Dear Mr. Doig,

I am writing to let you know how impressed and moved I was by your book *This House of Sky*. I consider it a privilege to be able to thank a contemporary writer for his work since most of the good works were created by people of the past. Your book goes beyond any time frame in its ability to speak to people.

You have a superb ability to describe humanness and situations in a poetic way and yet leave no ambiguity as to what human feature, or set of circumstances you are relating.

I am a big fan of Montana's and your book created more of a richness of Montana for me. I would normally be jealous of a person having the experiences you had as a child in Montana's lands but your book penetrated and exposed enough extraneous and internal life that I was enriched by the reading rather than feeling jealous.

I hope the best for you in your future endeavours.

Respectfully,

Karen Riener
Dear Karen Riener—

My publisher passed along your letter; thanks very much for taking the time to write me. It's always gratifying to a writer to hear that a book has sounded right to a reader. If you're a Montana fan, I wonder if you know the great piece of writing by Norman Maclean—the title story of A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT.

very best
July 28, 1982

Dear Sir,

Would it be possible for me to get Juan Origa's address? At 75th and 77 we have 20 loved his two books and would like to tell him so.

Thank you

Sincerely,

Esther and Pat Graham

Mrs. Ruth Graham
124 N. Hobart Rd
Hobart Ind. 46342
August 5, 1982

Mr. Ivan Doig  
c/o Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Dear Mr. Doig,

In a pure bit of serendipity, I came across your This House Of Sky while browsing through my local Public Libfay. I am always interested in Montaniana since I was born in Butte and lived there for the first 18 years of my life.

And there certainly could not have been a stranger contrast in life styles than where you grew up. All the time I was reading your book, I was mentally nagged by some feeling that I had read another one from someone who grew up around White Sulphur Springs. It was not until page 301 where you list some of the persons who were at your father's funeral. "The lone black face of Taylor Gordon..." I knew I had the author and scrawled thru a notebook I've kept sporadically over the years of books I've enjoyed and there it was in 1939, Born To Be by Taylor Gordon. All I remember about it now was that he worked as a sleeping car porter for the railroad but had great aspirations to be a singer. Was this the same Taylor Gordon and did he ever sing? Would you mind just answering that question on the enclosed card?

In my salad days I worked with a similar name to yours, i.e. Scottish & Russian. He was Ivan Munro and his Ivan came from a mother of Russian heritage.

I trust you saw the movie, Heartland which I thoroughly enjoyed. Montana is a beautiful State but I early realized as you did that my fortunes were elsewhere. When I went back to my 50th High School class reunion in 1980, I realized why Butte is on the list of the 10 ugliest cities in the US.

But they can't change the Big Sky feeling fortunately. Thank you for your lovely book.

Very truly,

Mary Breen  
190 El Dorado Ave.  
Palo Alto, CA 94306
Mr. Ivan Dorji
17021 101/2 Ave.
Seattle, Wash. 98177
Dear Mr. Dorf,

I wrote you a couple years back about your Montana book. Recently I met a geographer named Ashley, who teaches at Brigham Young University, and talked a bit with him about it. Being keen about such things, I sent him that radio script. He's interested in White Sulphur Springs.

If you're going to be in Seattle either August 1st or 2nd, we might meet for a talk.

g/o Newman, 4810 East Mercer Way, Mercer Island, Wash.

Gregory Smith
July 29, 1982

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

Dear Ivan,

First off, I'd best identify myself as the person who roomed with Gwen Cline at Northwestern in 1960 when Ralph Votapek was dating her and as the person who married Margaret Scriver's father and as the person -- among many other persons -- who greatly admires This House of Sky. I have now more or less graduated (the less being an incomplete thesis) from the University of Chicago where I did manage to meet Norman Maclean, who graciously invited me for supper and spent quite a bit of time raving about Ivan Doig!

I've managed to get myself back to Montana by putting four small Unitarian fellowships (Bozeman, Missoula, Helena, and Great Falls) together into one "church" that could hire me. I moved back the first week of July and everywhere I went everyone kept saying, "Ivan Doig was here-- did you meet him?"

No, dammit, I didn't. But now I have a photo of the elusive man as printed in the Great Falls Tribune, too fuzzy in several senses for me to feel that I recognize you from NU days.

Just in case you run out of data or start another book, I want to pass on my address:

106 Broadway, Apt. 6
Helena, Montana 59601
406-443-6054

It's the Parchen Building, gentrified by urban renewal and formerly the printing plant of the "Daily Independent." Most of the time I'll be on the road in a pickup and a camper, but will be home to reorganize on Tuesdays and Wednesdays if all goes according to plan. We aren't going to activate the plan until September, though, and the weather may not cooperate later on. People have been worrying about me driving in winter, but I figure I'll only be going the hundred miles or so to the fellowship-of-the-week and back, and on a four-lane highway at that. Much safer than the thirteen mile drive down from East Glacier to Browning early every morning and late every night when I was teaching school!

Being back in Montana feels something like E.T. being returned to his home planet. Suddenly I can breathe the air, speak the language, tell my stories, and just plain relax. But I may need dosing with rain once in a while over in the coastal NW. Maybe if I'm in Seattle sometime, we can have a cup of coffee or something.

Until then,

Mary Scriver
Dear Mary---

Welcome back to Montana—addressedly noted. Among my stops in the state this summer was my 25th class reunion; the class a yr older than mine was there too, and I seem to remember that was Harge Skogen's (as I knew her).

The writing's going well, though I have a year and a half of wrestle ahead with this Montana novel.

regards
July 7, 1982

Dear Mr. Doig,

I finally muster my courage and write the first fan letter of my life. I have read and enjoyed both Winter Brothers and This House of Sky, and I have to tell you that the latter is absolutely my favorite book of all time. The way you captured your father, your life, and Montana in word pictures and impressions is unique. The closest parallel I can find to your style is some of the work by Thomas Wolf.

So, Mr. Doig, you have another fan out here by the Puget. This one is a 40 year old professional forester who, in a former life, made documentary films before migrating West. I have been writing most of my life, keeping a journal and writing letters that become so lengthy and so prone to a stream of consciousness style that I fear many of my correspondents are overwhelmed (or so I am told).

I have a compulsion to write, but I can't find a structure to confine my thoughts. The playing with words and maddening attempt to say what I feel and think in a way that will communicate merely feeds my compulsiveness. This ancient box of a typewriter has taken a beating over the years. If I had your guts, I would start on page one, line one and see where I go.

Writing is the one real challenge in my life, and it causes me no end of joy and frustration. Then there is the fear that once I have laid open my thoughts to public scrutiny, the rejection will be crushing. How does one overcome that?

In any event, it is a pleasure to read your work, and it is my hope that someday I might meet you. I suppose the world is full of neurotic, would-be writers anxious to pick the brains of successful authors so that is a faint hope. You seem to share my love of people and words and the land so there is no doubt that I will continue to be one of your greatest fans.

With Respect,

Spencer Bruskin
N-206
420 85th Pl. SW
Everett,
Wa. 98204
June 4, 1982

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

Dear Ivan Doig:

I am late in reading THIS HOUSE OF SKY. I just didn't get around to it. Until one day not long ago a young friend of mine from Hungry Horse came to see me -- and show me her baby named Guthrie. She told me her reaction to your book. She said she loved it so she couldn't bear the thought of its ending and so she would only allow herself to read ten pages a day. I went right out and bought it. And WINTER BROTHERS, too, but I haven't read it yet. I might have to write you again.

My friend's name is Bonnie Quist. She is married to a singer from Cut Bank. Though neither has ever met my father, they named the baby for him.

Anyway, it was a lucky day for me that Bonnie came over. I loved your book, too, but could not restrain myself from reading it all at once. I hope you're prolific. I read a lot.

I might have guessed you would know Bud Guthrie -- I noticed his name on BROTHERS dedication page. And I'm afraid you will wonder why he didn't tout you to me. Maybe he didn't even mention me to you. Very likely. The fact is we just don't talk. Something happened when he married Carol. My brother and I have not had a private conversation with him in thirteen years.

That has things pretty well messed up. But not so bad that I wouldn't know he, too, would love your book, and if we were talking would tell me to be sure to read it.

Good luck to you. If ever you pass through Butte, you call me. I'm easy to find.

Cordially,

Helen Guthrie Miller
1260 W. Platinum
Butte, MT 59701
16 July '82

Dear Helen—

Please excuse the slow response. Your letter came here to Seattle while I was spending some weeks in Montana, researching toward a novel which I hope will be a sort of Son of House of Sky.

My wife and I spent some of that time around Choteau, and amid a trip up the North Fork of the Teton did call on Bud and Carol for an hour or so. I can't say I know Bud, or Carol, well; we've merely coincided at a couple of conferences. But they've both been generous and friendly toward me and my books. Bud seemed in good fettle the afternoon we saw him. The watercolor original for the cover of his new novel was brought out: Ear Mtn in the background, jackpines in the foreground—truly a lovely scene, and he's properly pleased with it.

Our stay in the Choteau country was memorable; according to Bud Olson, this is one of the three greenest summers of the past 35 or so years. I'm attempting to write about the Dupuyer country in this next book, and so appreciated the cooperation of the season and the mountains. It'll be a job to get my words up to the grandeur of that land.

Maybe our paths will cross sometime in Montana. Everybody in the state seems to know everyone else, at one remove or less. Many thanks for your good words about House of Sky. It's good to know it sounds okay to someone who knows the country.

regards
Dear Mr. Doig,

We have just moved from Selah to Oak Harbor, and I found a letter I thought I had sent to you. I may, in fact, have sent you a duplicate letter, and if so, please forgive the repetition.

You autographed a copy of *This House of Sky* for me at the English Teachers Conference in Boise. When I found a moment to settle down and enjoy the book, I found that after page 25 there was no order to the pages.

I want to exchange the book, but I also want your autograph. Should I send my present copy to the publisher or to you? I would even come to your door in person, if that would be the most expedient way of making an exchange.

Your writing is beautiful, and your sense of story holds me completely. I have become "hooked on Doig" and look forward to the publication of your new book.

Yours truly,

M. Jeanne Gordner
Dear Ms. Gardner—

I'm so sorry I forgot to write you sooner. I've just returned from a long trip to New York and was too busy to get my work done in time.

I'm sorry to hear of your randomly paged edition of "House of Sky." The books at the NCTE convention were provided by the Boise store called "The Book Shoppe," so I'd suggest you write the manager, Jean Wilson, about your faulty edition; I would think Jean in turn would inform the publisher. Her address: Jean Wilson, The Book Shoppe, 908 Main St, Boise ID 83702.

I hope you're feeling better now. I've had an accident of my own and I've been in bed for a few days. As to getting my name into a replacement copy, it might be most convenient for you to wait until I'm in Bellingham for a signing at Village Books sometime this fall. There's no definite date yet, but I've told Chuck Robinson of that store that we can set something up when my novel comes out this fall. Our relationship is a little rocky at this point, but I hope he'll see me again. I really need his "goodness."

Sorry you've been put to inconvenience, but I'm sure Jean Wilson will remedy the matter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Dear Anne Daig,

Three years ago you wrote to thank me for a review I did of House of Sky. I did not reply.

"Never apologize; never explain," they say, but I owe you an apology and I hope I can provide an explanation. (It's the explanation that has taken me 3 years to write!)

I was very pleased that you wrote to me. I had read the Time magazine review of Sky before I read the book, and I was puzzled at the reviewer's judgment. What I responded to (that the Time reviewer did not seem to) was the sadness of the life lived in those rented houses.
with their cramped rooms, chipped paint and leaky faucets. It's not the house, it's the people who matter, but you showed me the place and the people as they truly are.

I come from a midwestern counterpart of that life and the things you wrote about your family were the things I had always wanted to say about my own.

Thank you for giving them form.

(Dated 18 May 1942)

Dear Pat—

Better late than never, as evidenced by my own record of correspondence this spring. I hope your own work is going well. I'm gearing up for Montana again—a sort of fictional second cousin to House of Sky, set in 1939; am going to the state this summer in search of the bits and pieces.

all the best
Dear Mr. Daig,

Your Publishing Company has advised me that they could forward a letter to you.

I have read your book "This House of Sky" twice, with more enthusiasm each time, almost experiencing your life with you.

I was born in Ringling in 1914. My father and two brothers went to Montana from Massachusetts when the government was parceling out land. My mother went to Ringling from Wisconsin to teach school and built a small home up the road beyond the schoolhouse. When mother and father married, they took up homesteading on mother's land.
My father was Ford Valentine, his brothers Elmer and Ernest. Elmer married and settled in Sweden. Elmer was on a sheep ranch in Martin's Dale.

My family moved back to Massachusetts in 1920, Elmer a year or two later. Ernest stayed on until 1939.

My mother was Florence Arvis, related to Claude Higgs. Your father and your worked for a Higgs, would it be the same family? I wonder if your father ever knew any of the Valentines.

My cousin and I went back to Montana in 1969 to look up our beginnings. The homes were abandoned and I rather think Mr. Rankin may have taken over our land. The Wilkeys and Higgs...
Lived further down the road from us. I knew Ringling is a ghost town but I got very nostalgic reading your book, even though I was there only six years.

My husband and I are contemplating a trip to Seattle this summer to visit my Span roommate in W.W. I whom I haven't seen for 25 years. Of course on the way we would stop in Ringling. Howard is interested in just seeing where I came from and I want just one more look myself.

I have rambled on but I just wanted you to know just how much your book has meant to me.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Howard Stettsch (Alice)
March 28, 1982

Dear Ivan,

Having just read your excellent book, *This House of Sky*, I am compelled to give you a pat on the back and say thank you for the best reading pleasure I have had in many a moon! (But perhaps I am partial to memoirs.)

Both my husband and I (senior citizens in the prime of our 60s) savored the sincerity and fine-spun quality of your writing. We are recommending your book to any and all of our acquaintances who have ever known rural U.S.A. Your experiences may be unique in some ways, but not unlike the tough pioneering in many backwoods communities.

Best wishes for your continuing success. We hope to read more of your work soon, though I suspect you are too painstaking to write anything speedily.

Sincerely,

Marge Barrett

9050 N. Citrus
Sun Lakes AZ 85224
Dear Mrs. Barrett—

Thanks very much for your kind words about This House of Sky. You're right about me not being a particularly speedy writer—as evidenced by the lateness of answering my correspondence these days. I am at work, though, on a novel set in Montana during the Depression, and it feels good to be back on that home literary territory.

best wishes
June 13, 1983

Dear Ivan,

Thanks for the autograph.
My brother took me to an excellent 2nd hand bookstore, Comstock Bindery. I think it's on Premier Ave. South. I picked up a second printing of "Copper Camp" for $7.00. Large selection of Western America. Reading the "Miles City Star," I came across couple little items that I thought would be of interest to you.

Mike Archdale

1011 Schmalsk
Miles City 59301
25 YEARS AGO (1957)
Mrs. Jesse M. Parks, 87, mother of Mrs. P. E. Proudfoot of Miles City, died following a long illness.
Mr. and Mrs. M.J. Flinn and Harry W. Vincent returned from Helena where they attended the ground council meeting of the United Commercial Travelers.
H.E. Anderson was in Glendive to attend the funeral of his aunt.
C.O. Hagen, local jeweler, is visiting relatives in Riverside, Calif.
Hugh J. Lemire is in Boise, Idaho, transacting legal business.
The City Council voted unanimously to approve the application of Max Van Buskirk for land in the industrial site west of Miles City. He had applied for real estate enough to build a motel, restaurant, bulk and retail gasoline stations.
New officers of the Eagles Lodge were installed by past worthy president Arthur Hoffman. Installed in offices were William Damm, Roman Lala, Arthur Heiss, H.J. Perow, Ben Adlard, Virgil Rask, George McCaracken, Jake Paszczynk, Henry Johnson, and trustees Martin Kelm, William Freeland and Rufus Ashelford.
David G. Rivenes, Montana AAU president, was the principal speaker at the Kiwanis Club meeting.
Funeral services for Donald Guy Rash, 47, were held at Forsyth. He died at a Billings hospital. Surviving are his wife, Marion, and two children.
The three children of Mr. and Mrs. Ross Denson narrowly escaped being struck by lightning when a bolt struck the telephone line and ran into the home and struck the phone and couch from which the children had just moved. The couch was set on fire so Mrs. Denson dragged it into the yard and saved her home, which is on the Denson ranch 15 miles east of Broadus.
But Bud Robot captured most of the trophies at the drag races held Sunday by the Junior Chamber of Commerce at the local airport. Some of the other winners were Harvey Vernon, Merle Beehler, Jerry Jaeger, Don Hofferber, Lloyd McDonald, Jim Bivens, Charles Mohr, Bill Woodcock, Louis Smith, Louis Kortz, Carl Anderson and Harold Gierke.

50 YEARS AGO (1932)
The water level was struck by contractor J.C. Boespflug during the excavation for the Northern Pacific railroad underpass located at the Main street crossing. Water was hit at a depth of about 15 feet, but will not be a great handicap as excavation will not go much deeper.
Mrs. L.E. Fellows and daughter Grace left for Winona where they attended the graduation of Helen Fellows from St. Teresa College.
Officers elected by the women of the Loyal Order of Moose were past regent, Bertha Rogers; and recorder, Geraldine M. Cavill.
When everything else fails, try Yucca Salve. It has never failed for all kinds of open sores, boils, carbuncles, old infected sores or blood poison. Try it on external cancer and you will be surprised what it will do. E.L. Anderson, maker and seller. (adv)
Kathleen Lockwood 8, was feted at a musical tea at the home of her aunt, Mrs. H.E. Anderson in the Erickson Apts. assisting were Amary Ingham, Ruth Schaefer, Mary Katherine Kelly and Miss Evelyn Freeberg.
Average ages of the group of old people from the county institution who were guests of George M. Miles at the annual picnic given by him for their benefit at Leon Park Friday afternoon was over 76 years. H.F. Lee and Mrs. W.H. O'Connell assisted in preparations and transportation. Those who attended, with their ages, were Alf Johnson, 89; Mrs. Grandma Schultz, 86; Mrs. Gregory, 83; Cliff Kordler, 82; Ern Olson, 80; Mrs. Butter, 84; Iri Brown, 79; D. Pierce, 77; Mrs. Chandler, 76; George M. Miles, 77; Mr. Thebot, 69; J.J. McFarland, 68; George Griffith, 68; and Katie Teth, 54.
The tentative cast of a play for the graduating class of the junior high school includes Gordon Reynolds, Robert McGee, Gilber Hoxmer, Francis Calvin, Miriam Earl, Alice Petterson, and Ursula Hill. Specialty numbers will be given by Ralph Coltrin, Emogene Ritchie, Yvonne Stanley, Betty Howe and Fay Epstein.
Mrs. Tom Geonde is departing by train with her destination as Ireland where she will attend the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. She plans on spending about three months there.
The home of Mr. and Mrs. Peter J. Moran, 502 North Winchester, was destroyed by fire early Friday morning. The occupants were able to save only a few things. They were awakened by Harry W. Reed, a neighbor, who saw the fire and found the Moran family asleep.
(Parke Krumpe left for a fishing trip in the 16 Mile Canyon country.)
Friday was a bannner day for transients in the city, there having been 99 registered for a meal at the feeding station on Bridge street and before the day closed, the registration ran well over 100. The boiling of beans, serving of bread and pouring of coffee kept the chef on the hump for most of the afternoon.
Montana delegation to make use of the new deduction, said it reduced his taxable income by almost $20,000.

Marlenee's press secretary, Glenn Marx, said Marlenee also disapproved of the former $3,000 deduction.

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25 YEARS AGO (1957)
Charles Markland and Ralph Harris, present officers of the 40 et 8 of the American Legion, were re-elected. The group has recently taken in four new members, Russell Shore of Miles City, Harry Brubaker and Vaughn Johnson, both of Terry, and Joe Phillips of Forsyth.
Joanne M. Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Smith of 817 Palmer, will receive her diploma in dental hygiene from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis.
Mrs. Bill Murray Jr. was elected worthy grand regent of the Catholic Daughters of America. Mrs. Dorothy Buck was elected vice grand regent.
Officers installed by the Toastmistress Club were Mrs. Andy Elting, president; Betty Gibbs, vice president; Charlene Moss, secretary; and Mrs. Gertrude Grimes, treasurer.
Kay Price of Miles City will represent the Miles City Sage Riders as their candidate for Forsyth Horse Show Queen. She is a nurse at Holy Rosary Hospital and came here a year ago from Sacramento, Calif.
Georgia Boies, Marie Olander and Mabel Peterson reported to the Business and Professional Women's Club on the state convention at Helena.
Mrs. J.R. Jones and Mrs. J.R. Thompson have been named Chapter K delegates to the state P.E.O. convention in Butte.
Martha Scanlan received the Rotary Club scholarship to Custer County Junior College; Arthur Hosterman, the Kiwanis scholarship; and Patricia Hafla, the Eagles scholarship to CCJC.

The class of 1937 of Custer County High School will have a reunion. Plans are being made by Mrs. Helen Nugent Peary, chairman, assisted by Verna Cotton Benasky, Ernie Kosty, Paul Doyle, Tony Annalora, Louise Rinker Hill, Ian Elliot, Frank Rehn, Bill Stokes, Helen Minifie Combs and Lloyd Sanwald.
Mr. and Mrs. H.R. Stevenson, assisted by Butch Hargraves and Al Bankey, trailed 650 head of cattle 70 miles in 15 days from the Gallagher ranch north of Coahgen to Sheffield ranch near Moon Creek. The cattle belonged to Calvin Flint. They report the cattle went crazy over the water at the Hot Springs southwest of Angela, they like it so much.

50 YEARS AGO (1932)
Hubert Murdock of Coalwood, who suffered a broken leg near the hip recently while at work on his ranch, is in Holy Rosary Hospital with his leg in a cast.
Mr. and Mrs. C.H. McElroy returned from a three-day fishing trip in the Big Horn country near Sheridan, accompanied by their sons, Robert and Richard.
Mr. and Mrs. L.A. Wyatt spent Sunday in Billings.
Sunday afternoon was utilized by numerous parties who took advantage of the warm weather for the first spring dip. Swimmers could be found at various points along the Tongue River and at other favorite points within an easy driving radius of town. The river water is exceptionally muddy, report bathers.
Dr. P.R. Jaynes of Glendive was crowned champion in the second annual golf tournament of the Miles City Country Club. Runner-up was Vern Stangland.
Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Bloom of this city have announced the marriage of their daughter, Miss Alfreda Bloom, to Burnell G. Southall of Nebrara, Neb.
Kenneth Elkins, 36, resident of Broadus, died May 30, Memorial Day, of spotted fever, caused by the bite of a sheep tick at Broadus. He leaves his wife and one child.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Stafford have arrived in the city and have taken over the management of the Gilmore Hotel. Their former home was at Union, Mont. Their daughter, Gladys, who has been teaching in the Union community, will attend summer school here.
Ralph Harris, Parke Drumpe, Duncan Ritchie, L.C. Marck and Willard Thierfelder, who returned from a three-day fishing excursion at 16 Mile Canyon report the trout are striking in a lively manner. In one day, Mr. Harris claims to have caught his limit in three hours.

Mrs. Melva Leslie, formerly with the Metropolitan Cafe here, has taken a job at the Rec.
The 1932 American Legion baseball league closed and Coach Tommy Thompson is now faced with the task of selecting 12 or 15 players from the roster of 80 boys to represent Miles City.
A.A. Akins, A.G. Peterson and Roy Peterson made up a fishing party that motored to Lodge Grass over the weekend. They returned with a large catch.
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Ivan Doig  
c/o Harcourt Brace Jovanovich  
757 Third Ave.  
NY, NY 10017

Mr. Doig:

I just finished reading your book This House of Sky and I enjoyed reading it very much. Your narrative often had me reading aloud to myself so that I could let the words fall on my ears.

I will be in the Northwest this coming August and would very much like to meet you if possible. I am assuming that you still live in Seattle. I hope it works out.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen Van Mouwerik

18 May '82

Dear Mr. Van Mouwerik—

Thanks very much for the kind words about This House of Sky. As to getting together, though, I'm going to miss be off to Montana most of the summer, working on a novel.

I wonder if you've come across the piece of Montana and Western writing I most admire—the title story in A River Runs Through It, by Norman Maclean.

best wishes
March 9, 1982

Dear Mr. Doio,

Yes, I'd appreciate it very much if you could send me inscribed copies of both "House of Sky" and "Winter Brothers." I am anxious to read Winter Brothers, and to share House of Sky with some friends.

I have enclosed a check for $24, $11 for each book and $2 postage.

By any chance are you the same Ivan Doio who has done some work for the U.S. Forest Service? I was a Range Management student at Humboldt State Univ. in California, and spent two summers as a U.S.F.S. Range Technician.

Thanks for your help in getting these books!

Dianne Jennings
S.R. Geiger
2716 Hennepin Ave #4
Mpls. Mn. 55406

Ivan Doig
17021 7th St., N.W.
Seattle, Washington 98177
Jan. 19, 1982

Dear Mr. Doig,

I just finished your book last night—This House of Sky. Why didn't anyone tell me about it before? But I'll explain my excitement.

I made the college trip from east to west—Colorado State at Fort Collins—worked two summers in Wyoming for the National Girl Scout Center wrangling horses. Loved that, loved skies that only had clouds when it rained or snowed.

I grew up in South Carolina, where winter is monsoon season for the better part of three months. Now I am in Minneapolis—because I like snow and cold weather and am enjoying a city because I've never lived in one before.

My closest friend from college lives in Birmingham where she's in charge of Head Start on the reservation.

All of this meant I had to read your book—just from the introduction—before I knew what area of Montana you were writing about.

My biggest rush was reading of your newspaper job. Lindsay-Schaub. Decatur. You see—my relatives were Lindsay-Schaub! My mother's mother was a Schaub. I never knew much of my relatives when they still had the papers—and I was too young to give much thought to it. Kelso Towle—

I don't know if he was in Decatur when you were there, or if he was at another
paper, is my uncle. Both Bob Schabbon-Robert and Pete are cousins of some sort.

Thank you for the very vivid description of Montana and sheep and cattlemen. It was my honor to know a few in Wyoming and to be accepted by them. To be included in the picture a Basque sheepherder was taking to send home to his family. To help move cattle up to summer range. Slow stock yard cattle who had no fear of horse and rider and thus were harder to move. Thank you for bringing that back, even if it did make a homesick feeling.

But thank you most for giving me a look at my heritage in Zinkay-Schabbon. It made me proud to be able to claim ties. No earth shaking paper, maybe, but they sounded good and honest.

I think I would have enjoyed your book just as well if I had found no such delightful surprises - and am ever glad that I just happened to pull it off the library shelf at random. Now I can hardly wait to try another.

Thank you again.

Susan R. Geiger
202-738-4356
89801
EIKO, NV
681 Third St.
Diane Jennings
Feb. 4, 1982

Dear Mr. Doig,

I so enjoyed "This House of Sky" that I passed it on to a friend. Now that I want a copy for myself, I can't find one, and HBJ reports it as "indefinitely out of stock." I was hoping that you might know where I can get a copy.

I first learned about the book during 1979 when it was being read on a radio station from the University of Idaho (I think).

Also, I have not read, but am interested in reading "Winter Brothers" and "Streets We Have Come Down." I tried to order Winter Brothers through a bookstore, and got no response.

I would appreciate it, if you know where I can get copies of these books, if you could send me the address.

Thanks from a fan,

Dianne Jennings

(over)
Mr. Ivan Doig
Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich
757--3rd Ave
New York City, 10017

Dear Mr. Doig,

I loved your book, THIS HOUSE OF SKY. Your descriptive writing of your state was magnificent, your character building extremely stimulating.

Let me introduce myself as I have a few questions I wish to ask of you. I am the author of a cookbook, MARY'S BREAD BASKET AND SOUP KETTLE published by William Morrow & Co. My book did make Book-of-the-Month Club--all of this happened to me at the age of 60. Now I am gathering material for a second book on breads within the United States. A rather prodigious undertaking but my husband and I have traveled much over our country and two years ago decided to redo every state looking for breads and people--history and color. And believe me, bread opens all kinds of doors. Not that of bakeries but of home bread makers.

My questions are these--

1. I am very curious about the number of Scots that seemed to have immigrated into Montana and some of the other northwestern states. My maiden name was Douglass--thus the interest besides the fact that I am delving into ethnic breads wherever possible. I am not asking about breads of Scotland but more about people. I would be curious to know what you have found out in that regard.

2. What kind of breads did your grandmother make? I fell in love with her and wish that I could have watched her work.

3. Thirdly, I am very interested in the Hutterites. We did visit a colony ten miles out of Cascade. They were most hospitable and did show me their kitchens, the bread they make, gave me a recipe for 100 pounds of flour. You called them the "Hoots". I presume from that they do not mind the nickname and that it would be all right to mention this fun name.

Both my husband and I loved the state of Montana--more so than Wyoming. We had been there many years ago and the main thing I remember was the big sky stretching over those huge valleys and also storms playing around in one section--just fascinating. Congratulations on your splendid book.

Sincerely, Mary D. Gubser
Dear Mary Gubser--

Excuse the rather gaudy letterhead. This paper is a printer's error I'm trying to use up; if you're of Scottish lineage, you'll understand the impulse.

Unluckily, I'm some years away from being able to tell you much about the Scottish influx to Montana. I hope eventually to write a novel of the homesteaders, basing it on my own family's experience in coming from Carnoustie, but have another book or two to do before that and so haven't looked far into the emigration. About all I've been able to determine for the sake of House of Sky was that my grandfather and great-uncle were born into a large family, 9 or so children, and there didn't seem to be room for them in the Scottish economy. Three ended up in Montana, two in India. The Montanans I think were drawn by the sheep-raising, which they either knew something about or thought they did. And I know they were responding to letters from others who had come and homesteaded earlier. Also, given some of the Scottish landscape and weather, maybe Montana's harshnesses didn't look so bad; the ones of my family who came all stayed and became devout Montanans. Beyond that, I'm afraid I'm no help. You might have a look at John Kenneth Galbraith's book, I think titled THE SCOTCH, to see what ideas he had on the subject.

My grandmother's bread I don't know what to call except plain hearty ranch bread—white bread, thick crusted, baked in loaf pans; often asymmetrical and with a sizable hole inside because of the way the yeast had performed(?), and the crust often overdone because of the vagaries of old cookstoves. Sometimes she would make saffron bread, which came out yellow and had the sprigs of saffron showing, but I don't think she had a special recipe.

I think you ought to be cautious about calling the Hutterites "Hoots"; our use of the term was rather derisory, or meant to be comical or something. I used it in House of Sky because it was part of the context, but I wouldn't think that'd be necessary to your book.

Good luck with your research.
27 Oct 81

Dear Mr. Doig:

My wife Betty has returned from a visit to Seattle, and besides bringing back the gift of herself she has handed me your book.

All flattery aside it is indeed a splendid work and has given me great pleasure, in the prose, the land, its people and finally the moving portraits of your Father and Grandmother.

Let me salute you - and them.

[Signature]

Hope to see you in Berkeley.
Let 19 1981

Dear Ivan and Carol -

Having today after 10 delightful days in Seattle, working, seeing old friends and staying in the sight.

I also brought a copy of "The House of Sky" and read it with total absorption (how does one spell their word? "d" or "b" in the middle?) to the end.

I saw you have the rare combination of riveting prose plus making the reader really love about your characters.

I was particularly taken because my parents both left Scotland in their 20s and
Knew that lovely soft Scottish burn for all their days.

Thanks as much for the lunch at Ivan's and when you're both in the Bay Area or San Francisco, please come and visit. I know my husband will enjoy "Sky," too — he once raised a dozen sheep when we lived in Bucks County, Pa., and decided they were the world's most skittish animals. He even bottle-fed the babies at times.

Good luck with the new novel which I'm sure will be great. — Best,

Betty Hoffman
Aug. 1, 1979

Summer address: Box 110, Warm Springs, Star Rt.
Madras, Oregon 97741

Dear Mr. Doig:

I was looking forward to reading *This House of Sky*, from good encounters with your piece in *Pacific Search* over the years—but now that I've finished the book (my family are snatching at it as I write), I'm moved to write and "testify" for it—it is strong and beautiful writing all through, a feast. Somehow its evocation of a way of life puts me in mind of Ruth Underhill's wonderful "Autobiography of a Papago Woman"—do you know it? *Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association*, #46 (1936)

I have a little on your subject-matter, having grown up here in Central Oregon on a cattle- and wheat ranch, amongst families which relished personalities as you so richly do. We never ran sheep, but your dad's horseback exploits struck home, and that marvelous passage about the old combine nearly made me homesick for the old John Deere and Oliver pull machines I used to fly.

Evidently I left the U of I (in English) the year before you visited here—spring 1965. We've been in Rochester, NY ever since; the price of our staying there—
in spending summers here on the place, and on the summer range 3.9 miles, in the foothills of the Othocos. We'll be leaving 3. soon, alas, but another summer, it would be fun to converge. Do you know this part of Oregon?

One special pleasure we find is the chance to see people like William Stefford and Gary Snyder occasionally. I plan to come next summer, and I'll arrange a gathering!

I said above that I was writing because I'd finished your book, but in truth it hasn't finished with me; it ripples out like a pebble in a pool. I hope your new book is going well.

Sincerely yours,

Jarold Ramsey

Jarold Ramsey
Dear Jarold Ramsey—

Thanks so much for taking the trouble to send me kind words about House of Sky. One of the best pleasures of the book's career has been in hearing from people out of ranch lives. I even had a letter from someone in Arkansas saying it rang true with his experience!

Yes, perhaps next summer or some summer my wife and I could call at Madras. We've been to Bend, but have never made the drive north. I wonder if you know, or know the work of, Bill Kittredge of the U. of Montana English faculty? Bill is from Lake County, of a ranching family in landscape which sounds so sparse I gape to hear him talk of it.

I'd pass along news of the UW English department if I had any, but I'm not much acquainted there. Met Roger Sale last fall when we were book-tasting books together one day, and my wife is taking a modern American fiction course from Dick Blessing this summer, but that's about the sum of it. I've been on campus much of the summer, going through the diaries of the Olympic Peninsula pioneer who figures in my next book. I have a daunting amount of work on the manuscript the rest of this year, but in my calmer moments I admit it's going fairly well.

best regards
Dear Mr. Doig,

I am serving as an intern in the Belgrade Federated Church. My internship is only for 3 months but will soon be over.

One of my tasks was to lead a reading group. The first book we read was your book, This House of My. The intent was to help me become familiar with the Montanari culture. Your book helped
greatly & I thoroughly enjoyed it.
I enjoyed your writing style & thought it was quite well written.

Even though I was the "leader" of this reading group I was really being taught by the others in the group, one of whom have been in this area all their lives. They were excited to share with me about this area & their lives. A few of them knew members of your family. And when we went on a Sunday drive up to White Sulphur Springs &理解, VA.
Brekker, who now has his main residence in Belgrade, went with us. He took us to his house in Ningenjic and showed us where you lived across the street. It was all very interesting and he was most gracious.

We were wondering if you might write us a few comments on the religious life at the time of the book. In your book, the Church didn't seem to be a part of people's lives. Was the lack of a religious life just your experience or did it remain true of most everyone? If there was a religious life that
you will aware of around you what were its characteristics?

I will be leaving the the end of the first of December. If you could write us before then, I would greatly appreciate it. Many thanks!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

P.O. Box 627
Belgrade, MT
59714
Dear Mr. Callison--

Sorry for the delay in responding. I'm finishing up a novel, against a Christmas deadline, and nothing else is getting done around here.

I'm afraid I have only a short and unhelpful answer to your question. No, we didn't have much of a religious life in our family. Nothing at all regular, anyway. My grandmother always counted herself a Lutheran and my father a Presbyterian, but just out of habit, the lineage they'd been born to. I'd say, though, that a lot of our non-churchness came from all the time spent on ranches, where church was a long and often difficult drive. The Smith River country, as you may know from your visit there, is full of distance. Often my grandmother or my dad were on ranches 10 or 15 miles from town when the only travel was horseback, and later, on places up to 35 miles from town by car, over slick roads.

The larger rituals of religion did remain important, though. Weddings and funerals, they were conducted within the context of the church in my family, and indeed at such times an acquaintance with a minister was perhaps a luxury. You have a source on this there in the Gallatin, Lyle Onstad at Manhattan, who presided at my mother's funeral service. I should think he'd be an expert on the more-or-less attention to religion which was common, anyway, among the ranch and small-town people I grew up among.

The Brekke family: what a value they have been in my life. My thanks to Mr. Brekke, and to the members of your reading group, for taking such attention to House of Sky and my home ground. My father and grandmother would be flabbergasted—and thrilled.

all best
November 18, 1981

Dear Mr. Doig,

Enclosed you will find my husband's copy of your book, This House of Sky. I really appreciate your agreeing to autograph it for him. Since he loves this book so much, I knew he will be thrilled! I only hope he doesn't miss it between New and Christmas!

I have also enclosed $5.00 for the return postage. At this point I don't know how much it will cost but $5.00 will be plenty. There's also a label to put on the return box.

Once again, thank you very much for speaking with me on the telephone and autographing Steve's book.

P.S.

Sincerely,

Susan H. Merrill
1725 Holley
Holmen, WI
54636
Dear Mr. Daig,

I have just finished reading your book, "This House of Sky," and it has touched me deeply. You are truly a poetic and sensitive writer, and I feel as though I knew intimately your father and grandmother.

I am anxious to read your new book about the Northwest. Good luck in your writing career.

Jane Piel
Dear Mr. Doig,

Ever since I read This House of Sky when it first came out, I have been trying to obtain your autograph. My son, Armand Erickson was a passing acquaintance of yours at the U. of W. in the late fifties or early sixties. He was and still is a good friend of Bill and Mary Cleland, who I understand are friends of yours. After being guests in Armand's home, they presented him with your book. After he had read and enjoyed it he said he knew it was my kind of story so passed it on to me.

I must say I do not have the proper words to adequately describe This House of Sky but I recognized at once that your style was original and different and my husband and I both loved the earthiness of it. Having traversed Montana many, many times we knew the area and the authenticity of your story. It was a perfect delight from cover to cover.

Our good friends from Lewistown, Montana both read and loved it and so purchased copies for their two daughters.

Now since my book is a first edition I would sincerely appreciate your autograph to paste into my book. My son would be very pleased also.

I was in Seattle very recently visiting my many relatives and friends so decided to call the Stanley Doigs. I truly hope this has not been too much of an imposition on either them or you.

I have your three excerpts from the times on Winter Brothers and plan to purchase that book soon. Judging from the clippings, it will be most interesting and informative. I congratulate you on your success as an author and predict even greater fame for you in the future.

Most sincerely and gratefully yours,

Irma L. Erickson

[Signature]
5 Sept. '81

Dear Mrs. Erickson—

Many thanks for your kind words about HOUSE OF SKY. I hope the inscription below will serve okay for your copy. And if you’re going to have a copy of WINTER BROTHERS, you might as well have one for that, too.

best wishes
P.O. Box 760
Brookings Ore. 97415
July 25, 1981.

Dear Mr. Doig:

We are writing to you to see if your family came from the same part of Scotland that ours did.

Two weeks ago we were in Helena Mont. and our hosts took us to the Historical Society Museum there and there we found your books This House of Sky and Winter Brothers. We bought Winter Brothers as it was a hardback copy and the other was a paperback.

We talked to the man we paid for the book and he said you had been in just two days earlier, we were sorry to have missed you.

Our branch of the Doig family came from the Brechin area, did yours? Would you tell us please if we can still get a copy of This House of Sky in hardback?

Thank you,

Sincerely

David H. Doig
Dear David Doig--

The Historical Society folks in Helena must have wondered what was going on, Doigs showing up every few days . . . Actually they may be fairly accustomed to it, given the number of cousins I still have in Montana.

I doubt that our families are related, or at least very directly. My people came from near Carnoustie, north of Dundee; they lived in a parish called Panbride. I've been over there, but have done no serious genealogy; my interest was just for my writing, seeing the country where the family once lived. I eventually plan a big novel about homesteading in Montana, based on my family's experience, but I'll be changing the names and details.

As for House of Sky, I'm surprised the clerk couldn't come up with a hardback copy; I thought I'd signed some there just a few days before. Anyway, I'd suggest you try them again; write to Bob Silberling, Merchandising Manager, Montana Historical Society, 225 N. Roberts, Helena MT 59601 and see if he can't find a signed copy for you. If that doesn't work, I have a few copies on hand--it'd be $10, and another dollar or so to cover postage and mailer.

best wishes
22 July 81

Dear Dr. Diog,

I do my reading now with my ears, and am compelled to thank you for having written, "A House in the Sky." It was like listening to a fine piece of music. You write like a poet, as indeed you are.

Sincerely,

Grant H. Neuteboom

GRANT H. NEUTEBOOM
Mr. Ivan Doig  
4712 33rd Ave. N. E.  
Seattle, Washington 98105

Dear Mr. Doig:

Having just finished reading *This House of Sky*, I have that splendid illusion provided by particularly successful authors that you are an old friend whom I have known since you were the boy about whom I read in the book. It is not purely an illusion, for you did indeed share such a direct and immediate view of your life as a member of your family within the house of sky that my perception of you as friend and neighbor is well founded. *This House of Sky* is one of the few books which I began rereading as soon as I concluded the final page. I enjoyed it greatly for its own fine contribution, and perhaps in part because I come from Scots families who settled in North Dakota and I hear echoes and parallels among these families. Thank you for the sharing.

Several years ago, (it may have been as many as 10 or 12), you visited this library in search of information for your research project of that time, and left a note with us that you sought materials about Oliphant, Garfield, Alford, and McGilvra. I cannot report that we have acquired bundles of new materials about any of those people, and after this length of time, you may no longer be interested in them professionally. However, it may be useful to you to know that the new guide to archives in the state of Washington has been published and distributed to libraries. It might aid you with your current projects.

I look forward with pleasure to reading your new book.

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Marilyn M. Sparks  
Assistant Librarian

MMS:1
Dear Marilyn—

Many thanks for the kind words about House of Sky—and for persevering with the address problem in getting them to me.

I don’t know whether I’ll get back to McGilvra, Alvord et al. or not. I’m finishing up a coastal novel now and intend a Montana novel, sort of Son of House of Sky, after that, so the projects do appear on the horizon. Anyway, thanks for the reminder about the archives guide; likely our paths will cross, one way or another. In the meantime, all best wishes.
Dear Mr. Doig,

I want to write to you right away so I'll use the only stationary at hand. I'm writing on the ferry returning from Alaska. I have just finished reading "This House of Sky" and I want to write to you.

I picked up the book because my wife and I are planning to move to Montana—probably the S.W. quarter. Well, I had more I a delight than I expected. Not only did I enjoy reading about the impact and influence of Montana upon people, but
I found that you and I have had some very similar experiences.

I arrived at U. of W. - Seattle in Dec '66 to begin my Ph.D. studies.

My relationship with my father seemed very similar to yours. My father also died of emphysema, after going through the stages you describe. You did a wonderful job of writing about not only your relationship but the process of sharing your father's dying. Your writing allowed me to relive with some tears and joy memories of both my shared times with my dad and his death.

One of my 'professions' is being a geographer and the sub-title of your
book is especially meaningful to me. To describe a landscape so that it is at once intensely personal, at the same time generalizable is an art — your skills as a cartographer are indeed grand!

Sincerely,

O. Fred Donaldson
3187 S. Canfield
Los Angeles, Cal.
90034
August 6, 1981

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

Mr. Doig:

Thank You.

I just finished THIS HOUSE OF SKY (about an hour ago) and want to tell you that I was not certain whether to laugh or cry.

Your book seems very timely for me as my own parents are getting older and are in my thoughts a great deal. Your compassion and respect to some extent echo my own for my folks.

I have long harbored a wish to write (anything) and think that if I did make the attempt it would concern my family; and hope that it would convey the love and admiration shown in your book.

Thank you again for a wonderful read and the chance to get to know you and your family.

I am glad I did.

I hope you are well.

Respectfully;

Richard Isom  
P.O. Box 391  
Novato, CA 94948
Dear Ivan Doig,

I just turned the last page of "This House of Sky"—a book which developed into a complete turn-around from my initial impression. Now, I find myself deeply moved, delighted, transported in time and place. I've lived with the Doig family, moved those sheep across the prairie, huddled in Grandma's kitchen with the dog under the table. When I first opened the book, I complained, agonized, put the book down time after time. "It's not my type of book at all! How could Leslie have picked it out for me." (Leslie's my very special daughter. She always knows the Perfect Present.)

Then I remembered that Leslie said she hadn't actually picked it out for me; she had asked the advice of the children's librarian at the Lake Forest Park Library (N.E. Seattle.) But I know that children's librarian. She's a marvelous, vivacious lady who knows all things pertaining to books when I've gone to ask her advice about stories for my granddaughters. I would respect her judgement. Well, she miscalculated, that's all. I'm looking for stories about real people, something I can believe. But this book—descriptive passages of Montana, of all the boring places. I didn't want to read about old memories of what had happened before the book began.

"Nothing happens," I fussed. It's dull. Too many words."

"So put it down. You don't have to read it," my husband reasoned.

"No, I'll slog through to the end. Then I'll write and tell Leslie that this one turned out to be a real dud." Mutter, mutter. "Can't understand how she and that library lady could have arrived at this choice." And I ground my way through a few more pages. It was about page 50 when I began to move in with Charlie and his young son, made the tour of White Sulphur Springs—and I was charmed. It wasn't a book that I raced through to find the outcome of the Great Crisis. Rather, I read it slowly, pleasingly in small phrases, descriptions, looking into people's lives, knowing them as though I'd been there. At times I would read a paragraph over 2 or 3 times, just musing, savoring. Against my will, I was drawn into the story.

When Leslie asked last December what I'd like for Christmas, she figured
she'd get a dumb answer. What do you give people who live on a sailboat and travel by plane once a year for Christmas holidays? I told her we could use a new outboard motor, a bilge pump, some rubber cement. Leslie smiled. She knew I'd be happy with something new to read. She wrapped up 3 new books from the store, and a bundle of used ones from the Good Will. The perfect gift. Yachts all read a lot, and trade back and forth with each other when they meet in harbor. (Some people trade by the inch; others by the each.)

We have 3 categories of books on the boat. 1, technical stuff you need for reference: tides, weather, stars, seamanship, flags, splicing, first aid, fish; 2, books to read for pleasure that you've finished and are ready to trade; and 3, books you love very much and need to keep. Your book won't be put on the trading shelf.

For some reason, my copy happens to be autographed. I like that, now that I've come to know you. The ink ran a bit from some salt water spray—but it's still legible.

As to what I'm doing in Puerto Princesa? Reading. Waiting. The few odd boat maintenance chores. My husband Ken and I left San Diego 6 years ago, "en route around the world" as we told our friends. But we've dawdled through the South Pacific islands, Singapore, Borneo, and have only just recently arrived in the Philippines. Right now we're stranded in Puerto Princesa waiting for a new salt-water cooling pump to be flown from Seattle before we'll be able to move on. We don't make plans or schedules any more. It doesn't relate well to the life style of people who travel by sailboat.

If you ever find time to answer "cards 'n letters from people you don't even know" I'd be pleased to hear from you. Perhaps you'll send word of a new book you may have in the cooker?

We have a home in Beaver Washington, a tiny cross-roads town near Port Angeles. We call it a home, though it's a renovated gymnasium. Mary Johnson, our postmistress, is faithful about forwarding our mail to odd places.

Did I tell you the news? I just finished a really great book. It's called, "This House of Sky."

Sincerely,

Rica

(Roderica Laymon)

Rica
Beaver School
Beaver, Washington
9850 98305
Mr. Ivan Doig
C/o Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
757 Third Ave.
New York

Dear Mr. Doig:

On only a few occasions have I been so taken with the quality, style and content of a book that I have considered contacting the writer. This is a first.

Having recently finished both Winter Brothers and This House of Sky, (the later for the second time) I felt motivated to commend you for what I honestly feel is one of the, if not the, finest examples of literary expression that I have had the good fortune to come across. Your imagery, figures of speech and analogies draw the reader into your very thoughts and emotions. These along with a sensitivity to understand, all add up to perfection in expression.

A similarity of experiences with those of the reader makes him more an integral part of a piece of literature. It is almost uncanny how many juxtapositions and parallels were noted in This House of Sky. First, (not necessarily related to the book) I was proceeded by three Scottish grandparents. Being reared on a farm, I also spent many hours crawling through the graveyard of old farm machinery left to rust behind the barn. A Collie dog of mine was shot by a neighbor for running sheep. In 1933-1934 I attended the University of Montana at Missoula and was required to take a course which I think was entitled The Geography and History of Montana. I learned all the towns (including White Sulphur Springs which I later visited), mountains, valleys and creeks of the State. Even today I feel that I know Montana in many ways better than my own native Washington.

Two years later, being more driven glandularly than by a desire for an education, I married and returned to Walla Walla where my grandparents had settled in 1858. After 28 years in business there and following some domestic difficulties I returned, at age 53, to school majoring in English and journalism which I taught at Walla Walla High School for the next 10 years.

One more striking similarity is that in 1979 on retiring and moving to Deer Lake, north of Spokane, I developed Emphysema which incidentally, seems to be stabilized.
Your vignettes following each section in This House of Sky were truly assaults on the ramparts of your mind and memory. If such a term as honest can be applied to a book, it can be applied to yours.

Letter writing, I hope, gives one license to ramble. I'm going to digress a bit at this point. I understand that you are an authority on Western or frontier history and am wondering if you might suggest some non-fiction reading in this area?

I am a buff on this kind of thing having been steeped in early lore by my grandmother who came into the Walla Walla valley by ox team. As a boy we hunted jack rabbits at the conflux of the Walla Walla and Columbia rivers where the old Hudson's Bay fort Walla Walla's outline was still visible. This before the dams covered the area.

Grandad freighted to Boise, Colville and the Orifino mines before his farm started to produce. These and other associations have created a great interest in the not too distant past of our country.

One other item of interest was seeing the name of A.B. Bud Guthrie on the flyleaf of Winter Brothers all of whose books The Big Sky, The Way West, These Thousand Hills, Aftine, and others I have read and found excellent reading. I suppose because of a penchant as a child for Willa Cather and Hamlin Garland, Guthrie's settings are appealing.

Hopefully you will never allow the number of books you write to cloud the beauty and quality of your writing.

Sincerely,

(Mr.) LaVerne Maxson

24 July '81

Dear Mr. Maxson--

Thanks for your kind words about my books; I'm glad they ring true to someone of a similar background.

I'm not actually an expert on western writing, but can mention a couple of books you might like to look at: Wolf Willow, by Wallace Stegner, and A River Runs Through It, by Norman Maclean. Then there's Marie Sandoz's portrait of her homesteader father, Old Jules. And a couple of Oregon Trail books have come out in the past few years; I haven't got into either of them, but they've been well reviewed--The Plains Across, by John Unruh, and Eden Seekers, by Malcolm Clark.

Happy reading, and all best wishes.
Joe Pitman (sp?) called 2/23 to say he’d just finished Sky, and knew your dad and his brothers.
He was born in Butte, 1915, then his family moved to Lombard.
He left in 1935, now lives in Kalispell (I think).
I gave him our address and encouraged him to write.

Yr. fthfl secty
Hunsche, Friedrich Ernst.

xii, 387 p. with illus. and maps. 24 cm. N. T. GDB 67-B13-152

Cover title: Lienen am Teutoburger Wald.
Bibliography: p. ix–xii.

1. Lienen, North Rhine-Westphalia. 1. Title.

DD901.L684H8

Library of Congress 70 12

72-477085
July 9, 1979

Dear Mr. Doig:

I obtained your address from a mutual friend - Bill Reebeurgh. I wanted to write and tell you how much I enjoyed your book “This House of Sky.”

I too grew up on a ranch in Southwestern Montana - near Dillon. I’m about 5 years older than you - so the time period you describe is very familiar to me. Reading your book was a strange experience for me - it was as if someone put in print the memories, experiences and people that I thought were mine alone.

You have a rare gift. Your ability to describe events, people and places is superb. It’s good because
for the most part the people and the way of life you describe are gone. Perhaps someday we'll meet and talk about Montana. In the mean time thank you for a fine book and the many fine memories it unlocked.

Sincerely,

Dan Hawkins
Box 80-167
College, Alaska
99708
Dear Dan Hawkins—

Thanks so much for troubling to write me about House of Sky. I've heard from quite a number of Montanans, present or ex-, and it's been one of the unexpected bonuses of the book.

Why my wife and I have never cashed in on Bill and Carolyn's invitations to Alaska, I don't really know; we pretty much stay home and work, I guess. But I think we will make it north sometime, and I'm sure Bill will get us together with you when we do. I'd be curious to talk with you about the similarities, or lack of them, you find between Alaska and the Montana you knew.

There's a better Montana book than mine—better than anybody's, in terms of the writing skill—which you might like to know about. It's called A River Runs Through It, by Norman Maclean, and the title story, of about 100 pp, is the great one. It's set in the Wolf Creek and Big Blackfoot country, just now out in paperback from U. of Chicago.

Warmest regards to the Resburghs when you see them. Bill usually stops over to eat seafood with us early in the year, but missed this time.

regards
Dear Mr. Doig:

I would like to thank you for writing the book

This House of Sky, it was the most beautiful family
love story I have ever read. I bought one for my
brother and sister too and they both enjoyed it.
We knew about it because it was reviewed in the
Los Angeles Times. Have you written any books since
then that I have missed.

Sincerely,

Catherine Billmaier
June 1, '81

Dear Catherine Billmaier—

Thanks for your kind words about *House of Sky*. I'm always pleased when it strikes a chord with a reader.

Another book of mine came out last fall—*Winter Brothers*, published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $10.95. It's a considerably different book from *Sky*—a winter's journal of 1978-9 here on Puget Sound and the NW coast, using both my words and the diary entries of a 19th century pioneer, a Bostonian named James Swan. I hope to have a novel in print a year from this fall, and then a Montana novel done a year or two after that.

All best wishes
Ivan Doig  
17021 10th Avenue N.W.  
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

I am the Duncan Kelso that talked to you on the phone Monday, March 30th. *This House of Sky* has affected me so much that I feel frustrated in attempting to honor your request to wait two months to call you again. Pardon the intrusion of this letter, but it is born of the power of your own words, thoughts, and observations. I sincerely hope it is not an intrusion and you will take the time to look at the photographs and consider what I have to say.

One of the many impacts the book had upon me was the evocation of the Montana landscape raised by your descriptions. Reading them was like watching the silver image slowly taking shape on the white paper of a photographic print developing in the darkroom. I recently made some prints of negatives I shot of the Kittitas Valley (where I grew up) and the excitement of watching the image come up was comparable to the emotions I experienced while reading *This House of Sky*. In fact, even the images are quite the same. The making of the prints and the reading of the book took place in the same week, but were totally unrelated, except in the resultant images and emotions. The effect was so powerful I felt like I just had to talk to Ivan Doig.

I am not sure where talking to you would take us, but one thing that strikes me immediately is a combination of some of the passages from *This House of Sky* and photographs I would love to take of the landscape you describe. These could appear in a show or possibly a book. The prospect definitely excites me. This is what I would like to talk to you about, among other things.

Again, pardon the intrusion. Thanks for taking the time to read this and look at the prints. Some of the photographs are of the Washington coast which of course relates to your other projects. I will call you at the end of May, but if you feel you could spare some time before then please feel free to call me at 323-6918.

The Winter Brothers have just entered my life and I welcome them.

Sincerely,

Duncan Kelso
Dear Mr. Daig—

I have been reading, with the greatest satisfaction, This House of Sky. Rarely have I been so moved, so involved in a compilation of characters so real they people my room. I certainly have never written an author before; most of these I would like to commend for their work are of an earlier time. I guess I would liken you, in my mind, with Willa Cather—for she too had given me new regions, known but unseen; new people, unknown but loved. Thank you for Bessie Finger, Charlie Daig, Mrs. Fidgals; if your goal was to expand their impact (so essential in your life) to others, to give their courage and wisdom, frailties and humor, you have succeeded.

My method of reading this book has been slow, due to the demands of graduate work (in American Studies) at Brown. Right now, when I should be reading Walden and preparing for seminar tomorrow, I decided instead to settle in for the night and finish Sky. My advisor from my undergraduate school (Doshler in Ohio) gave me your book as a Christmas present this year, and it figures now as one of the better presents I've ever been given. This woman, Helen Kash Osgood, has reminded me (in these last few years) the reverence for the job for the living of this past, that colors all of Sky, all of you, it seems. In a time when the great majority of this country seems to be growing increasingly provincial, small-
minded, unconcerned even of the humanity we need to protect and cherish if we are to survive and expand our vision. Shy serves as a reminder of what it is that can be. Certainly we'll not have the same experiences, yet we will have people, and to seek out an understanding of ourselves through these, we need is the opportunity we cannot discover.

Articulating what they have meant to me is not an easy task. In some ways, it's like Loren Eiseley's description of the train ride we all take — riding and clinging only inches above pounding wheels, intensely involved with the process of living and responding. Thank you for your sharing. I know when I finally reach Montana, I shall see it at least partially through your eyes, hearing "I'm here to tell ye," and looking for your grandmother with her tight-lipped line of mouth to show me she is thinking of a way to express it all. I'll not really miss them, because thanks to you, they'll always be with me.

The best of everything to you and your family.

Lesley R. Dexter
21 James St.
Providence, RI 02903
Along with your reply, I would appreciate the return of the postage stamp which appears on this envelope; the stamp is for my collection.

2. March 1981

Dear Sirs:

I have a copy of Ivan Doig's book, This house of sky which I enjoyed immensely. Could you forward this letter to him or send me his address so that I can ask him to autograph a card which I shall send him so that I can then fasten the card inside my copy of his book?

Thank you,

Milton Owen

Milton Owen
9734 Sue Helen Drive
Jeffersontown, Ky.
40299
Ivan Doig
(The House of Sky)
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.
757 Third Ave
New York NY 10017
Dear Mr. Dagi:

I am enclosing your books "Henry of Stoke" and "My Father, The M.T. Edith" and not the same manuscript. They are separate distinct manuscripts. Wellington O'Brien may have had his family's help in editing these, planning rather loosely. He had been an editor at Short-Story before. He was not a "corroborating witness."

He was an excellent lawyer - one of the best.

Sincerely, Henry Loble
Dear Mr. Doig,

I just finished reading This House of Sky and fought down the lump in my throat enough to take pen in hand. Your characters are as real to me as sturdy and little John playing pinocchio in the pul in Avery, Idaho; the settings are so vivid I can feel the winter harshness on Lawson J. Summer's General Merchandise Store in tiny Lake George, Colorado. I grieve for my work-worn rancher father, now laid up with arthritis in a "city" house.

But beyond that, I too want to write more. I'm into local history, having co-authored a book about North Idaho prior to moving to the coast. I intend to do another about this part of the country and have begun to collect notes and reminiscences. However, that is a lengthy project. I am interested in doing freelance magazine articles in the interim. Can you offer any advice or suggestions that might be helpful? I can do it—but how do I break in?

I've enclosed an order form for my book up the Swift-waters, should you be interested in a different sort of a look at an area of our Northwest. I suppose it is presumptuous of me to ask—but I would really value some objective opinions about the book.

Incidentally, I can hardly wait to get my itchy fingers on Winter Brothers. I feel certain it will influence my future endeavors. Thank you for your contribution to American literature; at least we have a Thomas Wolfe speaking for the West!

Sincerely yours,

Sandra Trouvel
Dear Sandra Crowell—

Thanks for your kinds words about House of Sky. I wish I had some words to provide you about breaking into freelancing, but I don't. I've been out of it for 3-4 years now, so am considerably out of touch. Also, I'm not at all sure I could encourage anybody into that field; there's a lot of exasperation, chronic low pay, and so on. I consider I stuck it out in the business too long myself.

Anyway, my notion is that a person pretty much has to find his own way into print; there just don't seem to be standard guideposts. I wish you well in your route.

regards
The following was written by Virginia Bailey, member of Creative Writing Class, Shoreline Senior Center. Upon Reading House of Sky

Without opening the book, the title drew me deep into the heart of the text. The limitless expanse of family, embracing love, strength, and support. The key to the book is Page 273.

In the beginning, this staunch little red-head marched to whatever tune necessity piped. Before age set he learned to fit in with his lot at the moment. Along his way, he savored and devoured his experiences, especially the written word. How fitting that he offer what was preferred! It was no accident that most of people he met loved and helped prepare him for the road that he would travel.

Because he lived so much of his young life on the fringes of other families as well as his own, he gained the ability to observe. Almost subconsciously he stored feelings, impressions, landscapes, and words. I feel words are power and glory when properly employed. I believe Ivan does too, because he uses them so unstintingly.

Through the years love for Ivan knit his small family into a unit—Charlee—Ivan—Lady. The addition of the bright skinned Carol helped to enliven the growing somberness of Charlie’s failing health. Charlie and Lady’s love for Ivan flow through the pages of this book into eternity.
Mr. Ivan Doig, Author
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich
757 Third Ave.
NY, NY 10017
Dear Mr. Doig,

[Handwritten text]

Sincerely,
Cynthia D. Grant
26505 Dutcher Creek
Clove-dale, CA. 95425
Dear Ivan Doig,

We met at Annie Bloom's Bookstore in Multnomah, Oregon, and you very kindly autographed a couple of your new books for my husband and me. We also played ping pong with some of our mutual acquaintances in Missoula, Bozeman, Billings. I mentioned to you that a dear childhood-to-present friend was Jim Tidyman's first wife, Colleen, and that she appreciated your portrait of her mother-in-law.

I told her of our meeting in a letter, and have just received a response. I love what she said about you and about Mrs. Tidyman, and thought you might also. I have taken the liberty (OK, Colleen??) of copying that portion of her letter to share with you. I do not know if you have either the time or inclination to respond to it, but if you do her address is:

Ms Colleen Tidyman
45 - 432 Meakaua
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

Gus and I are enjoying Winter Brothers, and may make a pilgrimage around those mysterious angles of land and water before summer comes. Thank you.

Best regards,

Janet Merrill Hossack
Dear Janet--

Thanks immensely for your thoughtfulness in passing along Colleen Tidyman's comments. I encounter an astonishing number of people who knew Mrs. T.

Things have gone well for Winter Brothers--into its 3rd printing, total of 15,000 in print. Probably its best review so far is still Paul Pintarich's in the Oreg'n.

all best wishes
realized that I am closer in age to Petey than I am to Heather Rose! So much for all that.

Yes, I have read Ivan Doig's "This House of Sky". Is that his first or second? I haven't read another...had to send for that one, and got copies for the kids. It is a beautiful book, isn't it? And naturally I loved all the pages about Fannie! Have read those pages several times and have discussed them with the kids. They are very very much HER (tho I never had her as a teacher...and I think she would have scared the hell out of me!) and I think he did an excellent job in capturing her essence. She certainly seems to have been quite an influence in his life. He was absolutley correct in what he said about her attitude towards money...she DID turn down raises...and she DID write checks on whatever blanks were given to her, she DID garden in her nightgown. I cannot imagine anyone writing of her more accurately or more beautifully...it is really amazing. The first thing she read to the boys was the Iliad, and I often heard her quote from many sources. I loved the part about the myriad of things that she kept in her bosom (ample, to say the least) because it always fascinated me, too. And when Heather and Scott were babies, and she held them close to that ample bosom, their little hands always seemed to find a nice warm spot in the V of her dress. I have her original copy of her Valedictory address to Townsend High during WWI. In it she states that women are perfectly capable of flying airplanes (women's lib, 1917). When she died at the age of 61, she had never even been in an airplane, and had never learned to drive a car. She didn't want to. She was truly a remarkable woman, and I think my kids know more about her from me than they do from their dad.

In 1954 she received the U of M's Journalism school's Gold Key award. As Tom T's wife said..."and high time, too!" She was a wonderful mother-in-law and I loved her. And I am grateful to Doig fro giving my children such an accurate and interesting picture of her.

So...this has GOT to be it for now.

Will let you know what my travel plans are.

[Signature]
Mr. Haig
my father is a Native Montanan
from Valier. He would very
much like it if you would
autograph "This House of Sky"
for him.

We're related to the STOLTZ
Clan and she relates to
your book very much.

Thank you
Wm. B. Atkinson.

For BILL ATKINSON
Sharon R. Spauld
P.O. Box 5371
Mcola, MT 59806

Dear Mr. Doig:

I read your book This House of Sky in matches of waiting for the baby to decide whether she was going to climb out of her crib and go to sleep, and even under those conditions enjoyed your writing. Very much. I am writing to ask a favor of you.

In Feb ’80, my husband, then an assistant attorney general for the state of Montana, rounded a curve outside of Butte and was crashed into by 3x4’s from an out-of-control semi. Our friend (and Jim’s working partner) was killed, as were the truck driver and his wife. Jim suffered a severe head injury.

Part of the area of damage to Jim’s brain is an aphasia. Jim’s speech therapist is Fran Tucker. Fran has come to be more than a therapist in our lives. She has been an activist in friendship though these past months to our family. It was she who loaned your book to me.
While reading it, I laid down the book by my cup of coffee, and the 23 mo-old knocked the coffee over the book, staining and crinkling it. I have easily purchased another book, but comes the difficulty: it was an autographed copy.

Comes the favor: will you please autograph this copy and return it to us? (If you could personalize it to Fian, that would be really nice.)

I appreciate your assistance very much.

Thank you,

Sharon R. Spald
November 18, 1980

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

Dear Mr. Doig:

I don't generally write fan letters to strangers. But when I finished your book, "HOUSE OF SKY", and discovered my eyes were filled with tears, I knew I had to tell you directly what a beautifully written, loving statement you made about your childhood, your father, your grandmother, and -- in a clear sense -- yourself. For me it was particularly meaningful because our older son (age 29, and himself a writer) had given me his copy; he felt I would appreciate how you handled a father-son relationship.

A measure of how I reacted to your "landscapes" is a decision to give it to a close family friend who is suffering from bone cancer. It won't be pleasant reading for her but I believe she can handle the pain. Some of her background is similar to yours -- she was raised by her grandparents in a ranch in Texas. And she is handling her own physical condition with such courage and humor that her family -- her husband and five children -- get support from her.

You are an extremely gifted man. I look forward to the chance to read your next book -- whatever it is about.

Appreciatively,

[Signature]

WILLIAM LEVIN

WL/jh
24 Nov. '80

Dear Mr. Levin—

Thanks so much for your kind words about House of Sky.
I've heard from various people who say they've found help, in a time of affliction, among within their family, in it, and that much pleases me.

Your letter came on publication day, or thereabout, of my second book, a Northwest book called Winter Brothers. I greatly lament the recent death of Robert Kirsch of the LA Times, who wrote the best review of House of Sky and I think would have appreciated this one. But it's doing reasonably well, even so.

again, my appreciation for your very moving letter.
November 1, 1980
Thompson Falls, MT

Dear Ivan and Carol,

Thank you again for sharing your world with us back in August. I was touched and pleased by your warm reception. Of the three people in the literary world I admire the most, I have met one now. The other two are Robert Frost and J.R.R. Tolkien ... you share elite company in my thoughts.

I have made this basket for you from Ponderosa pine needles as a thank you.

(over)
gift for the time you spent with us in your home. It is a bit of Montana that you may enjoy looking at or using.

Good luck on your new book, Winter Brothers. If you ever need to come this way, we will warmly welcome both of you.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Carmen McDowell
Dear Ivan Doig,

While on a visit to California last month, a long time friend said, "I've been saving this book about Montana for you to read." She handed me *This House of Sky*. She was right. I read it with interest, savoring the speech you captured, the images and memories evoked. It is a fine book for many reasons including your sharing authentically of yourself and the experiences of the setting.

I was seven years old when we moved to a homestead in Montana in 1917 between the Big Powder and the Little Powder Rivers, south of Miles City. The range was still open. I remember the last big roundup near us, of herds from Sheridan, Gillette and
Southeastern Montana. I remember the cow punchers, the old timers who had come up with the herds from Texas. What I don't remember is the speech, the very humor, the special flavor I wish now that I could put on paper.

And you have done that beautifully. I wonder if readers who do not know that aspect of Montana can fully appreciate it.

I left Montana pretty much in the late thirties, having taught school to earn money to finish college — etc. etc. Your decision to go to Northwestern facing change and loneliness evokes memories in me. Well, I could go on.

Thank you for Writing This House Of Sky.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Lou Skinner Ross
Dear Mrs. Ross—

Thanks so much for taking the trouble to send me kind words about House of Sky. Talking to a number of Montanans of your generation and background helped me immeasurably with the language of the book.

I'm about to go to your part of Montana, at least as far as Billings, to the Montana History Conference. I was in Sheridan last spring, first time ever, and much liked it.

all best wishes
Dear Mr. Doig:

Many thanks to you for the pleasure your book _This House of Sky_ has brought to me and about 15 people whom I have sent copies—(paperback?) The basic idea which you explain on page 166 (in both the hardback and paperback) that this house of sky exists within the mind is so gloriously expanding to the thinking.

Did you know that your book is among the Talking Books for the Blind at the State Library in Helena? Absolutely a perfect choice. My former first-grade teacher, now named Irene Stewart, lives in Hamilton and
has been blind for more than 20 years. I visited my Aunt Madly Willey there in late Sept through Oct. I am now sending a copy of the book to Madly and have asked the Talking Books to send one a copy too - then they can discuss it.

Probably your book has special appeal for Montana natives - especially my age 63 and up to 79 which is the other two ladies age. But all people capable of reading and thinking should enjoy your marvelous mind pictures.

The gift that Charlie + Berneta Doig and Lady Bessie Ringer gave to the world is precious.

Thanks again, Corinne M. Bailey
Dear Corrine Bailey—

Thanks so much for taking the trouble to send along your kind words about House of Sky. The book seems to have quite a following in St. Falls. That's particularly gratifying, as St. Falls of course was the "city" of my growing up, the nearest big shopping place from both White Sulphur and Dupuyer, and I still have a number of friends there.

Again, my thanks.
Dear Mr. Doig,

I just finished your memoirs of your youth in rural Montana and your vividly-detailed, remarkable family. Your care and love in preparing them touched me. Growing up in Great Falls in a middle class family whose economic focus was a company building farm buildings, my perspective was more urban, comfortable, & bourgeois than yours, yet I recognized the characters and places you described. The quickness of rural Montana men & women & their reflex initial distrust of visitors from foreign environments made it hard to see the strengths, experienced-formed attitudes, & constant tensions that you chronicled. In the city, social class values collide more clearly than you may have seen in White Sulphur. The racism & grinding violence seem equally part of smaller & larger-town life. I've been away from the state except brief visits since 1975, & since college began in 1969 I've been only a migrant worker, catching jobs here and there and filling in with seasonal work at the two large resorts here. I've seen a few of the people you described in detail. Your book brought a precisely-drawn picture of a slice of the state's as well as a critical intelligence which has enhanced & enriched me as a writer & a reader.

Two questions remained as I finished your words. First, you beautifully sketched the determinism of the land & climate on the people's lives, & you...
I drew careful sociological portraits (I shivered with recognition, despite physical exhaustion, when I read upon description of the bars in White Slave). But you avoided social and political analysis thrusting, including the passage on your decision not to continue in salaried writing. Did you abstain for aesthetic reasons, because you felt unqualified, or because you think these analytic perspectives are valueless, or for some other conscious or unconscious reason?

Secondly, do you feel this is something still there in Montana that you want your offspring to have when they grow up, or are you happy to remain an expatriate visitor? I have no intention of giving up my tastes for the outside world even if I lose my roots (by chance I read Walker Percy's The Moviegoer simultaneously with yours). Time goes on & the state changes. People like yours and my father's and grandmother's passion, leaving people like you and me with the heritage. Putting the issue into specific questions damages the dynamic nature of it, but I'd be curious about your current approach to returning home & exposing your offspring to what you have left. Mine is to follow my work, keep movement in my life, settle as a compromise with the woman I marry—I beg the question about feel the constant attraction of the place all the while.

I thank you for the work you put into your memoirs.

Sincerely,
Jim Talcott
Mr. Joan Didion
To Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
757 Third Avenue, N.Y. N.Y. 10017

Dear Mr. Didion -

Your most moving book, "This House of Sky," from the opening sentence to the last is of a piece
an extraordinary beauty that I must tell you
how deeply it affected me.

We lived in a ranch in Montana, near Ennis, on the Madison River, from 1934 to 1952
when we returned to the New York area. Our
reasons for leaving were not too different from
yours - as I understood yours.

It seems you have lived and written a
paradox, a huge, hurting paradox but I
believe that is where truth is found; and
within the poetry of a grim reality which is
how I would describe my hearing of your prize.
I mean I was reading truth.

Today I reread the whole ending wondering
if again I should be half blinded with tears
for your father, your friend, mother and you.
and then I went back and read the beginning again, after finding that yes, I was a piece in tears. Indeed, dear Ivan D., you have written a book of truth--and we all remember the old saw that "the truth hurts."

Also, in Parting, I was struck by the description of the "drowning" the separation of the "thinking portion of yourself--watching the arms and legs perform automatically (Hope that isn't a misunderstanding of what you said)."

Our children who grew up in Montana are eager to read your book. I look forward to your next.

Wishing you much success in whatever may you want it and with appreciation of your work, I am--

Yours sincerely

Dio Berg

September 15, 1980
Sept. 22, '80

Dear Mrs. B—

Thanks very much for taking time to say kind words for House of Sky. I've heard from quite a number of Montanans, present and ex—(if anybody ever is an ex-Montanan).

At the end of next month I'll be back in Montana, at a conference featuring Montana writers—A.B. Guthrie, Norman Maclean, et al. It's the kind of thing I don't think any of us would have dreamed of, all those years ago in the little Montana towns.

all best wishes
Mrs. Richard D. Nicholson
1228 S. W. 157th
Seattle, Washington 98166

Dear Mr. Doig,

Thank you for sharing and caring in this House of Sky.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Nicholson
August 11, 1980

Dear Ivan,

I hope your summer has been a good one and that your new book will be published as you planned. I am certainly looking forward to reading it.

My husband, John, and I plan on being in Seattle from August 19 to August 23. Would it be possible to meet? ... perhaps you could buy me that cup of coffee you owe me. If you're busy that week, I'll be disappointed ... but I'll understand. I'm very curious to meet you, you know — and I've never been bashful about asking out someone I really want to know. I'll look you up in the phone book or get in touch when we arrive, OK?

Wednesday of this week, I'm attending an Ivan Doe party ... some of us interested
persons are getting together to listen to a tape of your speech at the Great Falls library meeting ... we shall see how well you "move your mouth". I'm looking forward to this party.

Thanks for your prompt reply to my last letter about your Montana trip. Whenever you want to take advantage of our hospitality here in the beautiful Clark Fork Valley, just let me know.

Well, hope to see you or talk to you soon. My best wishes to your wife ... 

Sincerely yours,

Carson
July 31st

Dear Mr. David,

It is years since you've been so moved until a book or story would:

This house of sh... Tears were shed at the sadness of your Father's death as I have...
Dear Mr. Father, husband too until the same complaint.
I too am deceiving until the breathlessness.

Heck your are to have been haed as you were
I have have carsle.

Thank you for all that you did for you
Fathers and Grandmas, few to-day are willing to care for their relatives.

May God bless you.

Yours sincerely,

Edna Prather

Ps. Farry's Sunday school have Authority in hands.
July 11, 1980

Dear Mr. Doig:

My friend, John Hays, (who will be the Governor of Arizona someday) suggested I read your book *This House of Sky*. I have two great loves, reading and Montana, this, together with your superb writing gave me a delightful experience. Some portions were poignant, but the picture clear and beautiful. Don’t deny us more of your books, you have such a keen insight to people and places. Well done!

Budge Ruffner.
Mr. Ivan Doig

C/O Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.,

757 Third Ave.

New York, NY. 10017
Los Angeles Times
WASHINGTON BUREAU

June 23, 1980

Dear Ivan Doig:

For some months I have been extolling your fine book to friends who came out of the West, sheep ranching, etc., who just like good writing. Several times, I intended writing you a note to tell you how much I enjoyed reading it...and finally am.

The occasion was the receipt, from my sister Fran Husdale, of the autographed copy you signed during a visit to Sheridan, Wyo. (My softbound copy, now pretty worn, currently is in the hands of an Interior Dept. aide who came out of Montana).

I was five when my parents moved from Philadelphia to try sheep ranching and other ventures in Wyoming (all of them marginally successful, at best). But it was a great way, and place, to grow up, and in.

So, in many ways I could relate in a very personal way to your experiences. But on a separate plane, the writing was terrific.

Sincerely,

Bill Stall
Dear Bill—

Sometime I'm going to have to come to DC, convene the House of Sky admirers group—Curtis Sutpen of the Post, Woody West of the Star, my graduate school colleague Steve Bell of ABC, you—and stand a round of drinks. I much appreciated your letter, particularly given your background and your own wordsmithing.

Sheridan was some place. Seattle—or DC—should have such a well-run and -financed library.

All is going pretty good. I have a Puget Sound "edge of the continent" book coming out this fall, am about to go to Alaska for background for a novel. Maybe someday I can make a real living at this.

best regards
Mr Ivan Doig  
Author of *This House of Sky*  
% Harcourt Brace Jovanovich  
New York  

Dear Mr Doig:  

I have just finished reading *This House of Sky* and found it so stunningly beautiful that I was forced to express my thanks to you. Seldom have I had such a reading experience. The values the book expresses are so vital and true.  

I probably found the book particularly poignant because my son is reversing your migration. I was born and grew up in Seattle. My son was born and grew up in San Diego. He could see that life here was killing to the spirit; so he went off to college at Montana State in Bozeman, married a Conrad Montana girl, and is now, after graduation, working as a laborer and living in a small mobile home in Belgrade, Montana. He frequently lets me know that the worth of home and family and the possibility to love and know people still exists there.  

Again, I thank you for touching me so deeply. I pray that your writing will continue to be sufficiently successful that I will have access to it, but not so successful that your life will be hampered by fame.  

Gratefully,  

William E. Barber  

Dear Mr. Barber—  

17 July '80  

Thanks so much for your thoughtful letter; especially the passage about pitfalls of fame, which I’ve tried to give some thought to. I don’t think I’m in imminent danger, at least yet.  

My wife and I sat out the first day of Mt St. Helens ash probably a few miles from your son; we were staying with friends at Churchill. I find a number of newcomers such as he must be in Montana now, and I think they’re probably a considerable asset to the state.  

Work is going well, another (Puget Sound) book out this fall, the one beyond that well underway. With luck, I hope to do one every couple of years, for however long I can last at it.  

Again, thanks.
June 21, 1980.

I am in hospital for about a week - a repair job to an artery bypass - and I've brought with me the carbon copy of my manuscript: "THE MAGNIFICENT ABSURDITY"; also "MAN AND SPIRIT" Wash Square Press; also "THE FALLEN CURTAIN" by Ruth Rendell, plus

THIS HOUSE OF SKY
by Ivan Doig.

"Doig? Doig? I wonder - is he from around Dundee somewhere? I never came across any Doigs within any other close radius. I'll take this - something to get onto in hospital."

So I borrowed it from Seattle Public library.

I love it! Not because it's a "doiggy" as we used to identify that clan - but because it is, or just purely is. A poem. A poem says, "is, does. Just BE's. It is the How."

I can't mail this till I get home - maybe Monday, Tueday? But - a thing says when it says it is written when it says. Because you are within it, and it is within you, and I don't know Montana - didn't know - until it entered me as I entered it!"
But is any territory or place a being separated from the denizens of it—animal, human, vegetable, mineral?

And what gives life to the place?

Ah! "Montana!" It gives its liviness. It is liviness. I am liviness. You are liviness.

This House of Sky,
by Ivan Doig.

I love it!

ELIZABETH S. SMITH.
763 Belmont Place East
Seattle, WA. 98102.

But you gotta move on and on and on, into the people in the places. The new "books." Yes, indeed! And they move in to you and it's all a House of Universe, yes?

It's Communion! That's what it is!
CALIFORNIA AS AN ISLAND  The earliest maps of America showed California as part of the mainland. As a result of an error by a member of the 1620 Viscaino expedition, California was shown as an island off the coast of Mexico for more than 150 years. Difficulties of navigation made the mistake understandable, but for most of that 150 years it was a matter of argument which was not settled until nearly 1800. This example is particularly charming, and bears many location names in use today.
Dear Ivan -

This may be presumptuous - but I thought you might want to see these enclosed.

I had asked your old friends to speak at my mother's Memorial Service - with my brother doing the introductions as public speaker - not my forte - my 31 year old son - with whom you have corresponded - wasn't sure he could handle the situation - so we left it that he would do as only if he could cope - and after the "scheduled" speakers.

The enclosed is evidence that he did want to share his feelings and as the service was very "upbeat" and not depressing he was in full control and the assembled crowd were really moved - I think David managed to convey so much of mother - she
Dear Ivan,

My son, David Bloom, was so delighted with your letter which he shared, via phone, from Boston, with me. Better watch out - there are three generations I and correspondents in this family!

I have been in Larchmont all this time and enjoying old and new friends in this unique community where I grew up. My husband and I finally found a home in Madison, Conn., so after the memorial service for mother, I'll complete packing up her apartment - return to Toronto and pack up our household there and hope to be moved, if not settled, by early July.

David is moving from Boston - after persistent urging, Wharton Business School has persuaded him to accept the post of Director of Admissions and Financial Affairs - a whole new area for one whose interests have been primarily literary - and certainly not business-oriented - but his academic background and experience augurs well for his future.
Son, Jeff -- is coming accelerated in grad school and photography while awaiting decisions on admission to medical school (at 29 years I age) --

Daughter Lauri -- 18 -- has walked off with first prize in prose creative writing, 2nd prize in poetry. Graduates and is heading for California with her love in the fall.

Now you know more than you probably wanted to know about Harris family -- just one branch at that.

Will be awaiting your new book with great interest. Should you feel inclined to let me know if its publication -- I'll be at the outside address until June 5th -- then at 149 Wildwood Ave, Madison, Conn. 06443.

Sincerely,

Ann B. Christensen
May 27, 1980

Dear Mr. Doig,

One cold winter evening last December it was my good fortune to be at home alone and turn on the FM station from the University of Arizona in Tucson. The programming that evening included a half hour reading from your book, "This House of Sky". Rarely have I been exposed to contemporary writing of the West that I have found as personally appealing. I ordered your book from the Double-day company in Phoenix, eventually receiving it in April.

It is well worth the wait. I have just finished the book (it is one of those that I read in small segments as I don't wish it to end) and decided to tell you how much pleasure and memory it brought to me. Our lives are different in that I was born (1926) here and have lived all my life on this ranch but your descriptions of the ranch people and ranch hands, the way of life, but most especially your thoughts about your family, bring back a flood of happy (and sad) memories of the way my life has been. Much of your book could have been describing Arizona in the thirties, forties and fifties; at least life on the ranches and small towns. I wish that I could talk to you in person but at least this short note will express my gratitude for discovering your book, quite by accident. I shall look forward to any future publications that you write with great anticipation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
23 June '80

Dear Mr. Hays—

Thanks for taking the trouble to write me about House of Sky. It's been a pleasant surprise that people elsewhere in the West have identified with my Montana story. I'm just awaiting the publication of my next book, Winter Brothers, in which I've tried to muse on westernness all the way from here at the Coast to across the Continental Divide, so it does interest me to know of any commonality of feeling among Western folk. By the way, there's another book which many of us think the best Montana work—the title story in Norman Maclean's A River Runs Through It. Thanks again for writing.

All best wishes.
Dear Mr. Voig,

Having read your The House of Sky a few days ago, I find myself re-reading much of it again today. To me, and to my husband, it is one of the most interesting, colorful books we've read in a long time for several reasons. Although I am at an age to rid myself of possessions, I am tempted to buy the book for the pure pleasure of reading it again and again.

I know most parts of Montana and love them. Many years ago, I spent several years teaching in Big Sandy, Malta, Whitefish and Stevensville. And I have attended the University in Missoula several times. Every summer we make at least one trip to Montana, usually to the Big Hole and Bitterroot country on north
of Missoula. We have missed three
summers since 1956. Usually we
spend a few days around Wisdom,
the fascinating "almost ghost town."
One year we followed part of a route
to ghost towns described in a book
by Norman Reid, Ghost Towns of the
Northwest.

A few years ago we went
to White Sulphur Springs for the
first time, though we had been in
Townsend, Big Timber and Livingston
many times. It was early July. We
decided to spend the Fourth there,
thereby having one of the most en-
trancing times we've had enjoying
the free barbecue, with its plethora
of lakes, pie, cookies and other
baked goods. Though neither of us
enjoy sweets, we could not choose
not to eat the pies.

I visited the Stockman,
the Rainbow and Melody Lanes, perhaps
Grand Central. The names escape
me. Davis are full of intriguing
people in Montana. One we
found a man who told us of all the
acres he "owned" at sixteen. I believe
he referred to it as "the old Bunker place." Given a drink or two, he
melded off many highly-colored stories about half-believable. His name, he
said, was Dominick or Dominque. He thought he might be Basque.

Our opportunity to ride the July 4 train from White Sulphur to
Bingling we passed up mostly because we felt too much liked
outsiders. Later we were glad we had not gone because part of the
train caught fire and all the occupants had to stay in Bingling
where I gather they had a gala night.

We visited The Castle,
marveling at its original construction
and the excellent work at renovation.
I bought Meagher County 1867-1967 and
Deed Law with a Gem by Art Watson.

In looking through the former I find a picture of Taylor Gordon. In
much earlier times than yours, a family were there also pictured
by the name of May Shover. The
book stated they moved to Malta
and a May Shover ran a hotel
there about 1948. When I was there,
no doubt a cousin or even grandson. We were pulling a trailer at the time we visited White Sulphur and parked at a KOA campsite west of town. It was operated rather haphazardly by someone with a hardware and lumber store in town, who did not find time for upkeep of the lovely shady spot. Unsuccessfully we fished the Smith River. The book I mentioned has an imposing picture of Napoleon Bonaparte Smith.

Twice my husband was mistaken for a Joe Rolad. In fact we were at the barbecue when some woman said “Here, Joe, take hold of this tablecloth.” My husband, after a moments surprise, obliged, but later he informed the “boss” that his name was Ed. He never did see Joe.

We loved every minute of our visit to that area, so much so that we made the mistake of returning the following year, but it was July 4th and it seemed without the glamour of our first trip. Often but not always the case.
Other than your remarkably believable characterizations, your breathtaking description of the Montana we love, we liked the book because it had no four letter words, rampant in most books today, and it had no sex scenes upon which many modern writers rely, thinking not always correctly, we feel, that those are what readers demand. We do not and know many others, not all as old as we, who do not either.

I have recommended your book to several friends varying in age from 32 to 72. Since they do not know Montana, their reactions may not be as strong as ours, but they are all intelligent, observant people who will, I am sure, admire your gift for character and for description. Last, but not least, I think you get the deep feeling of "wholeness" and humanity your book conveys.

Unfortunately, when you spoke here in Sheridan, we were just returning from Tucson, where we spent half the year as more.
I regret having to miss the speech at the Friends of the Library dinner here.

We expect to go to Big Timber and Wisdom in July. Perhaps we may go to White Sulphur again or perhaps we might better treasure our first experience and your book.

Please pardon the length of this letter. One of my farmers students once said, to Mrs. Gibson, when you get a pen in your hand, it just runs away.

Thank you for a rewarding reading experience.

Sincerely,

Catherine Gibson
Dear Mrs. Gibson—

Thanks so much for taking the trouble to write me about House of Sky. I’m sorry our paths didn’t cross while I was in Sheridan. I was very pleased with the reception of my talk there; George Oligoria did a wonderful job of warming up the audience for me.

Your description of the White Sulphur Springs 4th of July sounds to me as if it was 1978, which I think was the first (and ill-fated) of the railroad excursions. The summer before, my wife and I lived nearly a month in the big house directly across the street from the ragtag KOA campground you described; the house is the old Ringling mansion, now apartments, and we were there while I finished up research for Sky. Your appraisal of White Sulphur as remarkable one time, disenchanted or worse the next, is in line with my own. All my life, the place has been such a mixture for me.

The 4th of July celebration, incidentally, is new since I lived there. The one, and wonderful, celebration of the year used to be the Labor Day weekend rodeo, which used wild horses from the Rankin herd.

You might be interested sometime in Taylor Gordon’s book, Born To Be. It’s in paperback, U. of Washington Press. Taylor never has really got his due; a most intriguing man. I worked on an article about him once—in a sense, it was part of the genesis of House of Sky—but nothing came of it.

Anyway, thanks again for the warm response to my book. If I get back to Sheridan, maybe we’ll encounter one another.

very best
Dear Mr. Doig:

There should be enough time in modern life for a grateful reader to tell a writer how much a certain book was savored and enjoyed - *This House of Sky*.

For once, I trusted the reviewers and bought the hardcover, and I'm glad I did because what I have on my bookshelves is a classic, an America original.

Before I bought the book, I happened to read the N.Y. Times travel section, an article on taking a certain route through Montana and the towns...
you had known. By the time, last September, we had planned a trip from Alberta, south through Montana to a small town called Wilsall to visit a widowed sister, I knew we would have to take that route from Great Falls: it was unforgettable, and by then I had read This House, so all perceptions were further heightened.

Thank you for such a moving, powerful, vividly beautiful book. I hope it’s doing very well for you in both hardcover and paperback. And don’t worry if you never write such a book again— you’ve done it once, and shouldn’t try to break a record.

Sincerely,

Sarah Baird.
Dear Mr. Doig —

I met you a couple years back in St. Mary, Montana when you were doing a piece on Navy F9 for the New York Times. A partner & I were running The Park Cafe & you commented on our ice cream cones.

So I finally got around to checking a copy of This House of Sky out of the library. I'm not getting much of anything read these days it seems, so this really threw me. Each page sent me off into reveries. I want to spend more time getting to know my father while he's still here. Spent 3 days w/ my folks last week.

The point of all this b.s. is that I noticed on the dust cover that your next book is to be on the P.W. I haven't finished House of Sky yet, but someone mentioned it ended up in this region. I'd like to get together and talk about Montana, Washington, family and other good things. I'd like to do something on the Puget Sound
Area, but I can easily see it taking me 10 years or so.

We met in '77. In '78 my partner & I moved 5 miles up Hwy 89 to Thronson's Cafe in Babb. In the fall we moved over here and 5 months later moved apart. I'm planning on leaving the Cafe in Babb again this summer. Would you and your wife like to work with me? Well, at least stop by and say hi if you're around Glacier.

I may move over there as soon as April 1 or as late as May 1. But I'm keeping my P.O. Box 408 here in case you want to write. Are you still writing for the Times?

Do you write for Pacific Search now that they're P.O.W.? (I didn't see your name on the masthead).

You're more than welcome to come for a visit, although you might end up sleeping on the floor (or under the stars). Perhaps I can see you somewhere in Seattle. Hope to hear from you.

Sincerely, Ken Fielder
Dear Ken--

Sorry for not having responded before now to your letter, but Carol and I intended to drop in on you, at Babb, and see if your ice cream is still great. Mt. St. Helens changed all that; instead of heading north from Bozeman, where the ash cloud met us, we had to scrap our plans and detour home by way of Boise and Astoria to miss the fallout area.

Anyway, it was good of you to write, and maybe we'll make it to Babb another time. It's a continual pleasure to me that people identify with House of Sky, and take the trouble to tell me so. My next book, incidentally, has quite a lot about Port Townsend; it uses the diaries of James O. Swan, a pioneer who died there in 1909.

Take care--see you sometime.
Michael S. McGill  
3 Willow Way  
San Anselmo, CA 94960

April 2, 1980

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

Dear Mr. Doig:

I have just finished reading This House of Sky, and I want to thank you for writing one of the most beautifully written and moving books I have ever read.

I envy you for your sense of place and your ability to perceive the almost imperceptible process of change as it occurs in that place. As someone who was born and raised in the suburb of a Midwestern city, I often wish that I could develop and cherish some such sense of my roots. My wife, who is from the South, has it, as do most people who come from there. After reading Wallace Stegner's biography of Bernard de Voto I realized that such a sense: existed among people from the Rocky Mountain states as well. You have articulated it beautifully.

Your book is also a very moving testament about the relationship between a boy and his family. I suspect that the clarity of vision you demonstrate here was sharpened by the deaths of your father and grandmother. My father and grandmother both died last summer within a few weeks of each other, and I know that my understanding of what they meant to my life, and of their place in the procession of my family's generations, was made very acute by their sudden passing.

You describe scenery beautifully, and I know you are accurate from my own memory of places I have visited that you depict. I attended Northwestern the year after you left, and visited the Seattle area for a glorious week a couple of years ago.

Finally, you really catch a basic theme in the American character, best summed up by your dedication—"Westward we go free." The movement of child from home to build a world of his own is, I think, a fundamental aspect of our civilization that induces doubt and guilt in all of those of us who do so. Willie Morris in North Towards Home addressed the same theme. Your sharing of your deepest emotions and thoughts on this theme helps me come to terms with my own feelings about it, and I deeply appreciate that.

I'm giving your book to a good friend of mine who was born and raised in Montana. He had a life of frequent moves, a father who changed jobs often, and was injured many times in his various jobs; although his life was one lived in towns rather than in the country. He also is an inveterate storyteller. Knowing him and reading you gives me a warm feeling toward the state.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Michael S. McGill
Dear Mr. McGill—

I don't know whether it's the position of the stars or what, but recently I've been receiving long and thoughtful letters about House of Sky from people in California, and yours certainly prime among them. Thanks immensely for taking the time to write.

The line from Stegner's biography of DeVoto I of course prize is DeV. saying he always had wished he was from Montana. (I admit I've never wished I was from Utah.) I've become a late-blooming admirer of DeVoto, in fact refer to him a bit in the book I've just finished. As to "westward we go free" I wish it was entirely mine, but I think it's from Thoreau, something to the effect that when he walked, "eastward I go only by force, but westward we go free." I am trying to explore westernness in my books, more openly in the current one than in House of Sky. You do yourself too little credit about your understanding of regional feeling; for someone "raised in the suburb of a midwestern city" you seem to have a keen appreciation of place.

Anyway, thanks much for writing. I'm about to spend some time in Montana, but wanted to get a note off to you first. It's true reassurance to a writer to know there yet are avid readers.

best regards
1900 Washington - #603
San Francisco, CA  94109

April 19, 1980

Mr. Ivan Doig
HARCOURT BRACE JOVANOVICH
757 Third Avenue
New York, NY  10017

Dear Mr. Doig:

A few months ago I was fortunate enough to come across "THIS HOUSE OF SKY" in a private library to which I belong in San Francisco. Although I usually read five or six books a month, and have for many years, it has been a long, long time since I enjoyed one as much as yours.

You possess to an extraordinary degree the ability to share with the reader your love both of the people and the place of which you are writing. And, your command of English is such that it seems almost as if you are writing in a fresh, new language.

I could not have agreed more when your father said, so proudly, "That boy can really write!" He can, indeed.

After reading the library copy, I tried to locate your book in the main bookstores in San Francisco. Unable to do so, I ordered a copy from Harcourt Brace in New York. Since it arrived, it has been circulating among various friends I was sure would share my enthusiasm. All of them, without exception, have had nothing but the highest praise for your writing.

But, two of these friends had an additional reason for enjoying your book. Since I thought you might like to read what they have to say, I asked their permission to send on to you the enclosed copies. Incidentally, in neither case did I know beforehand of their familiarity with the area you describe.

We all want to be sure not to miss your next book. Does Harcourt Brace maintain any kind of mailing list of prospective readers of their newly published books?

Thank you again for your beautiful book. It was a delight to read -- from the title right on through the final page.

Sincerely yours,

Margaret Beaghler
Dear Margaret Beaghler—

My publisher forwarded your letter, and I certainly thank you, both for your thoughtfulness in writing about _House of Sky_ and in passing the book among your friends.

No, Harcourt doesn’t maintain a mailing list of prospective readers, but I can give you the title of my next book—_Winter Brothers: A Season at the Edge of America_—and the estimate that it’ll be published about mid-September of this year. I’m perturbed, but not really surprised, to hear that you couldn’t come up with _House of Sky_ in the bookstores. I hope that situation may have changed in the past weeks, now that the Harvest/HBJ paperback edition has been published.

I’m about to head for Montana, on a speaking and reading and visiting tour, but I did want to answer your letter first. Your friends with a Montana background may be interested to know I do intend a “big” Montana novel—I have a file jokingly labeled “Son of _House of Sky_”—in the years to come. Again, thanks to you all. It’s reassurance to a writer to know there actually are avid readers yet in the world.

best regards
Dear Margaret,

I’m so grateful for the opportunity to read your book. I loved every page of it—especially since I am familiar with that whole area in Montana. My sister’s bro-in-law lived in Great Falls way (inside).
several years, & I visited them often. We always enjoyed driving all through the area, so I knew what Ivan Doig means in his title "Landscapes of a Western Mind."

Sorry I have taken so long to return the book. Just today I found a place with the proper-sized mailing envelope.
so will get it off to you on my next trip to the postoffice.
I'm happy to have a good book to recommend to my friends
I hope the author will bring along with the new book she is writing.

Love, Mary
Dear Margaret,

After having so enjoyed reading your copy of THIS HOUSE OF SKY, I sent a copy to my friend Mary Jensen. She and her husband now live at a ranch in the Sacramento Valley. Mary has been an aspiring but yet unpublished writer for sometime. The following is a copy of Mary's acknowledgment of the book:

"THIS HOUSE OF SKY IS a good book! I'm on page 168 and have a difficult time putting it down. Usually I just skim through a book, but this one I find myself re-reading almost each sentence, as they have such a nice ring to them.

"For an unknown author to write his autobiography -- and of people he knew and places he's been -- that must people would overlook as not worth writing about, and make it interesting -- is quite a feat."

"What really startled me about this book is the strange coincidence of it -- Jim and I were married in White Sulphur Springs on July 4, 1938 -- the year before Ivan Doig was born. Jim was shearing sheep for Floyd Krebs on the Jop Steward Spread at that time. I'd never traveled before, so the places Doig mentions, Three Forks (we fished there), Townsend (that's where the bus left me off) and White Sulphur Springs (it seemed so small to be a county seat) and the names of the ranchers and saloons in the area are so impressed in my mind. Of course Jim, as well as many of our friends, sheared sheep, so different names were no doubt mentioned many times in conversations I listened to (while cooking up food to feed these sheares). The expressions and sayings -- all the identical ones I've been hearing since I was a kid. Maybe live stock raisers used these same expressions generation after generation.

"But what surprises me most -- this author is young, yet he sounds old; most of the writers in his generation tried so hard to outdo the other in being so 'way out' in dragging up weird characters and weird behavior to write about. Ivan Doig seems timeless and puts it together so beautifully. Each sentence and each word tells so much -- almost poetry in the beginning.

"My friend Hazel Krebs is driving up from Monterey tomorrow and will stay here for a few days. Her husband, Floyd, is older than Jim, but he's still running a shearing crew and migrates up this way every spring and fall. I will ask him and Hazel about these people in Ivan Doig's book. Floyd will know a lot of them. Ivan Doig mentions two Kreb sisters as being his mother's best friends. Of course there were 14 in the Krebs family."

I was sure Mary would enjoy the atmosphere of the book and the beautiful writing but I did not know she would find some of the territory and people familiar.

Sorry the typing is so bad.

Love,

[Signature]

Naomi McHugh
2024 Quintara Street
San Francisco, Calif. 94116
April 18