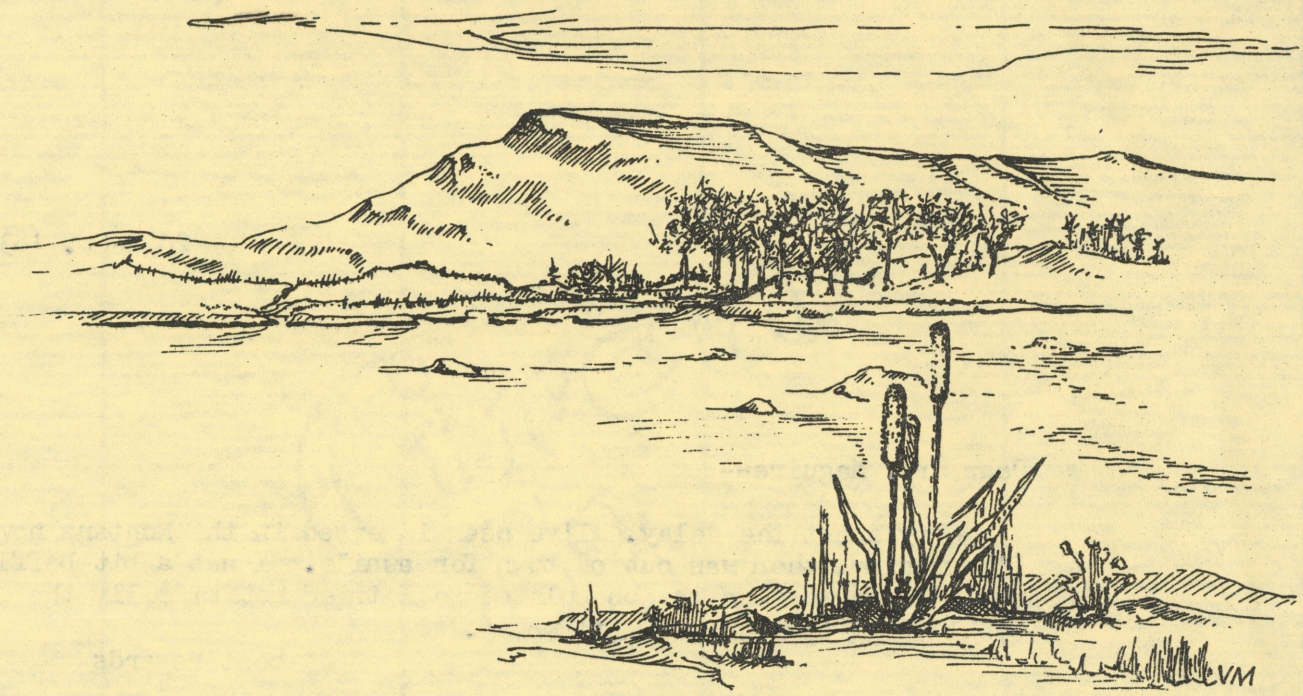
GAY FROJEN

3 Oct. '83

Dear Gay Frojen--

Thanks for sending the Monitor poem and comment, both of which were news to me. The poem was printed while I was in the Valier-Dupuyer-Choteau area of Montana this summer, working on a novel about that area. And we possibly crossed paths in July, because on the 4th my wife and a friend and I drove over from Helena, where we were borrowing a house, to spend the holiday in White Sulphur Springs and Ringling.

Best of luck in your student teaching and your eventual classroom career. And again, my appreciation.



Dear Mr. Doig:

I am taking advantage of some contacts I have in White Sulphur Springs with the hope that you can take a minute and sign the enclosed book plate for me.

I have been collecting Montana books for over 40 years and am trying to complete it with autographs where I can. My son bought me This House of Sky for Christmas when it first came out. He tried to find you in Seattle at the time but could not find you in the phone book.

My family had a ranch out of Armington, and we have spent our lives in the Montana outdoors. Your book touched on so many similar experiences and backgrounds that it came alive. I enjoyed it so much. I envy an author's ability to get it down on paper - and you did it most beautifully.

If you can do this favor for me, it would mean a great deal. (My son sketched the stationery for me - I like his way of recording it).

Very sincerely,

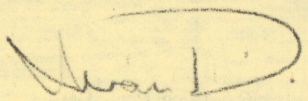
Mrs. Mel Maguire

20 Sept. '83

Dear Mrs. Maguire--

Sorry about the delay. I've been immersed in the Montana novel I'm writing, then was out of town for awhile. I was a bit baffled about where to sign the bookplate, so I tried not to sully the bookloving figure. Hope it's okay.

best regards



[S.A. Metzner]

MR. IVAN DOIG
17021 - TENTH N.W.
SEATTLE - WA - 98177

12-7-83

Dear Mr. Doig!

I am looking for a hard back copy of This House of Sky to complete a set of your books. They are to be a present for my mother for Christmas. One of the clerks at the University Book Store gave me your address to aid my search since the book is out of print. I have my copy but would not like to have to part with it since it is the best book on Montana I have ever read. My family and I lived there for 10 years in Butte! Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Thank-you,

13 Dec. '83

Dear Sharon--

Tried to call you yesterday, Sharon Wagner to discourse to the answering machine, here's the report. Hardback copies of SKY are so scarce that my own are now collector's items, and I doubt that you want to pay that kind of money--$20, $25 in recent bookdealers' listings. But: a few still are in the publisher's warehouse, and the one bookstore that sometimes manages to get one is Edmonds Bookshope (775-2789). They don't have any at the moment--I asked--but are going to try order some. So you might get in touch with them, and also try Shorey's, which occasionally has had a used SKY for $15 or so; if you can come up with a book, of course I'll be glad to sign it. Sorry I can't help more; it's one of the perplexities of publishing, the scarcity of a hardback once the paperback comes along.

best wishes for the holidays.

Rt. 1 Box 620
Loon Lake,WA 99148
June 18, 1983

Mr. Ivan Doig
c/o Atheneum Publishers
597 5th Ave.
New York,NY 98250

You may not recall our communication in July of 1981, at which time I wrote commending you on This House of Sky and mentioned some of the similarities in our backgrounds which made the book particularly appealing.

I recently read your Sea Runners and sincerely feel that you are one of the finer newer authors. Your ability to interweave theme and plot with such vivid imagery makes the reader an integral part of the action.

As an interesting sidelight, my nieces husband, Mike Koelke, who is president of Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka was here visiting last week and said that you were there several months ago during the promotion of your book.

Mr. Doig, I would be pleased to donate my time to do any editing or copy reading for you as I am retired after having taught English and journalism at the secondary level. If I can be of any assistance in this area, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

LaVerne Maxson

(Mr.) LaVerne Maxson

19 Aug. '83

Dear Mr. Maxson--

Thanks for the kind words on Sea Runners, and the exceedingly generous offer of copyreading. But I'm such a one-man operation, using even the copyreading as one more chance to fine-tune my words, that I've never been able to involve anyone else but my wife. I do appreciate being thought of so highly.

all best wishes

p.s. Excuse the delay in reply--I'm in the midst of writing a Montana novel, and am getting to almost nothing else these days.

Christ Our King
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH U.S.A.
Emmorton Road
Bel Air, Maryland 21014

EUGENE H. PETERSON, Pastor
Church Study 838-4698
Home 838-5520

9.3.82

Dear Mr. Doig,

I am sending this in care of your publisher hoping it gets to you. I just finished reading This House of Sky and want to express my admiration & appreciation. My wife & I read it together, aloud, as we traveled this summer from Maryland to Montana and back — she enjoyed it as much as I did.

I grew up in the Flathead valley and our family returns each summer to Flathead Lake where we have a house. Although the country is somewhat different from the Smith Valley, there are so many passages in the book that expressed my own growing up. The section on the saloons in White Sulphur, for instance: my father was a butcher in Kalispell and from the age of 7 or 8 I delivered hamburger & steaks through the back doors of all the bars in town and lingered to listen to the conversation & identify the specialness of each place.

What most deeply impressed me, though, in your writing was not the evocation of the land, and all that it means, but your generous treatment of everyone — seeing their strengths, praising their dexterity in survival. In this awful era of psychological blather in which we are

encouraged to reduce everyone close to us to a set of complexes and attribute the worst of motives to heroic actions, it is refreshing to discover someone who unashamedly appreciates — and has the patience to disentangle the tangled skein of words + silences that show the ~~the~~ full humanity of the people — parents, friends — who shape our lives. I didn't detect a single sentence of self-pity, or condescension in the entire book — quite unheard of in our narcissistic age!

You might be interested that I was given your books by Dr. Iain Wilson of West Yellowstone, a Scot who has lived in this country for 30 years + who loves the Rockies with both zest + knowledge.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

24 Sept. '82

Eugene H Peterson

Dear Eugene Peterson--

Many thanks for your good words about House of Sky. The book does seem to have a durable life.

Carol and I were briefly through your home area this summer, on our way back from the Choteau-Dupuyer country. I'm at work now on a Montana novel set in the Depression years, and it too will have in it both Montanans and Montana Scotchmen. Do you suppose your friend Iain Wilson might be game to talk to me sometime when I'm out there, if I find the chance? If so, and you'd care to provide his address, I'd happily contact him if the opportunity arises.

Again, my gratitude that you took the time to write me.

best regards

M. Willborn
P.O. Box 2089
Amarillo, TX 79105





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

© USPS 1981

July 22, 1983

Dear Mr. Doig,

I recently found a first edition of This House of Sky and sent it to you today, with return postage. I would very much appreciate your inscribing it. Thanks very much for the thoughtful inscriptions on the other books.

Haven't seen the large format of This House of Sky yet, but when its published I'm sure the book stores here will eventually have it. Looking forward to that and your next efforts.

Thanks again.

Mike Wilder Sent aug 1, '83

July 19

Dear Evan,

Enjoyed your book so very much.

Was interested in your reference to Annie Campbell from Perthshire, Scotland. My great grand parents, Alexander Campbells came from Perth Scotland and settled at Guelph Ontario Canada. My father Henry Goldwin Campbell came to Buffalo Ways, when he was 16 yrs. old.

Last week we attended

the Good Samm, State
Sampores in Great Falls.
They had an excellent program.
While there, my husband
visited with Gordon Doig.
Believe he said he was a
cousin of yours.
Its a small world.

Sincerely
Eunice Sammes

807 E. Juneau, #21
Milwaukee, WI 53202
May 11, 1983

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

Dear Mr. Doig,

I've just finished reading This House of Sky and have only one regret - that I can't now read it for the first time.

Your book was rhapsodically recommended to me by a close friend, Elizabeth Earnest, and the other night I told her I'd become so caught up in it I wanted to write you a fan letter (a thing I'm rarely moved to do), if I could get your address. As a matter of fact, she said, on a recent trip to Seattle (her native home) she'd called you to say how much she loved your work and so, happily, had your address.

A while ago, before I had begun This House of Sky, another friend threw out the cocktail-hour question: "If you could have one (personal) thing in all the world, what would it be?" Without hesitation I said it would be the ability to write beautifully - not for the fame, and sometimes fortune, attendant upon such a talent, but for the depth of perception and sensitivity needed to bring the words to paper. The riches lie mainly in the seeing (although seeing without any ability at all to articulate it must be the worst agony), and especially seeing love as it moves in and through our lives in its many expressions.

Time and again, while I was reading your book, I was struck, sometimes breathless, by the events in your life which have their echoes in my own. So my visit to my 70-year-old maiden aunt, who lives on Sheridan Road across from Lincoln Park, was even more special. As I walked down Michigan Avenue with that lady who means so much to me, I thought about how we were passing the same places, perhaps treading the very same inches of cement, as those beloved people who are forever a part of you - and now of me as well, for having read the book. Later, during one of our endless favorite card games, I thought how in her face are reflected my own grandmother's and mother's (her mother and sister), both gone for many years now, and also the prophecy of my own face in years to come. We are so alike. But most important, it is her face, and while I hope there will be many moments like that one, that one will not happen again, any more than I can read your book again for the first time. But I can hold both in my heart. Blessed be the ties that bind.

YOU write beautifully, Skavinsky. And I want to thank you most warmly for This House of Sky. It's as if you have reached across half a continent to offer a wealth of love by the double-handsful to a grateful and not-so-complete stranger.

Sincerely,

Jean Collins

Jean Collins

25 May '83

Dear Jean Collins--

Thanks so much for taking the trouble to write me about House of Sky. A writer can stand the reassurance that his work is alive, somewhere out there in the world.

I'm about to depart for Montana, for the sake of a Montana-during-the-Depression novel I'm writing. A sort of fictional first cousin of House of Sky, I suppose; with luck, it'll be in print a year from this fall--and I can start on probably the next Montana novel, one about homesteaders.

regards

Bill Knapp
10221 NE 62nd #8
Kirkland, Wa. 98033
4/11/83

Ivan Doig
c/o

Dear Mr. Doig:

I read Sky and loved it. Fathers and sons can be very hard with one another. The communions are rare. So it has been in my case, as father, as son. The bond can carry such a righteous burden of expectation and tyranny. Yet, in a few very brittle moments, if they dare, both may feel the particular essence in the other, and this can make them each whole.

Reading Sky, in the Spring of '82, I discovered some special insights into that special flux. For that I thank you. You perform wonders with your craft. I was genuinely moved, my experience was enriched. (Your profits were probably diminished, however, as I loaned my copy of Sky to many friends. Each time it was returned a little more battered, a little more worn, more loved.)

Somehow, the experience of Sky helped me to

discover depths of courage and compassion within myself that were previously dormant. This discovery, this awareness, strengthened me greatly as I watched my own father die earlier this year of cancer. Again, I am grateful for your art, as it has related directly to my life.

But then along came Melander and Swan, and then I was angry. I am a most provincial Northwesterner (I have lived in Seattle for all of my forty years). As with anyone who has lived here that long I have scratched out my share of grey, misty poems and turgid odes to the Northwest clime. The old journals reek of damp closets and rotting, mildewed books. And yet no one (until Melander and Swan appeared on the scene) had captured the Great Grey. I was going to try, but now I must move on to brighter challenges. The Great Grey has been finally secured by Doig. A masterful job. My skin wrinkled as I read, my entire being wrapped in the warp of shifting greys. Melander. Swan. I loved them both so. It was so much like diving into myself, playing with the tendrils of my existence. Thank you so.

A jacket blurb said something of a work of fiction, Montana-based. I understand. You must need a break from the Great Grey, a need for hot sun, heavy snow. I too yearn

for such things. Whatever is in the offering, I anxiously await. It's a little sad that a Montana interloper had to find us, for us; but so be it.

You have come, and you have brought your precious gifts. We love you for it.

Best of luck in your craft, and continued success, so that we, selfishly, may share in what you write.

With great respect and admiration,

Bill Knapp

23 April '83

Dear Bill Knapp--
Thanks for all the kind words about my work. You're one of the few to see the effect of my divided citizenship--Montana and here. Anyway I have it easier than Conrad and Nabokov, who had to learn the languages of fresh places! I don't particularly agree that I have roped and tied the Great Grey; room for more work on that, particularly by anybody who's really a waterman, sailor of some sort (I'm by temperament a drylander, despite Sea Runners). Poems might be the way to go; Dick Hugo got a lot done on this area before going to Montana. And you might like to know of a new novel, EAGLE SONG by James Houston (he of THE WHITE DAWN)--a Nootka Sound story told from the Indian point of view, and a book I greatly wish was mine. Meanwhile, yes, I'm in the Montana past, maybe for a few books now; best of both worlds, this climate to work in and that one to write about.
may your own work thrive. best,

April 18, 1983

Dear Mr. Doig:

This is a fan letter. I don't usually write them, but after reading THIS HOUSE OF SKY twice I felt I needed to let you know how much it has meant to me.

I can't remember when I have read a more enjoyable book, and I read a great deal. I bought this book several weeks before leaving on a trip, and knew that I must save it for a quiet time so put it aside until my return from Florida.

The love between you, your father and grandmother is expressed so beautifully. It must be a great joy to you now just remembering all those wonderful years with your family. You give small glimpses of yourself and your beloved Carol which leave me wanting to learn more about you. Have you written anything about your marriage? If not, you should, I'm sure it would be as enjoyable as your love for the rest of your family.

There are so many parts of the book that are great, but I enjoyed the part about the sheep ranches and traveling from one to another because I have a cousin who was a pioneer in the sheep business in Wyoming, and I painted a picture of a sheep wagon that had been used on her ranch for almost a hundred years. I have bought a copy of your book to send to her, hoping that she will be inspired to write her story.

I also read WINTER BROTHERS which interested me principally because of Pt. Townsend, where I have been several times. The first time in 1921, when I stayed in a red brick hotel in downtown. The room had a high ceiling, and an air tight stove for heat. It was in winter, and we had a fire that made the stovepipe red hot.

I lived in Seattle in 1918 to 1921 and have friends there. In fact, I spent the past two Christmases in Seattle, one time getting snowed in. I do not have the love for Seattle that you do, but do think it is beautifully situated and if it were not for the weather it would be magnificent. I moved to California in 1921 and wouldn't live anywhere else.

I am a freelance writer, 83 years young, and work for a writer, Carlton E. Morse, who wrote, produced and directed ONE MAN'S FAMILY for radio for 27 years. He is now publishing some of his novels for the first time. Stanford University has taken all of his scripts of his radio shows for a permanent exhibit in their RARE BOOKS LIBRARY.

You may be interested to know that it was quite difficult finding your book. I happened to find the first copy by accident, and when I asked for another, they didn't have it and didn't offer to order it for me. I finally went to B. Dalton and they ordered two copies for me. I'm telling everyone about it and loaning one of my copies.

I'm writing my autobiography too, not for publication, but for my family. Having lived to 83 and having a vivid memory of the early days, I find it is great fun putting it all down.

If you have any other books, please let me know what they are because I want to read them.

I'm so glad I found the two I have. Thanks for writing them.

Sincerely,

Kathryn W. Smith

Kathryn W. Smith
115 Arbor Court
Woodside, CA 94062

23 April '83

Dear Kathryn Smith--

Thanks so much for taking time from your own writing to say good words about mine. My grandmother, Bessie Ringer of This House of Sky, was a listener to daytime radio, I think undoubtedly of "One Man's Family."

As to other books of mine, I'm now writing, for fall '84 publication, a novel set in Montana during the Depression; it'll be a fictional first cousin of House of Sky, I guess. And a novel of mine titled THE SEA RUNNERS was published by Atheneum last fall. It's somewhat different from my other two books--a historical adventure, full of cussing Swede workmen escaping from cussing Russian masters in 1853 Alaska. Had good reviews, though. Since you're a confirmed Californian, I wonder if you've seen an autobiography/memoir I liked a lot--CALIFORNIA AND OTHER STATES OF GRACE, by Phyllis Theroux.

all best wishes

CHRIS

February 7,1983

Dear Ivan:

I have planned towrite you for some time but just don't get it done for one reason or another. First of all I want to tell you how much I enjoyed The Sea Runners. The map in the front of the book made it very interesting as I could look there and see exactly where the canoes were from one chaper to the next.

It was a hard book to get here, the book store had it and when I saw it I was in a hurry and didn't get it the day I saw it, then when I went back it was gone and they couldn't get any more. I wanted it for my wife's birthday do my daughter in Billings got it for me and got it here in time. She hasn't read it yet as she has trouble with her glasses and does very little reading right now.

Somewhere I read or heard that you were now writing your fourth book and that it again was a book about Montana. I will be anxious to get it when it comes out.

Looking up one of your former letters to me Iarlann Coughlin no longer lives here having sold her Books store. Yes Keith Ford was in school when I was at Ringling. If you ever see him again say Hi for me.

Think since I wrote last I have had rheumatoid arthritis which was very bad for a time but as of now I am nearly back to normal except my wrists dohurt. I had to have m y rings cut off, couldn't wear my watch and had to give up bowling for a year. I can now bowl again and wear the one ring that was not cut off nad can wear my watch agai

We have some good friends in Seattle who live at 443 South 207th if you know about that that is located.

Two of my cousins, sons of Marie Christison the one who shot the bear in House of Sky are very bad right one, one in Helena from cancer surgery and the other one in Great Falls from a severe stroke. I saw both of them last July 4th when I spent several days in Helena at the time of my boother's passing. Seems to me that we are all getting older.

I heard that your uncle Claude had moved from Big Timber but do not know where. Do you? My cousins in Helena gave me the name of a book I should read, "None to Give Away" by elsie Doig Townsend who lives in Independence, Missoure. Have you ever heard of it. She was at one time married to your uncle Angus until his death. I am going to see if I can find it in the book store here.

I know you are busy. Oh yes I amstill working but was laid off for a couple of months until they got the books mixed up then called me back and they still aren't all straightened out.

My best regards to both you and your wife,

Ken Christison

answered, '63
Ap. 20,

February 1, 1983

Dear Mr. Doig,

Last evening I finished reading "This House of Sky," and for the second time in over sixty years of wide reading, I feel compelled to intrude on a writer's time.

I simply must tell you what a masterpiece that book is. How superbly you have preserved the lives that embraced your early years, and that you saw to the end of theirs!

It is a triumph of control how you brought together so many aspects of complex people, with such delicacy of feeling. How I do admire the originality of your phrasing!

With warm appreciation for the pleasure your work gave me

Teresa Foltz

PO Box 244
Hagerman ID 83332

2 April '83

Dear Teresa Folts--

Thanks for taking the time to write me about House of Sky. It's a particularly opportune moment for me to hear such good words, as I'm in the midst of writing a long novel about Montana during the Depression, and it helps to have reassurance that anybody is interested in Montana besides my Montana friends and relatives.

best wishes

28 March 1983

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

Dear Mr. Doig:

I'm not sure that enthusiasm can come bouncing out of a letter but believe that phone calls can be an intrusion--so here I am in a letter, hoping that I can convey some of what I am feeling.

I have just finished This House of Sky and I loved it: it was rich, exhilarating, cathartic, funny, touching, EVERYTHING, plus it was set in Montana. I have read alot of books in my life--this one stands as one of my all time favorites.

I should say further that my father is a geologist and has taught at Princeton since 1926 (he is now retired). Ever since he started teaching he has gone to Montana for the summer to teach students in the field. He has been in different parts of Montana, but always in Red Lodge for a stint at the geologic field camp there named Yellowstone Bighorn Research Association. He loves teaching, he loves the outdoors and most of all he loves teaching in Montana. Just about May he starts waking up early in anticipation of the journey to the land of the sagebrush.

As you can see, his love of Montana is contagious. I spent a great many of my summers in Montana with my parents and I look back on them with alot of love and with a sense of peace that only looking at the Montana skyline can bring. The difference between Princeton and Montana, you can well imagine, is enormous enough so that two of the three children live west of the Mississippi.

To make a long story short, I have just recently been going through a divorce and picked up This House of Sky because a friend who also loves Montana said it was good. Good? It's wonderful--and provided me with evenings of quiet, peaceful moments, something I haven't had in a long time; it's not just that Montana descriptions bring back peaceful times, but that your book is so well written that I was there and the story took me away from the rain and the gray.

Thank you. Again, I wish you could hear my enthusiasm--but perhaps you can understand through the background. I finished the book last night and was just very touched. Needless to say Dad gets a copy in the next mail.

Sincerely,

Molly Butler

Molly Butler
1957 8th Avenue West
Seattle, Washington 98119

1 April '83

Dear Molly Butler--

Thanks for troubling to write me about House of Sky. This is a particularly opportune time for me to hear such good words, as I'm in the midst of writing a big novel set in Montana and can stand to hear reassurance that anybody besides Montanans wants to hear about Montana.

all best wishes

Friday, Jan. 21, 1983

Dear Mr. Doig,

I am a Bozeman weaver and in charge of selecting a theme for our Bozeman Weavers Guild display at the Northwest Weavers Conference. The conference is a regional weavers get-together for the hobbyist, professional, beginning and advanced weaver. The conference offers workshops, seminars, displays, shows, commercial booths, and lectures on our craft for some 500 northwest weavers. Each guild exhibits weavings by their members on a theme of their choice.

I chose the theme "Landscapes of a Western Mind," with your permission. We pick a theme for our display that provides a cohesiveness, as we are a diverse group of weavers. "Landscapes of a Western Mind" lends itself to a lot of creative imagery and good ideas for weavings. Much like "This House of Sky" our weavers take natural fibers and relate their own art forms. I received overwhelming approval of the theme from our guild members, over sixty weavers. I hope you approve too, of borrowing "Landscapes of a Western Mind" from your popular book. The Northwest Weavers Conference will be held in Bozeman, the first week in July. We would be happy to hear your response to weaving around this theme. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Janet Donham

Janet Donham
33338 Frontage Rd.
Bozeman, MT 59715

27 Jan. '83

Dear Janet--

I'd be happy and flattered to have you use the "Landscapes" theme--if there's a printed program or some such for your show, please send me a couple of copies when the time comes.

regards, and best of luck.



7.10-15

Dear Mr. DOIG,

thank you for your prompt reply. How grateful I am to you. Yes, I would very much like to buy 1 hardback copy from you. thank you.

the good news for you is that of the few remaining paperback copies of This House of Sky, I bought up the only copies at three stores (many do not have any!). I

bought the only 2 hardback copies of Winter Brothers — it is also out of print, I was told.

With the book I am buying from you, I have a total of 8 books to be autographed. When and where would you like me to meet you? Again, THANK YOU.

KWAKIUTL MASK
HELMI JUVONEN, 20TH C. AMERICAN
EUGENE FULLER MEMORIAL COLLECTION
SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

Mary Helen Windell
453.1477
(8649 N.E. 20th)
Bellevue 98004

Like God's creations in nature you bring joy into my life

Dear Mr. Doig,

Not unlike your experience at Ellen Creek, I fought the cancer battle three years ago (with very good odds), but the experience has left me with many new insights including telling someone unknown to me personally how much my life has been touched by yours.

Without this experience I would have never had the courage to write to you.

I do want you to know how grateful I am for your personal reply and your time. I cannot begin to thank you enough for parting with one of your hardback copies of this House of Sky. Again, I realize how fortunate I am.

For the very beautiful and sensitive way you share your life and Carol's through your writing, I thank you. Many lives have been touched in a special way.

Wish I had some Montana huckleberry jam for you maybe next summer.

Mary Helen Windell
2.24.83

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glint on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you wake in the morning hush
I am the swift, uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circling flight.
I am the soft starlight at night.

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there. I do not sleep.

author unknown
from *The Northwest Indian News*
Mary Helen Windell · SCRIPSIT · 1981

The Bellevue lady who wants you to sign books (Mary Hill Wendell?) called to see about that. Sounds nice, but very talky!

What would be easiest foryou? I suggested meeting you in U District maybe one day when you're down there. Stressed how busy you are.

She'd appreciate having autographs by end ofnext week. Will be out of town as of March 2. I said you'd call her when you could arrange something.

453-1477.

Take a Sky - 7:10-15, Phew!

Cinde - Hut main door

8649 N.E. 20th
Bellevue · WA. 98004
February 2, 1983

DEAR Ivan Doig,

Many times I have written a mental letter to you to thank you for This House of Sky.

My Montana ties go back to 1950 when my father, who loved the outdoors very much, bought a log house on Ashley Lake, west of Kalispell. This was my father's dream and all of us who were touched by it have strong emotional ties to Montana. It was most enlightening for me to read about your experiences as we grew up during the same years.

My husband enjoyed meeting you at Frederick & Nelsons in Dec. He gave me an autographed copy of THE SEA RUNNERS for Christmas. (We were fortunate to have observed a Potlatch at Gwa-yas-Dums on Gilford Island in 1976.)

Knowing that you are busy writing, I am hopeful that you

might be able to help with a request:

I would like to give a hard back copy of THIS HOUSE OF SKY, autographed by you, to my brother for his fortieth birthday in March. If possible I would like to have you autograph several more for people touched by "the Montana experience" whom I fondly call "Montana Pards."

Would this be possible? Do you have access to any hardbacks? If not I will order them immediately. (I hope some are still available.)

Enclosed is a self-addressed envelope for your reply.

Again, many thanks for "touching" us through your gift for writing.

Hoping this will work out and grateful for your time,

Mary Helen Windell

Telephone: 453-1477

6 Feb. '83

Dear Mrs. Windell--

I appreciated hearing of your interest in This House of Sky; I'm glad it rang true to you.

Hardback copies are a scarce proposition; once in a while you'll come across a bookstore with one, but the book is effectively out of print. I have a limited cache of my own; I could spare one for your brother but not beyond that, I'm afraid. The cost would be $12 plus postage; Sky weighs 1½ pounds, so book rate 4th class postage is 86¢.

There are paperback copies of the book pretty generally available, if that'd suffice for the other gifts you mentioned. Or, if there's no vast rush, I plan to have a Montana novel in print in about a year and a half. I wish the hardback supply situation was better, but that's the publishing business.

all best wishes

Ivan D.

p.s. There probably also will be a coffee table photo book, called Inside This House of Sky--a few thousand words of This House of Sky used as captions on 65 pics of the country of the book--in print this autumn. It's going to cost like the dickens, though, likely between $25 and $30.

JON B. LUND
3760 N.W. JACKSON SCHOOL ROAD
HILLSBORO, OREGON 97123

TELEPHONE 640-2118

December 16, 1982

Dear Dr. Doig,

I just finished This House of Sky and wanted to tell you how special it was to me. Aside from cheering constantly for your Dad, Grandma and you it also caused me to reflect on my own childhood and those people who influenced my life.

My home town of Astoria, Oregon may be somewhat larger than White Sulphur Springs, Dupuyer, Ringling and the like, but it was still small enough to have many of the same component parts. Instead of sheep and sheepherders we had fish and fishermen — and at that time a lot of both.

JON B. LUND
3760 N.W. JACKSON SCHOOL ROAD
HILLSBORO, OREGON 97123

TELEPHONE 640-2118

Thank you for sharing your very special memories with the reading public. I look forward to more of your writing in the future.

Sincerely yours,

Jon Lund

26 Jan. '83

Dear Jon Lund--

Nice of you to take the time to write me about House of Sky. Your town of Astoria is one of the coastal places my wife and I go back and back to--usually 2-3 times a year, some kind of Astoria-Cannon Beach-Oswald West venture. I assume you don't know that Astoria plays a role--as a distant goal to some striving 1853 canoemen--in a novel of mine called The Sea Runners. There's precious little of actual historical Astoria in the book, but it was interesting to delve at the Oregon Historical Society for even that much.

Again, thanks for gettingin touch. There's a great Montana fishing novella called A River Runs Through It, by Norman Maclean.



[Hobart, IN. 1983]

January 8th.

Dear Ivan Doig,

Finally getting around to saying "thank you" for acknowledging our letter to your publisher. After three years of hospitilizations for heartfailure, that slowed me down, some I as an "coming back" which is a wonderful experience.

At 75 and 77, we never have time to read all the books, gather catalogue, and use the beautiful wildflowers, do all the writing, and creating. Best of all is enjoying the nine, dear, grand-children our four nice kids - who had the good

since to marry four more nice kids - have given us.

We keep checking to find out if you have written any more books like the ones we have so enjoyed. Continued success to you both in your great work, and thank you.

Love,

The Grahams

Esther and Bob.

this is the first mild-flame we haven't been able to categorize - but it a beauty -

Esther.



4 Dec 1982
Seattle

Mr Doig -

Congratulations on the success of your "Winter Brothers" television program. I'm looking forward to reading the book.

I've had the good fortune to attend Fairfield High School with Marc Lee. Last summer, Marc had the good fortune to cross trails with you. As a result of that meeting, I treasure an autographed copy of "This House of Sky."

I recently purchased several copies of "the Sea Runners" as gifts to my Montana friends who share my attraction to Western Washington and have enjoyed your writing.

I'm sure your privacy has become more valuable as your notability increases.

With that in mind, I have a favor to ask. I could certainly understand & accept your declination.

Could you autograph these copies of "The Sea Runners"? I can be in Seattle or surrounding area (Edmonds) any time at your convenience. Marc Lee will be in Seattle Dec 9-11 If possible, I'd like to present this gift during that time.

If you don't feel inconvenienced, could you call me at 937-2083 or write to 2733 Belvidere SW Seattle 98126

Looking forward to your next achievement and hoping to hear from you.

Warm regards

Dale Evans

818 Flormann
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701
November 9, 1982

Mr. Ivan Doig
c/o Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Doig,

It is my hope that this letter will eventually reach you through your publisher or through an address that can be found at our local library.

Several years ago I reviewed "This House of Sky" for a local book review group. Perhaps because I was born on a homestead in eastern Montana and grew up in Glendive I have a passion for anything about Montana. Someone has written "virtually every person who has ever lived in Montana--even for a brief period of time--likes to be known as a Montanan for the rest of his life! I was particularly impressed with your descriptions of the land, the towns and the people--your lyrical choice of words often matches the phrases of John McPhee and would surely please Mrs. Tidyman.

Mrs. Tidyman, by the way, taught two acquaintances of mine who grew up in Valier--Virginia Geiger (Kenyon) and Gynell (now Naylor) whose father was a doctor in Valier--both older than you, I'm sure.

This letter is written to send on to you a recent article from The Denver Post about a Wyoming shepherdess whose experiences were not unlike some of yours and your father's. As I read it I was reminded of your book and thought you might be interested in the woman's story - and I could finally tell you how much I enjoyed "This House of Sky".

My husband and I made a side trip through Ringling last summer just to see the town and that area.

After attending an Elderhostel at Peninsula College in Port Angeles I was eager to read your book about the settling of the Olympic Peninsula, and I enjoyed the history. "This House of Sky" will continue to be my favorite Doig, however. Have you considered a second book about Montana? I hope so.

Sincerely yours,

Lucille Christle

(Mrs. Richard Christle)

8 Dec. '82

Dear Lucille--

Many thanks for passing along the Denver Post story. I had never thought of it before, but I believe I've never heard of a woman sheepherder. No reason why there shouldn't be, certainly.

Yes, I'm at work on a Montana book--a novel set in the Dupuyer country during the Depression. It's going to be a long one, though, and I'll spend all of next year writing it; with luck it'll be published in autumn of '84.

I was back in Valier for my 25th high school reunion in June. Had hoped Mrs. Tidyman's youngest son would show up--it actually was a reunion of 3 classes--but he didn't. I thought we looked like a pretty good bunch, even so.

Again, my appreciation. If you're within hearing range of the Radio Reader on National Public Radio, he's supposed to read my current novel, an Alaska adventure story, sometime in the new year.

all best wishes

November 22, 1982

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

Dear Mr. Doig:

It is through a rather bizarre series of coincidences that I am writing you this letter, not the least of which is that I'm sending it merely across town.

This past summer, my sister was spending some time aboard the ARCO tanker on which her husband serves, cruising between Los Angeles and Panama. During these weeks, she did a lot of reading, and one of the books she was lent by one of the crew members was THIS HOUSE OF SKY. And although the trip was a very exciting one for her, this book turned out to be her main topic of conversation upon her return. Our mother was born in White Sulphur Springs in 1935, and we've all been told about the town mostly from her late father and his sisters, so this was a particularly interesting book to our family.

The other strange twist, and the one that convinced me to write this letter, was the realization that you are a client of Davis, Wright, Todd, Riese & Jones, the law firm for whom I work. A postcard you sent to Marshall Nelson, Mitch Olejko and Ann Northrup was posted in our lunchroom, and your name caught my eye.

I'm not quite sure why I'm writing this, except maybe just to say that you've written a very special, heirloom-type book for us. And also to drop a few names, I suppose. I'm mostly interested in anything you might know about my great-grandfather, Lewis Wright. I've been told he was a painter, and that some of his works are still around the area. It would mean a great deal to my mother, who also paints, to know where some if any of them are located. There was also an episode in the book wherein a doctor died on a sidewalk in the middle of town. When my Aunt Eve (mother's aunt) read this, she told us that she remembered the incident, and added that it all happened right in front of the restaurant that her mother ran.

With only Aunt Eve around from the folks who spent any time at all in White Sulphur, and with her memory not as sharp as it used to be (I think she's nearing 80, living in Phoenix), some of the stories are sketchy at best. I know that her parents, Lewis and Eva Wright, lived there for a period of time with their children, Eve, Opal, Lillian, Ed and Louis, my grandfather. He married Lula Thews in 1933, I believe, and they moved to Spokane with my mother, Barbara, in '38 or '39.

Like I said, I'm not sure what I mean by writing this letter. It would probably be a major miracle if you knew, or knew of, any of these people, but I guess I just wanted to say that they were there, and that we thank you for making our background a little less hazy than before.

Sincerely,

Brad Watson

6 Dec. '82

Dear Brad--

Sorry for the delay in responding, but I'm at work on a Montana novel and haven't touched anything else on the desk recently. Glad to hear House of Sky was a boon to your family. I wonder if you know that it's the second "famous" book written about White Sulphur; Born to Be, by the black singer Taylor Gordon, is in UW Press paperback.

I'm afraid I'm a strikeout on the Wrights, though. The name doesn't register with me, perhaps because my head is now so focused toward northern Montana, the setting of this novel I'm doing. "Thews" is a name I recognize, but can't put any face or recollection to. There was a county history done in White Sulphur in 1967, but unfortunately it was flung together without index or table of contents; I've had a quick skim, but it's like looking through an old family photo album, no logic to go on. If you're interested in pursuing the family research to White Sulphur, my friend Theresa Buckingham, a stalwart of the local historical society and a good writer in her own right, might know of the Wrights, or pass you to someone who does. You could simply write her: Theresa Buckingham, White Sulphur Springs MT 59645. Her own book, The Old Party in the Feather Shawl, is a charming set of vignettes of life in White Sulphur and its valley.

As to any surviving art of Lewis Wright, probably the Montana Historical Society in Helena would be your best bet. The Society's library also has a less than comprehensive card file of pioneers, but it likely would have taken some outstanding (or maybe outlandish) incident to land Lewis in it. Wish I could be more help.

best wishes

Ivan

727 Orange Street
New Haven, CT 06511

November 17, 1982

Dear Ivan Doig,

Twice before (after reading your earlier books as they were published) I have intended to write to you and this time I am determined to do it and tell you that I loved them and that I loved The Sea-Runners, too. (A friend of mine turned to his wife after finishing This House of Sky and told her, "Every sentence in that book is absolutely original.) I wish I could express as perfectly as you would my admiration for and complete captivation by your three books. As it is, however, I am in a position to thank you by spreading the word--I am the manager of The Foundry Bookstore in New Haven, Connecticut and am becoming famous (I hope not infamous) for my shameless proselytizing for the works of Ivan Doig. I am glad to be able to relate that my efforts have been rewarded by brisk though modest sales of (in particular) This House of Sky and recently, The Sea-Runners. (Modest only in the sense that we don't sell enormous quantities of anybody's books.)

I also wanted to mention how irked and disappointed I am that you don't get the reviews or the reviewers you deserve in the New York Times Book Review (my customers' primary source for book reviews), which has too much influence over the fates of books. I found Wright Morris' self-serving criticisms of This House of Sky completely off the mark and Mary Lee Settle's pretentious review of The Sea Runners shallow and inadequate.

I hope if you find yourself in New Haven that you will visit The Foundry. I understand from my Scribners' saleswoman that The Sea Runners is doing very well in the Northwest. May it and you prosper--and may you write many more equally wonderful books. I look forward to them.

Sincerely,

Henry Berliner

Henry Berliner

29 Nov. '82

Dear Mr. Berliner--

Needless to say, on a day when the copies of The Sea Runners arrived to the bookstore at my wife's college a bare 20 minutes before I was scheduled to do a signing, your letter came as a breath of reassurance about the book business. Yes, my Runners are doing well out here; consistently the only regional book on the local list of 5 best-selling novels, usually wrestling with E.T. for 4th or 5th spot. Atheneum has just gone back to press for a 4th printing, 17,000 now extant in the world (sometimes I think virtually all of them lost in some warehouse).

I appreciated your words about my NYTBR reviews, although I haven't found them as dire as some other people have. (The HBJ saleswoman of the time was imaginatively profane about Wright Morris.) I guess I have figured that if a person gets out of one of those reviews unslaughtered, it's some kind of victory. Anyway, to reward your grit in reading those reviews, I'm passing along a few others which you might enjoy more.

I'm at work now on a novel set in Montana during the Depression; and intend to sign with Atheneum again for it, as I've liked my editor there and think he did a handsome job of production on Sea Runners. That'll be 1984's book, I hope with no ill portent attached. Meanwhile, you might be interested to know that Penguin has bought the paperback rights of Sea Runners, and intends to bring out their edition next fall; and if there's a National Public Radio station in your area, the Radio Reader, Dick Estell, is supposed to read Sea Runners sometime after the first of the year.

Again, thanks immensely for writing, and for supporting my books. The Foundry definitely has been added to my "must" list if I ever make it to New Haven again.

regards

Ivan Doig



THE PIEGAN STORYTELLER

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ SOCIETY

David C. Andrews
Box 53
Andes, New York 13731



Nov. 5, '82

RECEIVED NOV 1 2 1982

BKSTRE

Harcourt Brace
Jovanovich
757 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10017

Gentlemen:

I own and have read Ivan Doig's two superb books, This House of Sky and Winter Brothers, both published by you.

I would like to find out if he has a third book in progress, or plans one, and/or if you will publish it.

He is the most exciting writer about the west in 50 years, at least!

Please let me hear from you in regards to these questions.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

David C. Andrews

29 Nov. '82

Dear Mr. Andrews--

I appreciate your enthusiastic letter to Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, which was passed along to me. A book of mine indeed was published this autumn, but not by HBJ. It's a novel set along the NW coast in 1855, the story of a canoe escape from New Archangel toward Astoria-- The Sea Runners, pub'd by Atheneum, $13.95. And I am at work on a novel set in Montana during the Depression; if I stay on schedule, it'll be published in the fall of 1984.

Again, thanks for your interest in my work.