

Amazon.commentary by Ivan Doig: "This House of Sky," the making of a writer

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Then during one of those winters of discontent in graduate school, my father and my grandmother--my mother's mother--came to Seattle to live with my wife Carol and me for the sake of my father's health, in our losing struggle against his emphysema. In almost all instances, I had

done only enough of each of those Montana ranch jobs to convince me I did not want to do it every day the rest of my life. But here was a pair of persons who had gone on doing those tasks, and many more, until they simply could not, any longer.

The sight of these two people of the past who had raised me--Bessie Ringer, ranch cook, diehard Montanan since her early twenties when she stepped off a train in Three Forks with an infant daughter and a jobless husband; and Charlie Doig, ranch hand and rancher, born on a sagebrush homestead in the Big Belt Mountains south of Helena--the daily sight of these two in our Seattle living room, with a shopping center out the window below, very much made me aware of the relic-hood of the three of us. In the strictest dictionary definition: "an object whose original cultural environment has disappeared."

It has been eighteen years now since I finally put a period to the 410th page of the manuscript built upon those musings. My hands still sweat as I see the points at which the years of carpentry on This House of Sky could have failed. Installments of the long work of getting Sky's words into print are in my diary, such as this entry from mid-January

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"And we'll publish it this fall."

Amazon.commentary by Ivan Doig: "Bucking the Sun" and Rolling the Dice

It became a refrain I couldn't ignore as a writer: "There in the Depression, I got on at Fort Peck and then..." Time and again as I interviewed people in background research for the Two Medicine trilogy and my other books, they would turn to that first living wage, that first love affair, that first brush with death on the big Fort Peck Dam job; turning-points in life were a dime a dozen at Fort Peck, they made me know.

The epic project of the New Deal, at the depth of the Depression the Fort Peck Dam put more than ten thousand people back to work, with money in their pockets. And along with the five years (1933-38) that it took to build the world's biggest earthen dam came a roiling collection of construction boomtowns where there had been only snakes and gopher holes. Wheeler, Delano Heights, Square Deal, Free Deal and the other wage-fueled shantytowns famously captured by Margaret Bourke-White's camera in the first issue of LIFE magazine disappeared as fast as they came, but the Fort Peck experience stayed in people's lives. By capturing the water of the Missouri River, it launched them. In short, I saw that Fort Peck and its times were a tapestry of dream for a novelist: ordinary people with extraordinary stories to tell. But what it took to write the book was a three-year roll of the dice, investing into Bucking the Sun everything I've ever learned as a wordsmith. The poetry of the everyday, as when the damworkers step out onto the rod-and-collar devices that hold an immense steel tunnel-liner rigid and call that, I learned, "riding the tension spiders." The craft of work, from diver Bruce Duff walking the bottom of the Missouri River, to taxi dancer Proxy Shannon who "dances the dimes" (and occasionally more) out of the men of the dam crew. The kaleidoscope of telling characteristics, such as the pint-size sheriff's habit of calling his .12-gauge

Marlin shotgun "Marlene."

I'm obviously no minimalist; for Bucking the Sun I felt I had to create the five couples of the Duff family--every man and woman of them at work at Fort Peck--and the sheriff they bedevil. They go at each other, and life's blinding questions of love and allegiance and rivalry, in more than 350 scenes. (Comparably, I read that Martin Scorsese's movie "Casino" has 269.) People sometimes ask me if writing is hard. When I answer about Bucking the Sun, I tell them all I had to do was to go away for the past three years into the 1930's and try to bring back a book as big as those times.

To my surprise, Heart Earth took me back to where I thought I would not go again as a writer, to the territory of This House of Sky, my 1978 memoir; to the landscape of fate and family.

It was an odd gift from the past: my mother's letters from the last months of World War Two, bequeathed to me by her brother, Wally Ringer, upon his own death in 1986. My mother departed early from This^g House of Sky, and from my childhood knowing of her, with her death on June 27, 1945, my sixth birthday. Here, abruptly, was her own voice again, in ink to Wally while he was a young sailor aboard the destroyer U.S.S. Ault in the Pacific theater of combat. The creased pages of her letters sometimes brimmed with ^{brio}~~pio~~ ("We spent Sat. making formals and catching mice"), other times glinted sharp ("The herder we had planned on lost 30 lambs in about 10 days, so at that rate we'd have to buy him another band of lambs by fall") and throughout were individualistically deft enough to carry the story I saw in them, her story, my father's and my own. In essence, the three of us were a rural Montana family trying to make a place for itself in the post-war America that already was leaving behind the way of life of my mother and father. That spring and summer of 1945 was our collision with the future, the season of saga from Arizona to Montana to a destroyer in the South Pacific, which bent all our lives from then on. Vital to me as a writer were the sparks of memory and imagination that flew upward out of those letters of hers, and I let Heart Earth leaps^g every so often into "deliberate dreams," scenes and dialogue stirred in me by some mention in those ink-of-time letters--for example, our nights in a cabin in the desert outside Wickenburg, Arizona, near a German prisoners^g-of-war camp, the combination of isolated landscape and the spooky nearness of those prisoners, the heart-racing amplitude of the night sounds of

of the desert.

I wrote once, of the pull of the past and childhood landscape, that you can't not go home again. The story I found compressed there in that half-year of my mother's last letters proved that to me again.

Amazon.commentary by Ivan Doig: "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" and the Divided Heart of America

Here was the proposition: if the settler would live on the land a given number of years and "improve" it into yielding a crop, the government of the United States of America would give the settler that land. By the tens of thousands the takers of this most American of bets--the divvy of the continent against the perseverance of the individual--headed themselves west to take up homesteads.

The notion for my novel of Montana homesteaders, Dancing at the Rascal Fair, tagged after me through life like a second shadow. My own western existence has bordered the lives of the last homestead generation, the settlers who poured into Montana between 1900 and 1918 under the spell of the dream of making the state "the last and best grain garden of the world." My father was born in a log homestead cabin south of Helena in 1901. And now that I am middle-aging and deep-bearded, I am told continually by older Montanans of my resemblance to D.L. Doig, the first of the family to come from Scotland to Montana.

To explore that haunting past, I invented the McCaskills and the Barclays, families who have in common with my own only their Scottish origins and a hard-won rural life in this country. The period I chose in this first of the chronology of my Two Medicine novels was 1889, Montana's year of statehood, to the devastating winter of 1919. And the voice I chose to do the narration is that of Angus McCaskill. Early in his telling of it all, while he and his lifelong chum Rob Barclay are aboard the steamship bound to America, Angus says:

"We had a book--Croft's Trans-Atlantic Emigrants' Guide--and my malady was right there in it, page one. Croft performed as our tutor that a shilling was worth 24 American cents, and how much postal stamps cost there in the big

country, and that when it came midnight in old Scotland the clocks of Montana were striking just five of the afternoon. Crofutt told this, too, I can recite it yet today: 'Do not emigrate in a fever, but consider the question in each and every aspect. The mother country must be left behind, the family ties, all old associations, broken. Be sure that you look at the dark side of the picture: the broad Atlantic, the dusty ride to the great West of America, the scorching sun, the cold winter--coldest ever you experienced!--and the hard work of the homestead. But if you finally, with your eyes open, decide to emigrate, do it nobly. Do it with no divided heart."

But the heart of Angus is divided, and therein is the storyline, I saw. Put simply, Dancing at the Rascal Fair became the tale of these two inseparable friends, Scotland-leavers together, neighbors on the Montana homestead frontier, who became enemies over what one of them does to a woman they both love. Apparently others share my own affair of the heart with the homesteaders and their dramatic lives; this is the book that has outsold any of my others, even This House of Sky.

Amazon commentary by Ivan Doig: "English Creek" and the piece of the world I admire most

Am I Jick? People have asked me a thousand times, whether the 14-year-old narrator of "English Creek," in his pivotal summer of 1939, is my literary alter ego. No, not by a long shot, as Jick McCaskill himself would put it. But his homeland, the Two Medicine country of Montana and of my trilogy by that name, for an important time was mine.

English Creek and its valley are actually the Dupuyer Creek area of northern ~~northernmost~~ Montana, beneath the skyline of the Rocky Mountain Front. It's the region where I lived during high school and was a ranch hand and farm worker for several summers, the "Facing North" country in my memoir, This House of Sky, and it is big and hard and glorious--the piece of the world I admire most. It's a country of margin, of America changing, ascending from one geography to another, and of the sensation Isak Dinesen caught in Out of Africa: "In the highlands you woke up in the morning and thought: Here I am, where I ought to be."

Looking back on English Creek, the first of my novels to be set in Montana, I see that it shares with This House of Sky an emphasis on landscape and weather and their effects on people's lives. In both books (all right, in all my books) I was trying to write about the grit of an America which still half-exists in the mountains-and-plains West: ranching, haying, fire-fighting, the Forest Service itself, all have their own techniques and lingo which make them vivid. What I deliberately made different from This House of Sky was the voice of this book--the narrative not as densely poetic as Sky's. Instead, I tried for a kind of idiomatic eloquence, a western cadence ruffled by turns of phrase. Jick, the narrator, is a man of today looking back on 1939, which gave him the angle of viewpoint I needed to hang the storyline on, and he has the love of sayings and stories which animates a lot of otherwise taciturn westerners. I remember, as I worked on the book, how Jick's voice, built as it was from

my decades of file cards and notebooks of dialogue and phrasing, excited me so much I hated to admit it, for fear of jinx. But that voice of his, from the opening line when he tells us "That month of June swam into the Two Medicine country," felt true to the time and country, and came more easily than the style of any of my books before or since.

The Sea Runners, my first novel and the first fiction of any kind that I'd ever written, came to me from two anchoring scenes of history, like hands measuring a breadth:

"Last Sunday"--the 16th of January, 1853, near Astoria, Oregon--"as some of the settlers were crossing the bay, they found, drifting in a canoe, three men nearly starved to death...."

Six weeks before, four men had crept from the fort at Sitka, Alaska, headquarters of the Russian-American fur-trading company. Having signed on from their native Sweden for seven years' service at Sitka, the four chose to escape from their indenturement with the Russian frontier regime. All they knew of their chosen destination, the American fur-trading post at Astoria, was its direction, south along the wild coast of Alaska and British Columbia, and its means, an eighteen-foot Indian canoe they managed to steal.

What stretched between those historical scenes, a desperate voyage of a thousand miles in North Pacific winter and through the waters of the premier seagoing Indian tribes of the world, existed as one skinny newspaper item, reported to the Oregon Weekly Times by one of the settlers who stumbled across the trio of survivors. (The newspaper item, on dim microfilm, I stumbled across while doing research for my non-fiction book Winter Brothers.) I let imagination take over, and after traveling the Alaska and British Columbia coastline to see the route of the escape, I had my cast of characters:

--Melander, the planner, who puts together the escape as if piecing out a chess problem.

--Karlsson, his first, carefully-chosen, accomplice; a skilled canoeman and frontiersman, he joins the escape mostly from curiosity, to see whether the deed can be done.

--Braaf, Melander's second selection, is a thief, chosen for precisely that reason; bored to his fingertips by Sitka life, he leaps at the chance to pilfer the supplies needed for the canoe journey.

--Wennberg, the last to join, is the wild card flicked into the escape scheme, a clever and dangerous blacksmith who forces his way into the plan.

There, then, they were, to be written across two years into what I knew had to be a novel of considerable compression, with the focus always on the actions of these men as they try to cope with ocean, wilderness, and each other. John Berryman once wrote that a mark of modernity is that a person now can live his life without ever having the chance to know whether he is physically brave. Daily, these sea runners are whetted against that question.

Amazon.commentary by Ivan Doig: Experiencing "Ride with Me, Mariah Montana"

When I set out to put a century of the American West into my Two Medicine trilogy of novels, the past was almost too cooperative. As I crisscrossed Montana in ten years of research and writing, the cycle of drought and hard times that I was exploring in the homesteaders' era of Dancing at the Rascal Fair and the Depression years of English Creek struck the state again. People I talked to there in the 1980's echoed what their parents said about the hardships of the 1930's and their grandparents said after the terrible winter of 1919; again and again I was reminded that the past has its own undying voice.

The rigors and splendors of traveling the West competed during my writing of the finale novel, Ride with Me, Mariah Montana, as I traced out my characters' reportorial "circumnavigation" of Montana's landscape and history during the state's centennial year of 1989. At the National Bison Range at Moiese, a buffalo herd grazed past my car so close the swish of their tails could be heard. At the Chief Joseph Battlefield, while changing to a heavier coat as night and cold descended, I locked myself out of my rental car, fifteen miles from anywhere-- a bonehead maneuver I immediately foisted off onto one of my characters. The summer before, Montana was being scorched by record heat as I and my photographer wife, Carol, drove a newly rented motorhome out onto the prairie expanses east of Billings. When the temperature hit 105, the motorhome conked out on a remote road. Miraculously, with maybe a few cusswords thrown in, the vehicle was coaxed back to life, only to suffer system failures of one kind or another in each day's extreme heat until the ultimate meltdown, the air conditioner. Our final recourse: a bedtime visit to a swimming pool and then sleeping in wet bathing suits. Clamminess never felt better.

Finishing up that novel and the decade of creating people and past akin

to my own--I'm the grandson of Montana homesteaders and the son of Montana ranch workers--I let the book have the last word on my belovedly difficult home country:

"You look at the unbeatable way the land latches into the sky atop the Rocky Mountain Front or on the curve of the planet across the plains, and you end up calculating that our first hundred years here could have been worse."

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"A remarkable book....beautifully written, deeply felt....The language begins in Western territory and experience but in the hands of an artist it touches all landscapes and all life. Doig is such an artist."

--The Los Angeles Times

"...One expects a writer who attempts a memoir to have a large store of memories to draw on. Even so, Doig's powers of recall are nothing short of uncanny. The detail of people and events that his remarkable memory supplies, going back to his early childhood, make his story vivid and interesting, yet he never allows the book to become a mere chronological recitation...This House of Sky is worth reading just to savor the writing alone. There is an entrancing rhythm, balance and tone to Doig's simple, clear prose that imparts poetical beauty..." (Philadelphia Inquirer, Oct.27, 1978)

"...a compelling exploration of a personal past and present that becomes far more than the sum of its small parts....*This House of Sky* is a book of deep love and grace, of painful and gallant rhythms. Mr. Doig's sense of the land and his marvelous sensitivity to the lives that touched his own make *This House of Sky* a work of art."

—*The Washington Star*

"A masterpiece by two men joined in the past."

—THE SUNDAY OREGONIAN

"[Doig's] fascination with Swan is easy to understand, for Swan was an engrossing diarist—gossipy, humorous, vividly descriptive, seemingly determined to put the whole of his experience into writing—and the book is a fine one."—THE NEW YORKER

"We owe Doig more than we can repay for letting us make the enchanting journey that connects today and the past through the pages of 'Winter Brothers.'"

—THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

"Doig's absorbing account of the season he spent peering over the shoulder of a man 11 decades older than himself . . . is a double portrait of striking clarity, yet with wonderfully subtle hues."

—SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"[A] gorgeous tribute to a man and a region unjustly neglected heretofore. The reader has the pleasure of encountering two contrasting styles and two angles of view, both infused with the fresh air and spirit of the Northwest."

—THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

"I admire this . . . for its broadened horizons and greater historical resonance, and for the way Doig stays stubbornly at the heart of his West, or Wests. He is not only a writer to be watched, he is already important."

—WALLACE STEGNER

"...Like a meticulous shipwright or carpenter, Ivan Doig fashions books of beautiful conception and impeccable workmanship. Employing a clean, clear prose as sturdy as the pine and fir and spruce of his native Montana, Doig writes paragraphs and chapters of unobtrusive brilliance...In The Sea Runners, a superbly simple adventure story puts four men against the all but infinite vastness of the North American continent...Doig's muscular, exact prose, his tactile sense of detail and his craftsmanlike control of form all contribute to a remarkable evocation of the human spirit in context with inhuman forces. (Boston Sunday Globe, Oct. 10, 1982)

THE SEA RUNNERS

Ivan Doig. Atheneum. \$13.95 ISBN 0-689-11302-1

In 1852, four men, Scandinavians indentured to the Russian Fur Company, plot their escape from virtual enslavement in the frontier Alaskan settlement of New Archangel. In a remarkable evocation of human endurance pitted against the furies of the elements, this poetic novel tracks the "vast weeks of dare," as the four escapees dwindle to two in an incredible canoe journey down the Pacific Northwest coast to America. The four men, coarse and brutal, distinctive in background and the survival skills each brings to the perilous journey, share a commonality—paddling against the constant push of the North Pacific current as it wears deep into their bodies and souls. Doig, whose previous books, "This House of Sky" and "Winter Brothers," won praise, creates his fictional sea-runners from the historical records of a similar "great and terrible journey."

--Publishers Weekly

"A tense, shrewdly modulated sea adventure.... Readers who hailed This House of Sky and Winter Brothers will find this another safe harbor, for Doig continues as a prose writer of exulting originality....A polished chronicle of physical and spiritual endurance."

--Kirkus Reviews*

"Doig has a fine touch for rough, profane working-class speech. The country, the sea, and the fugitives are real and poignant....An entirely appealing story of men striving against great odds for survival and freedom."

--Library Journal

"Blending historical detail and believable dialogue with a remarkable ability to describe the natural world, Doig has fashioned a delightful adventure novel....A winning combination of Northwest history, muscular prose, and raw adventure."

--Booklist

◆ Fifteen years after *This House of Sky*, Doig (*Ride with Me, Mariah Montana*, 1990, etc.) returns to his earliest days in another profoundly original and lustrous re-creation.

Inspired by wartime letters (just recently presented to the author) from his mother to a favorite brother stationed in the Pacific, Doig traces his family's struggles from Montana ranches so isolated that "weather was the only neighbor" to the shared hopes of an Arizona defense workers' housing project and back to Montana, with its steady string of natural indignities. Doig's parents eke out a living, always on the verge of better times despite the shadow of his mother's asthma and the prevalence of daily hardships: coyotes near the sheep ranch; infested one-room houses; road mud "thick enough to float a train." His mother's death comes without warning, on the author's sixth birthday, just as the sheep are ready for shearing and a certain healthy profit. "Nobody got over her," Doig writes, "those around me in my growing-up stayed hit."

Doig captures the serial disasters, as well as several cherished family scenes—including a lunch of Spam sandwiches and lime Kool-Aid—with the clarifying beauty and sure shaping hand of his first book. Even when mining some of the same material that appeared there, he claims new territory for the significant figures in his life.

-KIRKUS REVIEWS



In poetic and precise prose, Doig has crafted a worthy complement to his acclaimed memoir, *This House of Sky*. While that book concerned family tensions after his mother Berneta's death in 1945, here, prompted by a cache of his mother's letters to her sailor brother from that year, Doig recreates a life "the five-year-old dirtmover that was me" could hardly have known. He describes life in an Arizona housing project for defense workers, where his family moved to spare his mother's asthma. He tracks down his Uncle Wally's old beau, about whom his mother wrote. He recalls the battle between his grandmother and father over his mother's medical condition, "the geography of risk" and the family move back to Montana ranching. Doig's writing is immensely quotable—listening to his elders was "prowling with your ears." What makes this book so touching is that, through letters, Doig realizes how much he, the writer, owes to "this earlier family member who wordworked."

-PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

"Ivan Doig's magnificent new novel is an answer to the prayer of anyone who has loved a distant country or experienced the full-hearted enthusiasm of youth.... Part immigrant saga, part intelligent western, part sweeping romance, Dancing at the Rascal Fair further establishes its Seattle author in the front ranks of contemporary American writers....Doig writes with grace and eloquence....In this fine work of fiction, every word, every surprise, every resolution rings true."

--Michael Dorris,
The Seattle Times

"Ivan Doig is a happy mixture of poet and historian. In just nine years he has produced five truly distinctive books set in Montana and the Pacific Northwest, three of them novels. All beautifully evoke the American westering experience and firmly establish Doig as one of our finest Western writers."

--Richard Critchfield,
The Washington Post Book World

"Against a masterfully evoked backdrop, Mr. Doig addresses his real subject: love between friends, between the sexes, between the generations....Doig's prose is as tight as new thread and as special as hand-made candy...Dancing at the Rascal Fair races with real vigor and wit and passion."

--Lee. K. Abbott
The New York Times Book Review

"I find myself filled with such high praise for this book that instead of relating paltry bits of it, I want to quote the whole glorious thing....It is dazzling to watch Doig depict generous, high-spirited characters."

--Pamela Gullard,
San Francisco Chronicle

"In his impressive new novel, Dancing at the Rascal Fair, Ivan Doig stakes a claim to the mantle worn by Wallace Stegner for half a century, the reputation as our foremost recorder and interpreter of life in the historic high, dry American West. With This House of Sky, English Creek and especially this book, he has earned it....His greatest strength is exploring the coagulated feelings of human beings within the family. His characters are not the morality-play heroes of the genre Western, but real people, tangled in their feelings, handicapped by their deficiencies, deeply decent, yearning for closeness, finding it only intermittently. Their melancholy dance of life is rendered with exquisite nuance."

--Winifred Blevins,
Los Angeles Times Book Review

"Doig seems to be one of those enviable writers whose every book is better than the previous one. The new novel is full of good writing and the sweat and tears and laughter of hardworking plain people...[Ivan Doig's writing] is more virile than [Paul] Horgan and less romantic than [Wallace] Stegner. A truer comparison might be with Robert Louis Stevenson because of Doig's magical welding of history with fiction, of adventure with everyday life, of legend with lore."

--Reid Beddow,
The Washington Post Book World

"His prose is at once simple and direct, yet rich and fanciful....The voice of his narrator is so binding that the audience is propelled into the lives of the characters....This reader can't wait for the sequels."

--George Harmon,
The Chicago Sun Times

"English Creek is old fashioned in the best sense of the word: Doig is concerned with the telling of a story that entertains, and he is also concerned with the novel's moral and ethical implications....he deserves to be better known."

--James Kaufmann,
The Christian Science Monitor

"Ivan Doig has a rare, uncanny skill for bringing history to life....In English Creek, his second novel, Doig again achieves a flawless weld of fact and fiction....[The characters] stay on long after the book is closed, more colorful and enduring than the history that inspired them. No more can be asked for the storyteller's art."

--Carol Van Strum,
USA Today

"Despite its setting in the most mythic of all American landscapes, English Creek is neither nostalgic nor simple: It's too concrete and detailed in its evocation of the past....In supple, muscular prose as terse and yet redolent with meaning as the speech of Montana, Ivan Doig grapples with universal issues of character and morality."

--Wendy Smith,
Newsday

"There is...a pervasive warmth, a gentleness, an affection for those long-distant Depression years and the toughness, the innocence, and the sense of community they shaped."

--The New Yorker

JICK McCASKILL, the protagonist of "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana," is a crusty, retired Montana sheepherder with a willful and beautiful daughter, a wicked way with a one-liner and a serious disdain for most of what modern America has wrought — especially as the acne blight of contemporary life has manifested itself on the craggy face of his beloved state of Montana.

You wouldn't say that Jick is terminally annoyed, but you might not want to invite him on a long trip, either. Which is exactly what Jick's daughter, the maddening, mercurial Mariah, blithely does. The Montana centennial is in the offing and Mariah, a talented photojournalist, and her ex-husband, Riley Wright, a columnist, have been assigned to come up with a series of features on the state for their paper, *The Montanian*. Mar-

iah dragoons the reluctant Jick into chauffeuring the pair around in his Winnebago while they go poking into the far corners of the state looking for story ideas.

Since Jick and Riley harbor a cordial loathing for one another, it's a mismatch made in heaven, but it sure makes for a hell of a book. "Ride With Me, Mariah Montana" (Atheneum; \$24.95) is the third entry in Ivan Doig's Rocky Mountain trilogy ("English Creek" deals with the Far West of the 1930s, and "Dancing at the Rascal Fair" with the late 19th century), and even if there's not much in the way of two-fisted action and if the sex is by inference only, this is still a book that sports major *huevos*.

Burr Snider,
San Francisco Examiner

"An extravagant celebration filled with devotion, and with passion for its locale, its people, and their history....Ivan Doig is a writer whose work makes readers recall why they love to read....His novels lay whole worlds at your feet and invite you to make them your own."

Susan Dodd,
The Washington Post

"...Bucking the Sun is ...one of those books that takes you over as you read it, invading your daydreams, lodging its cadences in your brain, summoning you back to the page."

-- Washington Post

"...Doig now has to be considered the premier writer of the American West."

-- Chicago Sun-Times

"Bucking the Sun...derives its narrative energy from as tangled a web of familial and psychosexual rivalries as one is apt to encounter this side of Hamlet or The Brothers Karamazov."

-- Entertainment Weekly

"What Doig understands well and describes with fascinating power is the way nothing in life is ever still."

--San Francisco Chronicle

"The reader is pulled into their story by a puzzle the author has set....The device works beautifully and so does Doig's roguish novel."

-- Time

"Bucking the Sun is a glorious piece of writing."

-- Gannett News Service

"...a neat, excruciating Agatha Christie country house murder set down in sprawling Montana."

-- New York Times

"Ivan Doig is a terrific writer and a great storyteller."

-- Christian Science Monitor