This special edition of
BUCKING THE SUN
has been limited to 150 numbered copies
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each signed by the author

This is copy

Chuckanut
Editions
May 1996
25 April 1995

Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Avenue NW
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Ivan:

We hope this letter finds you well and that your writing is prospering in good fashion. We are always delighted to have you at Village Books and look forward to your return!

On a different note: on Sunday, June 25th, Village Books will be celebrating its fifteenth anniversary—a celebration to which you are cordially invited. In commemoration of this event, we will be publishing a fifteenth anniversary magazine. Because of your contact with Bellingham/Whatcom County readers, we would love to include a comment from you in this forthcoming publication which will reach over 10,000 Village Books customers.

If you would be so kind to pen a few words for us—about the importance of independent bookstores, about your feelings about Village Books, about your appreciation of your readers—we would be extremely grateful. Our plan is to publish your comments in this forthcoming magazine or in future Village Books publications.

Thanks for all you have done for us and other independent bookstores. We look forward to another fifteen years of close association with you and your books. And do please join us if you can for our anniversary celebration on Sunday, June 25th at 7:00 pm!

Most sincerely,

Chuck & Dee Robinson
Co-Owners

P.S. Enclosed you will find a self-adressed stamped envelope for your convenience; though this is short notice, we hope to hear back from you by May 10th!
Home. Home. I knew it entering, runs the opening line of Richard Hugo's heartson poem to "The Only Bar in Dixon," and although Village Books is naturally of higher literary pedigree, it too is a treasured oasis, one of a kind, and has provided intoxicating times. Where but there have I ever inscribed a book to Jackpine Judy—"that's my wife," explained the blushing young man in the lumberjack shirt, "and, uh, can you add to Firecone Pete, that's me." Where else do the booklovers come down from Western and up from the waterfront and in from the hills around—doing a reading in Bellingham is like no other audience I open a book to; the mix of people, the cocked heads of attention, empathy, understanding. Well, I very nearly knew it entering, having done my first of I don't know how many appearances at Village Books in its opening year of 1980, and I hope to be saying this same thing for at least its next 15 years: Village Books, Chuck and Dee Robinson, their staff—if they didn't exist, we couldn't invent them.

--Ivan Doig
One dusk I squinted across the land where I was growing up and saw that the prairie is really a seascape.

The wind was blowing, as it did day and night that summer, and the moving waves of rich-yellow wheat could just be seen in the settling dark. A harvesting combine cruised on the far side of the field. I had never been within a thousand miles of an ocean, but I knew that the combine, with its running lights just flicked on, was a freighter bound through the night for Sydney. Bench hills rose to the north, surely a fair coastline. The expanse of it all, hills and fields and wind in the wheat, ran out far beyond -- oceanic -- to where the sky and the flat horizon fitted together.

The magic of place is indelible. I was fifteen, there at that found sea which was both fictional and real, and now at fifty-seven I write about both the Montana land where I grew up and the Puget Sound country where I have spent the majority of my years. Always I have believed that writers of caliber must ground their work in specific land and lingo in order to write of that larger country, life. So it is with us all, I would argue. Richard Hugo, the great poet of Montana and Washington, had a saying that always sounded to me like something he picked up one especially grand night in a Missoula bar: "If you ain't no place, you can't go nowhere." To have a base, a plot of accustomed existence on this earth, to be familiar with its changes of the seasons--there is a propulsive rhythm to that. The ultimate experiencing of a sense of place comes from grounding our lives in such specific gifts of earth, and in having the sense to preserve them.