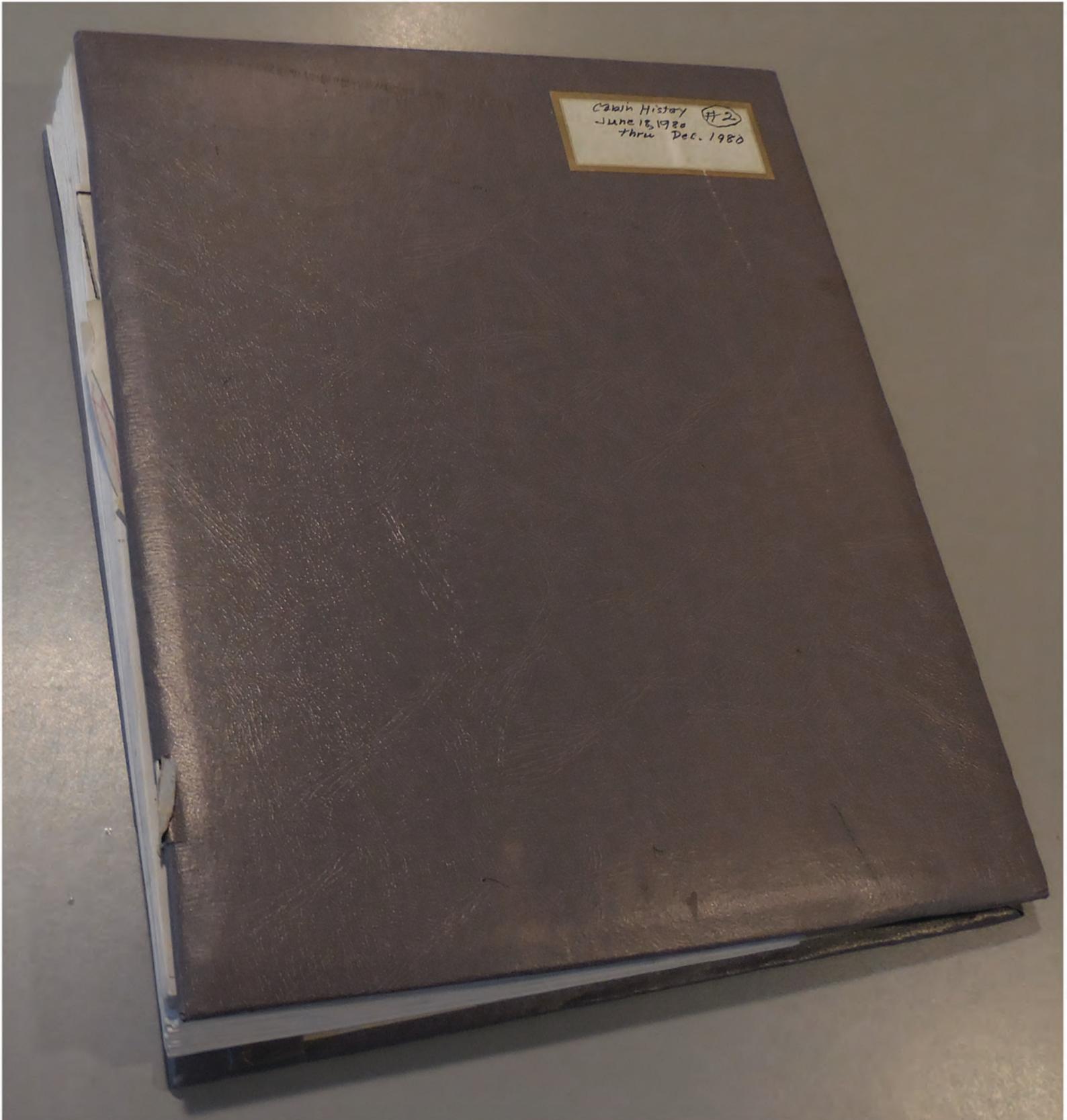


# Cabin History #2

June 18 - Dec 1980





Moved!!  
June 18, 1980

227

**MOVED! HOME!**

Dennis, to my utter amazement, had all the stuff unpacked and packed into the cabin by the time I got there. He stayed the night and we celebrated...with beer.

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**The next day** we set out to take the truck in to Lynwood by our three day limit.

I was following Dennis, trying to keep close, for neither of us knew the route we were going and we didn't want to get separated. We got to a main highway to cross. Dennis stopped at the stop sign and went on through. There was no traffic, so, in order not to lose him, I just paused at the stop sign and whizzed across, only to have some speeding car appear out of nowhere on my left and I just barely missed him hitting him!

That was bad enough, but instead of going on his way on the highway, he crossed to a service station, made a turn back and began to follow me! He was obviously irate and going to teach one lil ole lady a lesson, for he followed right on my tail for almost a mile. It seemed forever to me. I was so scared! I locked the doors and tried to keep up with Dennis and kept bleating away with that silly sheep-baa horn on my car (Help! Help! Dennis!)

But following so close, Dennis was unable to see me behind the bulk of the truck, nor could I see his rear view mirror. The road we were on was deserted and woodsy—rural; there was no place for me to pull off or get help.

I was in an agony of fright. What if the guy blocked me and Dennis went on, not knowing? And it looked as that's what the guy meant to do, for he pulled up and drove along beside me, making threatening gestures. I was just about in despair when Dennis' head appeared out the truck's cab window and he was cussing that guy till the air turned blue!

At which the guy meekly stopped, turned and headed back. But I still was a shaking case of nerves. What if went and reported me for "running a stop sign" and I'd get a ticket and all that? And I'd have a hard time proving that he was at fault, too, speeding like that; there being no witnesses. Later, when we got to Lynwood, Dennis pooh-pooed it, of course, but he doesn't know what little chance lil ole ladies have with big machos.

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We returned the truck. All was well. I got back my \$40 deposit, which, I think, I gave to Dennis as "pay". We then had to get Dennis back to Seattle and Alki. We went in the "back way" through that horrid urban blight on 99, which Dennis drove so wildly and fast my nerves did not simmer down.

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When we got to Alki I don't think I even went in, for it was late and I wanted to get back before the peak traffic. So I left. The kids said they'd be up Thursday. I did hit all the traffic and I thought I'd die of a heart attack before I got back.

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**June 18, Wednesday. In cabin. 9:10 p.m.** I am in my bed—my own bed, in the bedroom niche where the bed just fits despite our not really measuring it or planning it very carefully. I love it! It will be a nice place to be 80 years old...and bedridden?...the bathroom only a step away.

The kids are coming tomorrow. I'm happy! What a job it was but we **did it!**

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**3 a.m.** I wake from an exhausted sleep and it just hits me: **I am here! It's over!**...and what a hard adjustment to make so suddenly...from the cacophonies of horrid slum to utter silence.

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**June 19, Thursday.** Only Dennis and the kids came, they out of school and he baby-sitting them. He worked on the septic tank. They stayed all night and they left on Friday about 3 p.m.

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**June 20, Friday.** About 3 a.m. My first chance to make notes. After the kids left, I collapsed and came to not knowing where I was. And then gradually realized...I'm home! I'm here! No telephone! No neighbors! Oh joy!

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**June 21, Saturday. 10:30 a.m.** I didn't even wake until ten. It's overcast and glum outside. Hey! is today the equinox?

The news makes me angry: After I've gone all through that landlord/tenant battle, now they're cracking down on those harrassing landlords!

Idle thoughts while working hard...

Dennis was loathe to go Friday. He and the kids will be back Tuesday. It'll take me all that time to clean up this mess here...The wood supply is all gone...

Later: Good! It's not raining, even clearing a little?...So nice to be able to flush the toilet, the septic tank now in!...I'll have to find some place to put all these newspapers left over from the lining of the septic field...Damn! spending so much on garbage bags and got the wrong kind!...Have to get my desk and papers in order...my attempts at the electrical circuits plans unfinished...dammit!...

Later: Been unpacking kitchen stuff...where are my good dishes?...Went out and set up a cot in the salmonberry patch, hoping for sun...not. I just lay there and let the hurts ease out...Wow! didn't realize I was in such bad shape!...how nice to lie therein that greeny place...nothing but insects to disturb me...but even they don't...just go about their business...oh! how my shoulder and right arm hurt...all that driving gripping the steering wheel too tightly—scared to hell...

8 p.m. Have to give up. What a battle! But got the kitchen "in working order"...Though suppose I'll have to dismantle it all for the electricians...

June 22, Sunday: Sun. Wake up as tired as when I went to bed, but nice to see the comforts of home shaping up. Was rain—drizzle—could hear it on roof over my head, but nice...what's wrong with my clock radio? can't see the figures...mountain ash on dial?...

wish I could take a week to do this moving in and resting up, but have to hassle all those people...There on't be any refrigerator...that's gong to be rough when Mike and Marylyn here...

Later: Moved the sign I thought was a building permit out of sight, for it says:

"Do not move in before inspections;a misdemeanor.  
This is not a permit."

Afternoon: Downstairs all in shape...and clean. Kids left a TV here. Tried it but couldn't make it work...OH! forgot! I have an upstairs to clean, too!...Kids will be mad at me: I blocked off the hole at top of the closet which they kept urging to cat to use as a descent from loft...

When the kids came they did bring some delicious turkey sandwiches, but I'd forgotten to get weiners and buns for the kid So I took Noah to the store and bought \$5 worth of stuff...even ice. Home, I cooked and set up a fine picnic on the picnic table outside. "First time! Fun!" I cried...but it wasn't.

The kids didn't eat their food..just messed with it. And I kept fussing at them playing so carelessly in the bonfire, warning Sarah about sparks and her long hair. Dennis only said, "You'll have to get fire insurance: I'd hate to have all this..." And then it rained. Hard and most of the evening after they left.

6:20 p.m. Set up my desk in the loft. Am very tired, but what a thrill to have it here at last!...Little disasters: Tried to get a lamp wired for light near desk. Pow! It blows out. And I had to rewire it...

Big disasters: There won't be time to get electricity in before Mike and Marylyn come for that big family gathering we've been planning and waiting for so long. That means no hot water...and no refrigerator..will be hell with all those people here...

Later: The rain has stopped How nice! Am sitting at my desk in loft...window open...birds chirping...moths. I cook...eat...getting rested...

**June 13, Monday:** Wake to birds, and weather dark, though no rain....Problems: cold in here and the squaw wood I collected too wet to burn; and the logs on the porch too big for the stove. And the portable heaters I can't use for my temporary wiring won't reach. But I rearrange it and try and test temperature—is up two degrees.

**10:30 a.m.** The McNabbs came. Luckily, I was dressed and the place clean. They liked the cabin! "Dennis will need a septic tank permit," he says. (Curses! Another permit!?)

**Noon:** I go to McNabbs' to phone. I was not able to get the electrician, but I got Dennis. He said he and the kids would be up tomorrow... Then I had a long talk with Lu. She says the crime around here is terrible! (Sigh. I thought I'd gotten away from all that.)...Mail? But just a change of address notice...

**1:10 p.m.** The Septic inspector comes. All ok! "Did a fine job!," he says.

**Afternoon:** Not able to get electrician on phone I went to Sultan and tried to find their house. When I did find it, nobody was home. I left a note explaining all and saying they could call me via Case. I asked some old guy there in Sultan about electricians. He was no help.

I went on to Monroe and the bank, where I got my check mess straightened out and I asked the gal there about local electricians. She said, "Ask at the hardware store."

At the hardware store they suggest "OK Electric." I sought it out. It was an unimpressive warehouse at the end of a terrible road. I talked to a gal alone there and made a date for a guy to come out maybe the next day. We chatted. She was very nice. When I left, my car made the most horrible screeching noises again. The weather was very stormy.

On the way back I stopped at McNabbs' and called Dennis and Abbie again. I got Abbie, who put Dennis on. I told him about the septic field being ok. "Really!?" he cried. "And I only have to put in one foot of dirt instead of four? Now I can start making you a front yard! I'll be up tomorrow."

I went home and gleaned wood and fussed around in "my new front yard". I even tried to chip the gap in the nursing log across the trail wider, but had to give up—too tough a job for me. The sun came out and the birds sang and the woods were so pretty! I walked down to the creek for the first time since the move-in. It made sounds like gurgling and laughing.

I was puttering around happily in the picnic area when there was a call, "Hallo the house!" It was the Sultan electrician, Markley. "Say!" he called "I'll be up Wednesday at three!" I asked him how long he thought it would take him? "Oh, a day." I didn't believe him, but Glory Hallelujah! Case had said he was a real good guy, expensive, but a perfectionist.

I went in and cooked a little dinner. I was sleepy and tired, but—bliss!

**Later:** I got into another box of stuff. It had the wine glasses of mother's I'd promised to give to Abbie. I decided to hold off giving them to her until after Mike and Marylyn here; it would be fun to serve nicely in my new house! I unpacked and fussed around and then I sat down and played my little "toy organ". I was very happy!

**June 25, Wednesday. 6:45 p.m.** The kids left about half an hour ago. They had come a bit earlier than I'd expected. The weather, supposed to be nasty, was rather nice. Dennis went to work filling in the drainfield and I took the kids and went to Monroe and shopped for food and grass seed for Dennis wanted to try to put a lawn in on the drain field. I spent \$40 or \$50, but it was fun! it was for our celebration dinner.

#### The electricians!

We got back. The electrician from OK Electric arrived just as Dennis was taking the kids down for a swim, even though it had started to rain a little. He was a nice, older man. I explained what we'd want and "bargained" with him, pending getting a bid. I had that appointment with the other electrician and I rather wished, now, that he wouldn't come. This man said he'd let me know and left.

I went out along path searching for squaw wood for the fire I'd tried to keep going all day, when here was this young man arriving out there—too early! The other electrician. For some reason he was rather snotty and arrogant. When I took him in he took a look around and quoted his price, which had gone up.

Dennis had slipped off on me in my other electrician interview—off to take the kids swimming. But this time I called him. He came, took off his work glove, shook hands and they went through the male greeting rituals, but the young man didn't stay long.

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After he left, "How'd it go?" Dennis asked me. I was rather in despair about the whole thing. I'd privately decided I liked the older man's manner better. I told Dennis his estimate. "\$2000!" Dennis said, "I'd do it for \$500!" "Oh, I don't know what to do..." I said, "We'll need hot water when Mike and Marylyn here...course they do have showers down at the club..." "So much money!" Dennis said. "Mike and Marylyn...they'll scoff at our poorly attempts..."

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But...they went back to their work. They all worked so hard out there. They did in minutes what would have taken me hours. And Sarah was carrying logs that even I couldn't have lifted. One thing they did was work on getting a bigger gap in that path-obstructing log. "Take this to grandma and let her smell it," Dennis told Sarah. The smell of cedar; it was so nice!

There was only one unpleasantness in all this: that lonesome, spoiled brat of a boy down the street bugged us all the time, (falsely) insisting he was having a birthday party that the kids had to come to. He was a pest.

But then their work was interrupted; the storm struck. The rains came down and we were cooped up all the rest of the day. We stood inside and watched the trees swaying through the skylights. "Used to scare Noah," Dennis said. "Not now." "well, it scares me!" I said.

The rest of the afternoon we spent inside. Everyone had fun—playing the organ and all. I was surprised how well Dennis could play. He was good! As he played a scotch air, "We're scotch, aren't we?" he asked. "Mmm..." was all I could muster, a little embarrassed at the perhaps-affectation?—I've made of our Clyde/Lorna/Gordon names and red hair and vague family references to "grandpas sailing from England..."

I was also a little embarrassed when Dennis said, "What's all this under the bed?" He'd discovered my hoard of lumber scraps I'd hidden to make shelves with later. (Perhaps I am a little...scotch!?)

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When the kids left, I appreciated having them come; they are wonderful people and they really exerted themselves and got a lot done. But I felt rather sad...and mean, watching them take all their belongings—the radio, TV, etc. I felt as if I were evicting them; they could no longer have the place and use of it to themselves.

Yet, as they left, leaving me there in that storm, the radio started playing that song:

 "This day is the first day of the rest of your life!" 

I spent the rest of the evening until midnight fussing in the kitchen on food and dinner and all.

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**June 26, Thursday:** found me in despair; I just didn't see how we could effect that electricity.

I got up and went down to the mail box; that "OK Electric" man had said they'd mail me their bid. There was nothing there that soon, of course. I began to wonder how I could contact Mike and Marylyn—tell them maybe they'd better not come: there was no wood; there'd be no hot water; no refrigerator...would all be great discomfort. And it had been three years: we wanted so to show it off, but—Dennis and I had both sighed—the stripped area where the septic field was—looked so ugly...

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2 = 1)

7 days till Mike and Marylyn come. Sighing, I wrote a wild letter [don't come] and went down and posted it in the mail box.

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**June 27, Friday:** I get up early and go down and retrieve my letter. It is all soggy; the rain got into the mail box. it's wet and raining and cold. I feel awful; my hand hurts; I'm dirty and smelly. And I have to get the garbage out. And I will have to go down to Monroe and hassle electricians in all this rain. I go out and lug in a log Dennis insisted would fit in the stove. It won't. I haul it back out.

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**Later:** I go down to the mailbox. OK Electric bid's there. I sigh. Open. Hey! It's cheaper than Markley's! \$1312 and includes heaters and permit (which I already have...I think.) I sigh with relief.

Then the guy from PUD comes to read the meter. I ask them how long it would take them to hitch up the electricity. "At least 3 weeks," he says. "We are moving...our building...and vacations...we are short-handed." I go back in and curse. How am I going to tell Mike?

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I am just composing a note to Markley (will take the other bid) when here come the kids! Abbie, too. And they'd brought all kinds of good food; "poor boy" sandwiches, peaches, beer and—\$50!—my rebate from the nasty managers at the Dump! I forgot to ask Dennis how come it was in cash?

I show Dennis the OK bid. He is elated; told me to go ahead. It should have been a joyful visit. Somehow it wasn't. Everyone just sat, kind of glum. Dennis made a big fire and he lugged my two barrels of papers to the loft. "We brought the tent up," Dennis said, "...if Mike and Marylyn want to use it. We won't stay overnight. We won't be back till Saturday." I was puzzled; why didn't they want to be here...we all together?

When they left my car wouldn't start and so I couldn't accompany them down to Monroe. I went on later, by myself, to do my electrician errands. First I went to Sultan and put a note on Markley's door (won't need you) and then I went on into Monroe.

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To OK Electric. Darwin, the boss, who'd come up, was not there. The girls and people there were so dumb. "Well, go ahead," I said. "Here's my permit." And I left, thinking about what a ragged, incomplete way they did business.

I did a little shopping and then stopped at a very dingy car wash and cleaned the car. At least I got the worst of the Mountain ash out of it. The sun was shining now, and I was in better spirits; it seemed like things were beginning to work out.

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I stopped at Case's on the way back and told him to save some of his wood for me and that maybe we would use that little propane refrigerator he had offered to let us use.

"Sure. Sure. That would be fine. No, he didn't want any rent for it—only thing was—it needed some fittings—we'd have to buy \$3-\$4 worth." He made coffee and invited me to stay and eat spaghetti with him, he alone, but by the time he was through giving me a bad time about how we'd need insulation, I was so upset I just slipped out, noting, on my way what a tiny thing that propane refrig was.

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I stopped at McNabbs' and phoned Mike. And, though, it was hard to talk to him with the McNabbs there listening, I told him about the bid.

"Fine! Fine!" he said. "Go ahead."

"When are you coming?" I asked.

"Oh, not until Friday or Saturday...maybe late Sunday. Chris has a basketball camp."

That was a blow; I'd expected them sooner. Now I'd have to call Dennis and tell him. I tried—twice, but no answer.

I could see Marv's jaw working. "Don't forget to put down that you owe us for those calls," he said. (McNabb is a scotch name?)

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I went back to what the neighbors call "our dark, dank and gloomy place" I didn't have to hurry now; the kids wouldn't be coming so soon. The cabin looked neat and tidy. It wasn't dark; someone—the kids?—had left a light on in the loft. Sarah's little gift of an "apple tree" sat in a pot on the steps—Abbie had left a beer and two peaches for me. The huckleberries the kids had picked were on the table. The radio was playing softly.

"Will you be cold?" the kids had asked me.

"Oh no. I can just jump into my 'snuggie' (a body quilt the Mikes had given me for Christmas) or I found that blue quilt mother made me."

Then they asked me how big I wanted the bedspread Abbie insisted she was knitting me. "Oh you can't knit all that!" I cried. They just measured, not saying anything.

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I went out to look for some wood. There was a **thump!** in the house, Scared, I dropped my wood and went up on the woodside porch to investigate-locked! I was **locked out!** And all those secure locks we had just put on! How was I to get in without breaking a window?

I tried the little bathroom window. No. I had barricaded and sealed it. But I pushed on it anyway, feeling a fool; what if someone came down the trail and saw me trying to break into this house?

Finally—a crack. I reached in. A nail. It caught my wrist watch strap and broke it. I could not loosen the nail, but the knot in the cord I'd tied to it **finally** came undone. Another push, but the window started to come off its hinges! I kept pushing. Everything inside came clattering down, but I finally had the window open. Now I had to find some way to squeeze through that little chest high window.

And, if I did, what would I land on? would that plastic toilet seat hold me? I reached in and **slammed** it down. Then I had to clamber up somehow. A bucket of Wayne Case's there on the porch. I upended it, stepped up on it—one leg in—the other—a scramble, but I was in! I was laughing and giggling at the slapstick comedy of it, but also chiding myself: don't you ever go out without the keys in your pocket again!

Inside I couldn't figure out what had thumped and fallen to trick me into that little bit o' fun. The only thing was the fire was now roaring: that big log in the stove had fallen down?

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**June 28, Saturday:** I waked to chill and gloom in my woods wondering why people speak so disparagingly of the "dank, dark, dire woods"? If they're not out in the open with the security of their TV's, machines and each other, are they afraid?

Mike had asked me if they should bring anything? I wanted to say yes, -money for the electricity! but... "Swimsuits?" he asked. "Oh yes." But I didn't tell him the pool water heater was out again.

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**Later:** I go out toward the cul-de-sac. There is sun out there—down below—outside the woods. Carrolls have their radio blating away. Only mail is something wrongly addressed, not for me. I go talk to Lu and Marv. Nobody's much fun. I stop and ask Case about his wood: He wants "going price"—\$70 a cord, with a minimum of \$10—you haul. I go home disgusted. A walk around my new neighborhood wasn't much fun.

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During the day—I did a lot: I cleaned the porches, organized the wood supply, cleaned house, repaired my vacuum cleaner, nailed down little rugs, organized closets and clothes (one hell of a job!) struggled with putting up a new hang bar in the closet, which I found very hard to do, not having the proper tools. But the rest breaks I took out on the lounge in the salmonberry patch, where the sun was shining were nice!

I found that a mouse had nibbled on the cheese I thought was safe in that cooler; I put some bait out. I tinkered with the draft on the stove and managed to turn it to a smaller draft, hoping it might cut down on the way that stove **gobbled** wood.

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Later I roamed the woods and enjoyed the variety the woods offered in a mere half acre; there were all kinds of unexpected nooks and crannies. I dwelt on how much more I liked my place than those exposed, dreary assembly line cracker boxes down below with all their crime and dust and clutter. When Case was showing me his new house, my private thoughts were—hell! he might as well have stayed in an apartment in town—no difference. Why move to the woods if you don't want the beauty of them?

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I worked at my desk on my budget. How nice not to have to start it off with a rent payment! Then I took a nap.

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**June 29, Sunday:** The holiday was coming up. I think about what the difference will be here versus Vancouver. Abbie had asked me if I were lonely up here. She would not understand that I was lonelier in Vancouver with all those people around (they were all impossible; those slum people were trouble and no place to get away from them.) Here, I could choose; go down to the clubhouse, where there was bound to be somebody if I lonely.

**Later:** I did go down there and shower and shampoo. Then I went to the (only) nearby store there beside the Highway to the Pass where the tourist trade prices shocked me. I went home then and pattered around happily outside.

**Later:** I went up to my desk in the loft and hassled long with bales of papers and bills to catch up on. And I certainly appreciated having a place, at last! to stash all my papers out of the way and out of sight when not being worked on. I put up some of my highway drawings, hastily, on-(no walls!)-beams. Afterall, this is an artist's loft!

Next, the chain on the St. Andrew's cross I'd been wearing as a talisman broke. I had worn it for a month without taking it off until it had made my neck raw. I felt ashamed as being so superstitious, but I wondered if this were an omen? I was home. Safe. I no longer needed it?

I noted that I was feeling much better: I was able to chop wood and weild tools and whistle back at the birds—all things I couldn't do when I had first arrived.

**Later:** At dawn, I lay and compared my late past expenses, trials, and living conditions to what I now had—and I was very pleased!

**June 30, Monday.** I woke very late—to the first really sunny day since the kids had left. I wandered down by the car and nibbled on blackberries and enjoyed the sun there in the open places. I noted the wind had changed direction.

**Later:** A busy day! I used a compass to mark the directions on the water meter box, for I was always very confused with our odd-shaped lot and the cabin "turned around backwards" to way I'd planned it so long. Then I got in the car and went toinvestigate what the bulldozing noise was I heard.

At the bottom of our street I was encountered as I stopped at the stop sign there. Two grubbily dressed, but pleasant young men coming from Woods Lake direction on motorcycles stopped and eased their cycles over to talk to me. They wanted to know where they were. They had a xeroxed copy of county map and I just happened to have that compass with me. We had along, fun talk. They were going gold-panning and had an extra pan—Why didn't I come along? They weren't smirky about it, but—for obvious reasons, I declined. They went on.

The noise was a "cat". I asked the men what they were doing? A new house going up, they said. This was in the first cul-de-sac—on the west end.

Then I stopped and asked Lu how much the water fee was here? "\$5 month," she said. We stood in the sun in what was by then a beautiful day and chatted a long time.

Then I decided to stop and ask Case about the water and a few things. He was alone and just cooking a late breakfast of bacon and eggs. Nothing would do but what I must eat with him, so I had a huge brunch and we sat and talked for maybe a couple of hours, we two retirees—just lazy. When I mentioned I had no cigs he produced a pack of his wife's and we had more talk along with real, honest, perked coffee! Finally, we both decided we'd better got to work, and I left. It was 3 p.m.! But it was all fun! A very social interim!

I came back and forced myself to waterproof the picnic table. Case said it would take the linseed oil about five days to dry. It was a a long, hard, messy job. I ran out oflinseed oil and dug out the creosote to finish the parts of table that wouldn't touch people. The table was heavy—Dennis builds for giants—hard for me to turn over...

It was evening and birdsong before I got it upright again to dry. I rested then on the lounge in the salmonberry patch, which I had privately dubbed "the Angels Club" because of its peace and beauty and birdsong so like heaven after that slum I'd been in! And I started to laugh when I noticed in this Eden reared a huge, prickly "Devil's Club" plant...

I was dirty, exhausted, but very happy. I went in and braved a (necessarily) cold shower. It wasn't bad at all. Clean, I gloated on my very good day. And thought how I'd done more real living up here in two weeks than I did in a year in Vancouver...I got a blanket and prepared to take a nap...



**Dark...evening...** I was just about asleep when I had my first big scare here. Something outside...little thumps...Then Carroll's dog started barking like mad...then something **thumped** on the porch just outside a "front" window. I was so scared my heart thumped like thunder.

I waited and waited, glad I'd decided to put a temporary curtain over that window. Finally, the dog stopped barking. I sneaked over to the door with my flashlight. ("All I need is to flash a light in their eyes," I had scoffed at those who said I needed a gun up here.) I tried shining it out the bathroom window, but the glass only reflected it back.

It was then I noticed the window, which had to be partly open to let the temporary electric cord come through, was **open!** Heart still pounding I taped and tied it again. Then I saw the hatchet lying—luckily?—nearby. I moved it up to the table near the door. (Would I have to **use** it?)

All quiet now. My senses started coming back. I found myself going to the other end of the house and shining the light out into the woods to test it. It did shine, brightly, into the woods. And then I saw it...a big tortoise shell cat.

My first big **scare** living alone in the woods. People had fussed so about the **dangers** I would encounter...and...it was only...a **cat**.

Thankful, now, for the neighbors' dogs, I spent the rest of the evening puttering at fixing the bathroom until I was so tired I had to stop. And then—it was very late by then—I read myself to sleep.

**JULY**

**July 1, Tuesday.** I wake to another nice day and am piqued that I would have to waste it going to Monroe, where I had to bank, get gas and oil, and do some shopping. And then I'd have to come back and pay bills, the first day of a month being my budget day.

**Later:** doing so I found I'd spent \$50 on gas for this move. The move cost what?...\$300?

I find myself feeling better all the time; it's as if I were a plant that had been poisoned and was shriveling and starting to die beginning to expand and grow and come alive again.

And I laughed, noting the "camp costume" I had on and how careless I was getting already on how I looked. Instead of the careful primping that living amongst people engendered, I now found myself just grabbing anything that was handy and warm. Today's costume was my black **fur** collar (to keep my neck warm) over mother's old black **silver braid** trimmed sweater over my gaudy, **long-skirted** house coat—"lady" garb...in the woods!



But I was also beginning to feel moved in and that all my troubles were behind me...until I started thinking about the electricians...and...other things ahead.

Dennis and Abbie were, meantime, taking a well-earned vacation at the beach.

9:30 p.m. Shopping today, I became a little wild; I bought ice cooler chests, an electric plate, dishwashing equipment—\$50 worth, but I was tired of hardships.

And I had a wonderful day! And I worked all evening. It's so much fun! A jillion things to do and try out. I spent a long time battling rewiring so I could use the new hot plate—that was a real challenge. I spent hours on it and almost gave up, but managed to work it out without electrocuting myself or blowing (an electrical) fuse (my temper was something else.)

I set up the new ice chests with ice I'd bought. These two jobs eliminated having to use the old beat-up items the kids had lent me and presented the risk of hurting their feelings, but I was too carried away with setting up my new house to care.

Then, I couldn't resist; I mixed some of that goop the guy sold me to fill cracks in the bathroom wall and tried it. It worked fine!

During all this I mused on my reactions to my shopping in Monroe. I had found that my delight in fixing up my new home was rather dampened by the trials of getting things done in a small town. I found the people apathetic and slow and goods and stocks so limited and low it was hard to find what I wanted.

I had stopped and checked on the electrician, but again I found the apathy. I had to just talk to the office gal; I seemed unable to catch up with him. I gathered he'd get around to our job in his own sweet time.

Later: I feel "lofty". (that means I'm going to sleep in the loft) where I am now, testing it out, as this will be my guests' private place. I like it up here...much better than the downstairs bed. For I feel so safe; marauders can't reach me up here—that high window—no one can scale. Again...so nice to be in my own loft at last! no neighbors, no trains, nothing to bother and disturb me...

Dawn: the birds begin. I am learning to note time not by the calendar or the clock, but by the natural happenings...like; the "whistle bird" calls out about five a.m. and about five in the evening; or, (seasonal)...it's "blackberry time" or "salmonberry time"...or the sun falls there in such and such a place...at such and such a time...

Other joys I felt during the day; so nice just to drive leisurely...country roads, and not on frantic freeways and city streets; so nice not to have to traffic-avoid hurry with my shopping and then have that long, awful trip back to that hell hole in Vancouver...speaking of which: the news says the mountain is still acting up; they still have ash and worries. Sigh! So nice to be away from it!

Something else I learned today: writing my checks to post: I mustn't put them in the box the night before, someone said, for vandals prowl into and get your signature to forge...

And...the grass is sprouting!

July 2, Wednesday: I wake to no sun. Not rain, but gloom. It certainly makes a difference here when there is no sun; it is beautiful when the sun shines and grim when it doesn't, but guess one just has to ignore it and get busy.

Today I have to get dirty me cleaned; my clothes cleaned and sorted and beds clean and changed. I will have to go down to the community club and take a shower. Dread it...will be awfully cold...

I went. It was great! Made me feel so good! Should have done it before. After, I had a nice chat with Lu.

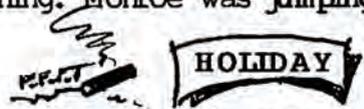
They had a lot of rotten cedar lying around from cutting that tree down. She said they wanted to get rid of it, so I brought some back and tried it on the fire. It's great! burns slow, not zip! like that alder. I'd also helped myself to some of those big red huckleberries growing on bushes around her place. Nibbled a few.. good! I picked some of the blackberries around our driveway when I got back. Yum!

I spent the rest of the day working hard, getting my hair fixed and things ready for expected guests on the 4th. At least I hoped Dennis and all would come up, though the Mikes not due until Sunday.

**July 3, Thursday:** I thought I was getting away from Burlington Northern Railway? During the night, a long train below—the loudest I've heard it since I've been here.

The day is as unsunny and glum as they predicted it would be. I have to go to Monroe to see about my Social Security check and get ice and things before the holiday hordes clean everything out... do wish Dennis had widened that cut through the log so I could use my cart...

Later, evening: It's raining. Monroe was jumping with people!



**July 4, Friday.** I hurry to get ready in case the kids come, but, working out in my "front yard", where I can encounter them—the morning passes—noon comes—no kids. I find myself disappointed—was sure they'd come, this being such a perfect place to shoot off fireworks. Decided maybe, later, I'd go down to McNabbs' and phone them and maybe, surely? there'd be people and parties down there I could...join?

**An interruption and annoyance:** that brat, Ron, from down the street came up and begged me to give him the pool key. I was furious: in the first place those people are just renting, and not supposed to have use of the pool; second, kids are not supposed to go in alone, without parent or caretaker there. And he said McNabbs weren't even there. "No!" I told him. Persistent. "No!" He left, mad. I fear I will have neighbor trouble now?

The day wore on. I'd dressed, ridiculously, in red, white and blue for the holiday. When no kids came, I had only blue(s) left.

4:30 p.m. I gave up and went to work on the bathroom until I was exhausted. I decided to take a break and go down and phone the kids, leaving a note for them, though I no longer expected them. Feeling very "poor lil me", I went.

On way I noted the garbage man had not come and I worried about leaving those sacks there—if animals would get into them.

**Down at the club** there wasn't a soul around anywhere; only the McNabbs. I told Lu, "Why, I thought the place would be jumping! (the pool, picnics, families et al). "Dunno," she said, "used to be that way—now, nobody comes." Then they told me the pool warmer is busted again—for the third time—and nobody seems to be able to fix it.

While I was outside talking to Lu Marv came out and presented me with the phone bill I owed them. Despite this hint? by that red-headed old Scotchman, I went in and phoned the kids anyway.

When Dennis answered, "I hoped you'd call," he said. "Mike called. They'll be in late Sunday afternoon and will leave the next Saturday."

"But I thought...the birthday party..."

"Oh, they're going to have that at Zirkle's on the way back." That hurt.

"Bud and Paula called," he continued. "They want to see the Mikes."

"Well, I hope they'll come up here?"

"Dunno." That hurt.

"Well, when are you coming up?"

"On Monday—the kids and I—Abbie can't come... I thought you'd be coming down here today," he said.

"Well, I thought you'd be coming up here!"

"Well, we too much driving...But come on! Chicken and apple pie!"

That sounded so good; I was starving and had only a can of chili for dinner.

"Oh, I'm too tired, now," I said. "all that driving—don't feel I can hassle all that traffic..."

We began to talk about getting wood. "Godfrey has some," he said. "Was gonna stop by and leave you some, but..."

I told him Case wanted \$70 a cord for his and that Lu had looked up prices around here in the paper and they only wanted \$60. "The axes are dull," I went on, "...and the grass is growing...and I fixed the bathroom walls." He was delighted. "Bring Edward's screen," I said.

"What? Oh..."

"So Marylyn can have some privacy," I said.

"Well, I'm not going to the Zirkle party," Dennis said.

"I wonder if I'm invited," I said. We hung up.

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Lu walked out with me and gave me a box to gather some more of the cedar wood.

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I went on back to the cabin, and built a little fire of that wood. When I looked outside, the woods were full of smoke from it. Cedar to cedar, I thought.

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My holiday hadn't turned out to be much fun. I went to work on the kitchen some more, thinking about how I couldn't drive down to that party anyway—half way back to Oregon and then drive back at night, for I'd have no place to stay; nor would it be any fun to go to a party and not be able to drink, having that long drive ahead of me...**POW!** my screwdriver hit a bare wire and sparks flew. Happy fourth of July, Lorna! I snotted.

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**July 5, Saturday.** I woke early and spent the day working on finishing up the kitchen, getting so tired that three times I thought I was about to die. Then the sun came out later and it was pleasant. Three years I'd been waiting to show off to Mike and Marylyn what we've been doing up here, I thought...And what if they don't show? if I go ahead and get that pot roast and all...? So? Maybe they wouldn't come, but I was happy and busy getting ready!

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The mail brought me the water bill with a cheery welcoming note enclosed from Marie. That cheered me, and then, after a little nap in the car, I set out for town to shop with my last \$50. For my social security check still not in yet, (and I with guests to entertain!)

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First I went to Sultan and made inquiries about getting the axe sharpened that involved nice chats with people. I finally found the house. The man wanted only \$1.50 to do it, so I left it to pick up later.

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Then I went to the market there and bought a huge pot roast and ice and things. It had been so long since I'd bought for guests! It was fun!

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And then I rushed back and lugged stuff in and then loaded up to go down and shower. I stopped at Case's and he as very chatty and generous, offering me the use of their freezer and refrigerator. He told me to toot my horn after I through with my shower and he'd come up and get his tools we had up there.

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Then I on to McNabb's, where I paid him the phone bill and gave him a penny extra...as a joke. They opened the gate so I could bring my car in and we loaded it up with some more of that wood. Chat, shower and back to cabin, tootling at Case as I went by.

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When he finally came, I invited him in and offered him a drink, but he refused; he said he'd had to quit that—that it was controlling him. I also invited them to come and meet the kids when they here. And then he made me feel good, as he looked all around, his face glowing, "You kids—got it made!" he said. I felt proud and happy. He took his tools and left.

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And I set to recovering the coffee table Mike had made me in high school with Contac. I worked on that till about 9 p.m. I was very excited and happy.

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**July 6, Sunday. Today is the day! ZIT!** I was delighted to see bright sun and birds were chattering away...So much to do! First I filled out that form for the "Neptune Society"—arrangements for disposal of my body and cremation—a rather gruesome task. And then—get the axe, some food; and then start cooking and tending fires....About noon I was ready.

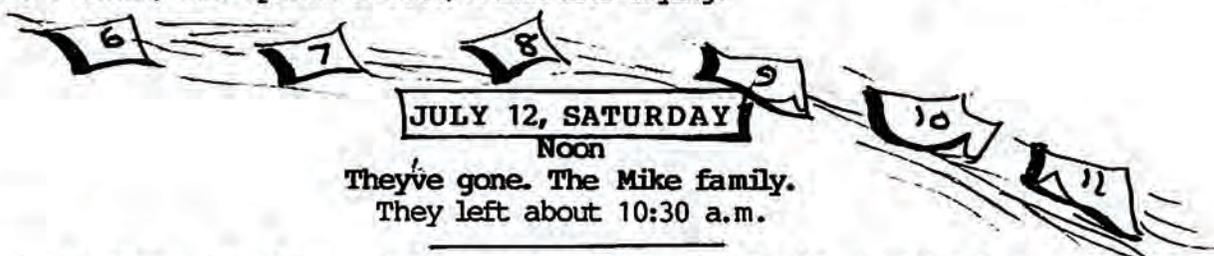
The long-awaited day at last! All set to go! But—No!? Dead! (Not me—) The car battery! The car wouldn't start!

I walked down to Case's. (Help! A jumper cable?) Nobody home.

I walked down to the club. The guys were all busy unhitching and loading up the pool motor. That meant more guests disaster; there would be no swimming—one thing I'd bragged up about the place. Lu offered to take me to the store, but the guys said if I'd wait, they'd come up and help me with the car. I stood around and waited, unhappy. Then Marie came and it was all good fun and neighborly. Then Jerry Smith and Marvin loaded me into their car and we went back to see about my car.

Bad news. Throttle out. (I'd been worried about it and having trouble with the car the last week or so) Battery dead. The carburetor was pouring out blue smoke. They couldn't get the car going. They finally left, refusing to take any pay.

I tried to get the car going after that, but—no luck. I gave up and went back to the cabin, and opened a beer; I felt like crying.



I was sorry to see them go; they added life and meaning to the place and we had a lot of fun. It was great!—all I had imagined—having all my family gathered together at the cabin—at my place!

There were some bad moments, of course—mostly pertaining to weather and in-law frictions, but, in all, was fun and fine!

Today autonomy returns; my own ways again.

I set out for the store alone, something I wasn't able to do all the time they were here. The sun is breaking out in the stormy sky, after three days of grim rain.

"Betcha the sun comes out when you leave," I told Marylyn when they left.

"What's wrong with that?" she asked in her bright-side-of-everythingway.

I stopped at Case's and apologized for never having gotten together with them all during the kids' visit. "Just too busy!" I said. And so we were.

#### RECALLS: (as I set my house in order again)

\*...the loft was taken over by the boys...

\*...all that (wet) wood they all collected for me—bless them!

\*...lock. Mike fixed the dead bolt lock on the entrance door for me...

\*...the railings they put up on the porch for me. "Just like a play pen for grandma!" I'd exclaimed. It was wonderful to see all my Chambreaus—the boys now "men" cutting up wood for me and working with the 2-man saw on that big log, Dennis in charge, "Get that saw going, kids!" And little Sarah proudly carrying logs as big as she...they fixed me quite a supply!

\*...money. That one time, when we got into rather an argument about who owned the cabin. I'd pointed out that it was all theirs, legally. "It's yours and Mike's," I said. "I'm just living here...a scrounge!" Mike had been buggin' me about taking out house and fire insurance and getting a phone in. I guess I'd pleaded poverty, for Marylyn had chimed in and said they didn't have much money, either; they said they were quite far in debt.

\*...families! The Zirkle party caused some frictions. When they left they were going to stop there for what had turned into a big Powell powwow at Barbara's place in Tenino instead of Zirkle's place in Olympia. Only they were going; the rest of us begged out. I had been mad and hurt when Marylyn did not reveal until evening that there had been a letter for her in my mailbox that day about the party. Somehow the rest of us felt uninvited.

"No, we won't go." I told her flatly.

\*...weather. I was so thankful that the sun shone the day of their arrival and the first two days of their visit. But then the weather turned nasty. Wednesday we sat all day inside feeding little sticks into the stove because we had no big wood. And they all complained so about being cold. And everyone got a little edgy, cooped up in the rain.

\*...inconveniences. Just the temporary electricity so no hot water.

\*...cars. Mike arrived with car troubles. He spent much time fixing it, using my car to run all over getting stuff he needed, so that I had to go and get more gas.

\*...food. Marylyn brought a big ham and it seemed we had ham for almost every meal. And Abbie had brought bread and jam, both home made. One of the nicest moments was when they were all of them working so hard "bucking" up that windfall alder and grandma came out with big slices of homemade bread and jam. How they all gobbled it up!

\*...birthdays. We planned a joint birthday party for Mike, Chris, and Dennis, they all having birthdays in July. Marylyn primped and dressed for it as if a real Big Party. The rest of us just wore any old thing.

\*...reactions. There were times when I felt that grandma's house might become a dumping ground? Dennis and Abbie: Don't you want this old carpet? Or this...? or that...? And Mike and Marylyn: Maybe we could send the boys up to stay with you. But they did admire the curtains I'd made out of those sheets of soft plastic packaging material I'd swiped out of some garbage cans downtown. "How clever!" they said.

\*...pictures? Mike had brought his fine camera, but he didn't have the strobe light. And it too dark under trees to get any pictures outside with my cheap little camera which was about all we had to depend on.

\*...leaving. They had collected aluminum cans all during their visit and then went off and forgot them. They didn't make any mention of coming back when they left....

All these remnants of recalls went through my mind as as I worked on cleaning up after them.

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Then, that week after they left, I had to make trips to town to replenish supplies and money and resume where I had left off.

I tried the electricians again. Again it was just the gal there. We had a long chat. She said he'd mail me a date when he could get out there; maybe it would be Monday. So I still was no further along on the electricity.

I stopped and got catalogs from Montgomery Ward's and Sears order outlets in Monroe the better to "shop" for things I'd need for the cabin.

On the way back, I stopped at Case's. Only she, Edith, was there watching Tv and complaining bitterly about how boring it was there in the woods.

Then, more or less caught up, I sat down to do a better report on the kids' visit, feeling it might be a fun thing to have in the family archives someday.

### Report: THE MIKE CHAMBREAU'S VISIT

As I said, the weather was perfect until Wednesday. Then the rains came and we were cooped up in the dank gloom with "no" wood to burn and the discomforts of makeshift electricity and no hot water.

We had three picnics; one Monday night with Dennis and his kids—a bonfire in the firepit and using the picnic table. That was fun!

And then Abbie came with them Tuesday and we repeated a picnic.

And then, at the last, the birthday celebration in the gazebo Friday.

That turned out to be really fun and nice! Mike and Marylyn surprised us with a big, fancily decorated sheet cake they'd ordered at the bakery. And we invited the McNabbs to join us.

We had car troubles and food shopping troubles all the time. Mike fixed my car and then used it to chase all over the countryside trying to find parts to fix his, which had conked out just as they drove in. He finally did get it fixed, and we tested it by driving clear up to the summit even though it was still miserably raining.

That was one reason we went; as a means of getting out from being cooped up in the rain. As I said, we all got edgy. Marylyn's charm and patience wore a bit thin. And there was some in-law friction when she took over my kitchen and all the food and activities planning. My pot roast dinner the first night was OK; but it was the last meal I fixed. Marylyn took over with all her gourmet salads and we ate with candlelight and wine—Not exactly what I'd had in mind, roughing it in cabin.

Food was a problem at first because they came empty-handed. So there was no food as I was broke; my check hadn't come; embarrassing. And Dennis didn't get any wood chopped to cook any, if we'd had it. But Friday, after my guests went and bought food, my check came and we all contributed.

The sleeping arrangements—my idea worked out fine; Mike and Marylyn in my bed, I on the couch and the boys upstairs. Dennis did bring the screen and I used it to screen off the big bed. There was some talk of using the tent—they even put it up; but it stunk so of mildew they took it down again—just before the rains came again.

Mike was very beneficent in replacing tools needed, Dennis just having had all his robbed; he just went out and bought what was needed. I gave Dennis and Mike \$40 out of the cabin fund and they went off and came back with lumber and I had porch railings before I knew it! And Marylyn and the kids kept gathering wood; it was like having a magic crew working for me! I was too busy in the house trying to dress, do dishes and organize things to really get out and rejoice in it all.

And what were their reactions after all that wait to show off all we had effected? We-ell—there were no cries of ecstasy, as I'd imagined [ Oh! How beautiful! What! you have created!] maybe they were too tired and busy unloading to react? But—I keep forgetting—they limped in, barely making it with car troubles. By Monday and Tuesday they began to rave about how pretty it was in our woods and what good job Dennis had done.

Their reaction to the weather? Well, when the rains started again, Marylyn remarked that she doubted if she could take it—rain country. There was also a factor I didn't know about until much later. I had thought my cabin in the woods was unique in the family; it seems Marylyn's family and "everybody they knew had a cabin in the woods"—the modern thing to do. So?

Our three picnics were great!—what I'd always wanted and dreamed of in those years in city apartments. The first, Monday night, was better than the second Tuesday. The Dennis family was only represented by Dennis and the kids, but the novelty of having even that much family get-together in our own "private park" was unique in my experience. And the good food, the campfire to toast marshmallow goops, the wine and all—Dennis' eyes just glowed with (wine?) and the apparent success of it all. Maybe, reassured, why he talked Abbie into coming the next night? She had come up Monday, but had gone on blueberry picking in the environs with her sisters and had begged out of joining us.

**Tuesday night.** By then Marylyn had taken over menus, shopping, plans and kitchen, and then Dennis and Abbie appeared empty-handed, with no food, to my surprise (as they almost always brought something).

But Friday was the day Abbie brought all the homemade bread and jam and other snacks and goodies, so I felt things were evened off and all was well.

My little toy organ "piano"—we all really enjoyed! Steve and Mike and Chris were playing it all the time. That made me feel good; at least it was finally used and appreciated. We had much music and singing. Marylyn has a lovely voice she seemed proud of.

Mike's car troubles went on and on, until I, finally resorting to superstition, made a secret prayer "to St. Andrew" and lo! he suddenly got it fixed!

Mike and Dennis working on the railings pleased me; I'd never seen my two sons working on a project together. To provide for the wood for them took all my available cash, but it was worth it. The railings went up so fast I could hardly believe it. They both used the power saw that first day, but Mike worked on doggedly—or should I say I say nervously?; it's Dennis who works doggedly—helping with the hand saw. They worked on even in the rain the rest of the week until they had it finished. Both porches.

The railings, in actuality, were rather a shock to me. They seemed so much heavier than I had envisioned when I worked on the designs—that's why I made my remark about "a play pen" and "hemmed in" feeling. But when all was finished and we leaned on them and chatted, I felt the security of their strength and danger blocked off. I got used to them quickly,

Marylyn's almost obsessive insistence on wood gathering and ordering the boys to bothered me some what. They were always dragging in wet wood, and there was no place to put it. I was too busy inside battling the chaos of so many people in such a small cabin to join in. But I finally got out and went under the house and cleared out a place to put it, even though I'd rather they'd waited till better weather had dried the wood out a bit. But, rain country, one can't wait?

We never did get with the creek. Mike got nervous about the boys using the machete and squelched that job I'd thought would be fun for them to do—clean the creek. But, before he realized they were using the machete and axe and hatchet—that first day—Chris and Steve had hacked a clearing to that bowed alder Dennis now sanctioned suitable for a swing.

And first thing I knew I had grandkids swinging through the trees like young apes on sail-boat rope Mike had brought with him. The kids really enjoyed that rope swing, though grandma cringed watching those young bodies flying through the air. I was amazed at their adeptness, even little Sarah as agile as a young ape. And Uncle Dennis was good at monitoring them, so I quit worrying.

Those are the highlights of their visit; what we did.

On the whole, it turned out quite well—considering our disparate ways.

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### After they left.

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**July 15, Tuesday.** After I got things back in shape, I put a camp stool on the porch and leaned my head back and rested up, thinking...

Tomorrow I will have been here a month! I think about the kids going back into the freeways and the city. I hope there will be happy memories of my lil cabin in the woods?...

Abbie asked me down for Dennis' birthday Thursday. I accepted with alacrity; be nice to be out again for awhile.

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**July 16, Wednesday.** Rain, rain, rain. And more in the forecast. On my errands around, I stopped and asked a young man in a telephone truck "How much to install a phone?" "Oh, about \$50," he said. But I want to get the electricity in first.

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Surprise! I'd just finished dressing when here's Dennis! alone! He wants to work on the loft floor. So he and I set to work.

It turned out a busy, pleasant day. He did the loft work and built me a little bedside shelf while I got under the house and got things almost all cleaned up down there. He left, leaving me with a new sawdust mess in my just cleaned-up house, but he took a lot of junk with him—the tent, the table, etc.

He also mentioned getting the inspector up now. I told him I'd be down and stay overnight for his birthday, but he rather dampened my excitement about making the trip when he told me about some very near accidents he'd had on the way up from crazy drivers.

I was tickled—Dennis not usually gossipy—about his comments on our guests. "Marylyn acts like she's always at a cocktail party!" he said.

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July 17, Thursday. The day I leave to go to Seattle—wouldn't you know—the sun comes out; will it be nice all the time I'm gone?

Dennis, 34 years old! I can't believe it!

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**Echoes:**

Yesterday Dennis mentioned the hi-fi Mike had made me, sinnging its praises and value. I had to confess I'd given it to the "Goodwill" in a mad moment of moving clean-out. (It didn't work anymore and I hadn't been able to find anybody to fix it or even take an interest in it.)

He was horrified! Said he'd give anything for it! (Now he tells me; and whew! glad Mike didn't ask about it!)

"And all those nice records we had, " he said. "Did you keep them?"

I had to confess not.

I wish I had known he wanted them; or that they had been around to help me decide things in that Jack-Hall-Landlord blow I went through. I had been too crazed to make good decisions. What the kids may not understand is that I forfeited those records because I, personally, couldn't stand to listen to them anymore—too many hurtful, poignant memories and associations.

**Electricity; Still none!** And no word from that guy. I am getting really mad at this run-around going on and on, And light fixtures—my depleted money—I shall have to buy out of what little I have left this month. "Get the best!" they all urge me. "Get what you want!" They don't seem to understand; I haven't the money to get the best. When I shopped, I was horrified at what light fixtures cost!

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I scurry around getting ready to leave for Seattle, but I don't want to get into the rush hour traffic...

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**The glasses.** I rather hastily packed up those nice, fragile, stem-ware wine glasses of mother's Abbie said she'd like to have. I put the box of them on top of my loaded shopping cart and start down the trail to load up the car. Midway on the path—the cart tipped over—and two of the glasses smashed! I could have wept—after treasuring them all those years—!! I felt I'd have to should replace them, as I'd promised them to Abbie.

So, amongst all the other errands I had to do in Monroe before I left I added that one. I went to the bank and got some extra money and rushed around seeking duplicate glasses. Luckily I found some and bought two, feeling rather crestfallen, for they were neither expensive or special as I'd thought mother's to be and I could ill afford either the time or money I was spending on them, but I had promised Abbie.

—Later, when I got to Seattle—"Oh we already have some," she said. "We went ahead and bought some." Crash!(number two).

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Before I left Monroe, I called the electrician's again. They told me that it would be \$200 more to go to a 200 amp circuit, which would bring the bill to over \$1500—more than I had; I was only able to get a \$1000 loan. I told them to go ahead with just a 100 amp. Mike would be mad, he insisting I needed 200 all over. Yes, I would—in the bathroom—for the water heater, but, having no stove or washing machine, etc..I took a chance.

I went on into Seattle.

**July 18, Friday.** My sojourn in Seattle was very pleasant. Even driving the dreaded freeway didn't bother me, for I knew the route, now, and Dennis had driven it enough to warn me of peak traffic times. And, coming back, it was so nice to have only that short hour's drive to the cabin versus those long arduous trips to Vancouver, I even began to get delightful ideas of whipping into Seattle often..."just neighbors"now. It would be easy to break away from my "hermit" life; I'd be able to go in and see people often!

And the weather turned out just fine! And the birthday dinner Abbie cooked was very good. And I left stuffed with food and laden with raspberries from the vines in Ed's yard; and plants to plant at the cabin; and lots of magazines to read. I gave Abbie \$10 toward the yarn for the bedspread she insisted on knitting for me. I enjoyed my walk to the store with the kids, and, later, Dennis and the kids an I sat on the beach at twilight where memories of Ed abounded and yearning for salt water resurged in me.



Dennis and I went on a couple of very successful shopping trips. It was nice to be driven about Seattle and not have to do the driving myself. And it was such a beautiful day! I found my old liking for Seattle coming back and that the old haunts and associations didn't hurt anymore.

And Dennis was in a very good mood. He wanted to go shopping—"Bargain hunting", he said. He even took me "behind scenes" at Sears, where he used to work and where he was gladly greeted by former co-workers. I wondered if he wanted to show his "availability", as he'd need to go back to work in August.

We went shopping at a discount warehouse Dennis knew of. There we found, and got, a big piece of avocado-colored sink counter covering for only \$7. We looked at lighting fixtures, but didn't buy; they were not the kind I wanted. And we looked at second-hand refrigerators and were pleased to find a "possible" for them at about \$200. That was about the price range I wanted to replace theirs, so I could take it, the one too small for them.

It was nice, too, to have the use of a 'free' phone to be able to talk to people. I used it! I was very pleased when Bud and Paula reported that Mike and Marylyn had said I had a beautiful place! that they gave them a glowing account of it.

I talked to Bishop, too; I picked up lost threads with everyone and left very pleased with all the company that said they were going to come to my place: Dennis and Abbie were coming the next Wednesday (Abbie said they wanted to come!); Bishop said they'd come August 2; and Bud and Paula "soon" before August 10, when their oldest daughter and her husband would be in town from back east. I also had a date in September for a big anniversary party in Seattle for Hamblys, friends from Highway days. My social life was picking up! I now felt I could go in to Seattle and people were coming to see our cabin we'd worked so hard on!

I left Seattle in high spirits.

Going back into Monroe, almost asleep at the wheel in lazy bliss, I noted a truck by the highway that had a big sign "Fresh salmon! Only \$2.35 a pound!" Return of my salt water and sea food yens made me stop. The youth said they would be there every day until fall.

"The fish from Westport?" I asked, leery of it being illegal-to-sell fish at that price.

"No! From Lake Washington! The fishladders!"

This was unusual, as was the reported inexplicable sudden run of salmon through the locks. But I drove on elated: Hey! I could have salmon bakes for my guests!

I stopped at Safeway. Some weary-looking, white-faced little old man blocked my way. I was very surprised to find it was Dwayne Case! I'd never seen him look so old or so bad. He acted very strange and I was very puzzled at the remark he made: "What are you doing back in town?"

At the fish counter my yen for seafood was satisfied by getting some shelled fresh clams all ready for chowder. I went home and made some. And that satisfaction was added to a couple of very nice, happy days. Later I changed my clothes and put up a lawn chaise on what I was now calling "the woods (-side) porch" and I lounged there contemplating gratefully the "tent" of wood the kids had gathered for me and upended to dry.

Then I went and planted my scarlet runner beans from my Vancouver triplex garden around the big concrete foundation blocks thinking they would help screen them and look pretty flowering by the red roof.

I was very happy. Everything was fine!

**July 19, Saturday.** I awoke early to an overcast sky. On my agenda were three big things to get done: electricians, PUD to hook up the electricity and the inspectors! And then I could really start moving in!

I began what was becoming my cabin rituals: coffee, and turn on the little heater and lay a fire but not start it until later when I'd use the warmth for dressing, wash up and dishes. The I'd clean up the bedroom first, since, somehow it seemed to have become my front entrance.

Waiting for the cabin to heat up, I think about my neighbors and friends here. There aren't too many—only the Cases and the McNabbs, really. Other people seem to be gone all the time.

Case is different, and not as friendly now that he has his ex-wife there (a strange situation) and she sticks to the house and TV, not liking it up here. The McNabbs have become "too invalid", he not well, and Lu not making her friendly walks with the dog since the dog died. The others nearby—that slummy rented trailer house down there—the people slummy, too. The young Carrolls are unfriendly. Other people, as said, seem never to appear. Prognosis: not too good for a social life and new friends?

I line up my work for the day since it seems I will be alone and not be going out. I finish cleaning under the house; tend the wood, getting it off the porches; organize my cabin papers. I curse at the weather prediction: rain all week end—I wanted that wood to dry. The mail brings me a check for the residue in the credit union: \$418 left after the loan money taken out. Any elation is erased by notice they are buying me more shares with my loan payment, which I do not understand—makes me angry—I shall have to write them.

Later: Something I forgot. Electrician wanted the bathroom ceiling finished, or there's no place to put up the light fixture. Dennis was going to finish it...I go down and saw a piece of wood and put it up...enough to mount a light on. Rain.

**July 20, Sunday.** I sleep in a bit late. But the next day I will have to get up early: the electricians are supposed to come and work.

Later. I regret I don't have the linoleum and the stuff for the walls yet as this would be the time to do it while everything is stripped down. Too bad I had to move before things finished up; to think that I have to move all that stuff again!

A nice warm day...I plant onions and beans outside...nice. I work hard and then take naps...nice. Nice to wake up to birdsong and privacy and be able to work on, uninterrupted. I dismantled the bathroom, and then went down to where Dennis had planted the grass. it was hot down there! I lay and soaked up the sun and enjoyed the privacy. What a far cry from my crowded, neighborinfested Vancouver days!...I plant my asparagus roots out there...

Privacy, but not quiet. The Carrolls have been working with a chain saw all day, with loud, cheapy music going. I sneak down and peek through the brush; Heavens! looks like they are cutting down the whole forest!

I work till 5, getting all spaces cleared for the electricians. Then I have a blissful nap on the porch in the sun. I've gotten most of that rotten cedar off the porch, but I too tired to stack the wood the kids cut...I mark stations for this vicinity on my radio...

I survey my day's work; there are piles of junk all over the place, but orderly piles—one pile all the kitchen stuff, and so on. I got the counter cleared for Dennis to put the sink covering on....

I hope the electricians come...after all that...

**July 21, Monday. Electrical day...**I hope they will come...this dragging on and on and all these delays...

I don't know whether to stay here while they work or just get lost. One thing I am still not sure of: does that estimate include the heaters, or not? it will be a financial calamity for me if not. I find myself being irked by all these inspectors and codes which add up to so much delay, Isn't there such a thing as good craftsmanship any more? Where are the kind of men that one can trust and be sure that he will do the best job of which he is able? I wonder if Paul Revere had nosy inspectors and "policemen" checking on his work and the quality of it? I find I don't resent it when they are helping, but I sure resent their dictating!

I look at the electrician's estimate again...and panic. It says "wiring"; does that mean only the wiring and I have to furnish everything else, the fixtures, the smoke alarm, the porch lights, and the heaters? it seems that an estimate should be better itemized.

9:40 a.m. I am furious! No sign of the workmen. What kind of hours do they keep anyway? Here I'd gotten up and dressed, gotten everything dismantled for them, forfeiting eating so as to be ready and...no show! Anger gave me a nicotine fit. I decided I'd run down to Case's and buy a pack of cigs off him and call the electricians and see "what gives".

I put a note on the door: "back in fifteen minutes" and went. No luck. No signs of life at either Case's or McNabb's. I raced down to the Sultan store. It was a gorgeous day and, for the first time, I noticed one can see Mt. Rainer looming up as one goes down one part of the road.

At the store I bought cigs and then tried to phone on the doorless pay phone outside. had no luck getting through. I asked operator's help. Still no luck. Just then a telephone truck drove up. "How do you work this phone?" I asked.

"Dunno," he said. "Say, I'm lost. Where am I?"

I got h on his way and then, finally!—operator. Before I even got any connection, she said "That will be 85¢ for one minute." (Monroe is 8 miles away.)

"Forget it!" I cried and slammed up the phone and raced on back.

There seemed to be no sign of electricians. Case was out in his yard. I ask<sup>ed</sup> him. "Haven't seen them," he said "Come on in and have a cup of coffee."

"Can't," I say, "expecting them..."

I went go back to cabin. There was no sign of them. And nothing written on my note. I was furious! Would this never end!? I sighed and decided to go back to Case's and have coffee and phone again. I did. Gal on phone says, "Oh, I guess they are on their way..." She didn't sound too sure.

About 10:40 a.m. Two guys came, a cute little older guy, merry, slight, and a bigger nice young one. "Nice in here," they said as they walked up the trail. I took them in and checked the estimate with them. "Oh, they buy the heaters, but I buy all the light fixtures."... Dammit! Now they've gone off to lunch! I decided I might as well go shopping?

6:10 p.m. It turned out a big day! Aside from which on the news they said the schools were let out because of the heat. Seemed odd to me because it was on 80°.

I'd waited for the guys to come back. When they did I told them the changes I wanted and checked with them where to shop for fixtures. "Everett," they said. I groaned. And then checked their work and hours plan for the day and then told them I was leaving to go shopping and, if I didn't get back before they left, I'd see them the next day. And I left—starving!

I stopped at Case's and retrieved my note pad I'd left there and checked with him about the places he shopped for materials, and headed for Monroe, having to detour where they were re-surfacing the road.

In Monroe, I stopped in at the bakery "Deli" in Monroe's dreary little "Mall" and got a snack to eat. It was hot as hell in the car and I sweltered in my grubby working clothes. I went on to the bank, where I cashed a check for \$30 to get me through the rest of the month, leaving \$100 to buy four swivel lights and two porch lights...whenever I'd be able to get into Everett.

I debated then if I should go on to PUD and talk to the gal about the electrical hook up or whether to wait and talk to Dennis? I decided to go. Did.

And cursed a blue streak. The door was locked; gal out to lunch. I was beginning to wonder if Monroe people ever got any work done? But someone signaled me to come in..the gal was just back? She seemed to recognize me (though I don't know how she did, the dirty, disheveled old woman in "grubbies" I was that day).

"Oh yes," she assured me when I asked about getting the wiring hooked up. "only two...three days for that kind of service." Feeling reassured, I left and got gas...to go to Everett.

I stopped in Snohomish on the way and ran around trying to find electrical fixtures places there. Having no luck, I went on into Everett. I had no trouble finding the place I'd been referred to. It loomed very posh and prosperous looking—one of those places where... "If Modom will please wait?" while gorgeously uniformed young women went charmingly around serving "coffee? or lemonade?" to very prosperous looking customers.

I waited, feeling a perfect fool in my sweat and dirt and grubbies. It was so hot! And I was so thirsty! And nobody offered me any lemonade! While ignored, I prowled around and found and decided on what I wanted. Finally, a cool young woman approached me, "Yes?"

I indicated the swivel lights. "You want one?"

"No, I want four, and those..." (the porch lights.)

Again. "One?"

"No, two!" My purchase was amounting to some \$71. "How much do I have to buy to get some lemonade?" I asked, panting.

"Oh my! It's all gone! But let me go and get you some." She brought me some. She was suddenly very nice. "How come you moved to Monroe?" she asked me. I summed up the story...hastily. I drank the lemonade, then took my purchases to the car and then—whoops! went back in and got my sales slip. And I was very surprised; actually, this posh service place's prices matched those in Sears' catalog! I left, happy, kidding myself I'd gotten better lights for the same price.

I headed home, stopping in Snohomish for food and ice, where I discovered a discount market where prices were much cheaper than in Monroe's no-competition "captive market" stores. This pleased me with hopes for savings on food bills.

I got back to the cabin beat with heat and dripping wet with sweat. It seemed nice to get back in the tall, cool trees again.

And I was very anxious to see what my electrician guys had done in my absence. The first thing I noticed was that there was no service panel up on the porch. They had told me it'd come that day. I'd kidded them, as I left, about "cost over run." "What's that?" they'd asked me.

"Why, it means more than the bid!" I'd said. But, despite that crack, I'd felt we had rapport, and I their respect? my pulling weight with them about "our Highway Dept. connections." I hadn't felt mistrust with them.

I went in. The place was a mess! There were wires and sawdust all over the place! I went around checking on what they'd done. They had not moved the plug outlet boxes back as I'd asked them to do. (This was important, for Dennis had built for his "T&G" paneling; it was only a matter of, say an inch.) But the way they had done them—for the sheet rock usually used on their jobs—it meant that the boxes would not be flush with the walls the way we had designed and built. I laughed ruefully: even for \$1300 "plus" and the rest of my life paying for it, I can't have what I want!

I checked further. Migawd! I had double plugs all over the place! (code) There were 4 in the loft (where I'd figured I wouldn't need them) but where I very much wanted them—in the kitchen—I seemed to have only one? And all that money I'd just spent on swivel lights for the kitchen. (They were not cheap!) and "code says you have to have a light on the stairway" so I'd gotten one more.

[Ok ok ok. All that agony I'd sweated designing my kitchen, determined, after all the dingy, unlighted kitchens I'd lived in, I will have light when I cook! ok. the best idea I could come up with (of things the market offered at that time) was...swivel lights.]

I looked at what they'd done and nearly sat down and wept. How in thehell can you swivel a light you can't even reach? The outlets were about 6 feet up on the wall (and I'm a mere 5'3") and the switches—I'd worked so hard to put them in convenient places...Oh no! They'd put them where they wanted them.

I was so hot, so tired—hysterical. I just went and sat on the back stoop and thought of "stupes!"

And then, a bit rested, I went out and lugged all that stuff in, fixed the ice in the ice chest and then—so hot I thought I'd die I just stripped and ran around trying to find my clothes. No? I grabbed the first thing that came to hand, one of those aprons I'd made to wear to work... "jolie jupons" I called them...like a short child's pinafore. And I ran around putting my meat on to cook. And then, puzzled—what in hell was that leaking around the toilet? I crawled under the house to investigate, my bare ass hanging out. (It felt very good!)



The meat I'd put on to cook was corned beef (could simmer forever) so...I lay down on (woods) porch, not caring whether I went to sleep or not, and thought about things:

While I'd waited for those guys, I'd used the time to rearrange my stock of wood...had gotten it where I wanted it...

Those guys—echoes: "You **should** have a light on the stairs," the little dark man said.

"I know, I know," I said, wearily.

"They might call you on it," he said. (Code) "But you wanta try it without?"

"No, no," I said, "Go ahead...(wire it)"

"You don't need it," he said..."But...well you figure it out."

"Ok, ok," I'd said, tired of all the quibbling.

The young guy...later. "I worked in District 1 (Seattle). We worked on that traffic light at the intersection. I noticed your drawing upstairs."

"Oh?" I glowed. "Oh, what's your name?"

"Schwartz. Ed Schwartz."

"Uh...familiar..." I said (but it wasn't.)

I went to sleep on the porch. Later, when I woke up, it was so hot, that I just wandered around, nearly naked, looking at what those guys had done, and inwardly cursing (poorwork! poorwork!) And feeling so little and thwarted trying to reach to where those swivel lights had to go...

"Where's your boss?" I'd asked them. "His name is Darwin?) Somehow the name amused me. "Oh...dunno...'unavailable'..." That so good-lookin' boss of theirs, all charm and "better bid" cant...

I gave up on that day and fell into bed early.

**July 22, Tuesday.** Wake...to another hot day? Wish I could go swimming, but can't get to my suit packed away. Electrician today. Wish I had Mike or Dennis here to help me with them; afraid I'm being ripped off again.

**12:10 p.m. Electrician came.** I explained. He wants to talk to Dennis tomorrow. He left. He said he'd be back.

I go to Case's for coffee and to McNabb's to phone. I get Abbie. She says they will come tomorrow.

He did come back. He got the service panel up! **Hurray!** At last! Nice guy. I had fun talking to him. Marsh—his name.

I went down and gossiped with McNabbs again.

After the electrician left, I noticed there was fungus on the particle board around the sink. I mixed some of that dangerous fungicide Dennis had given me and washed it down so it could dry while the weather was hot.

Before I did this, because it was so hot, I'd dug out my swimming gear and stripped down and put on my suit with just that wrap-around skirt I'd made to go with it and put my thongs on my feet.

It felt so good! Summertime! At last!

I felt like a witch as I brewed that pail of poison, but a good witch? For I made a "Mr. Yuk" sign to put on the pail so the kids wouldn't get into it and I wondered if they'd like to go swimming the next day?



**The electrical panel up!** I thought I'd never see the day! They gave me a 200amp panel for the price of a 100 amp—so they said. I gloated. "We'll have you all in and inspected tomorrow!" Marsh had said. I like him; you can kid with him. And he's a real worker. I just sat on Dennis' wood-splitting block and watched him and questioned him and admired. "Oh wow!" I kept saying. He loved it!

"Hey!" I cried. All those pretty buttons! How many circuits do I have?"

"How many did you figure?" he asked.

"Ten!" Right on! There were ten buttons.

**That evening** I opened all my casement windows, so long dreamed about at last a fact, and let all the nice, cool breeze blow through. And enjoyed the peace and quiet—until—I had to turn the lights off: **the moths!**

**On the news:** Mt. St. Helens blew up again...a big one. They said the ash was heading for Yakima again. I felt blessed to be out of **that!**

It was a great day!

**July 23, Wednesday.** My hopes of a day in the pool dashed by waking to rain. Although the radio said the sun might be out by noon, that didn't help much, for that wouldn't give the pool time to warm, now that the heating apparatus didn't work. The McNabbs claimed the pool warmed to 78° by just the sun alone, but all that tree-surround-three sides it began to be shady by mid-afternoon.

I got up early to start to prepare for a busy day; the family and the electricians and Dennis working all in the same day! I wished I'd been able to get the ceiling fixtures so they could put them in, for they said they'd be through today. And I supposed Dennis and that guy would have to buy some more 2x4's to use to move out those outlets..and I'd hoped Dennis could get that sink counter top on..I'd cleared it ready for, but there'd be no room for anybody to work; they'd all be in each other's way....

I went down to post a change of address in the mail box for Social Security. Jolted! My car wasn't there!—until I remembered I'd forgotten to put it back in after the guys left...And I had no fruit for breakfast...hey! I picked blackberries!

**That evening. 9:25 p.m.** Ye gods, what a day! Fun, but utter chaos. The kids left about half an hour ago.

The sun never did come out. It just...didn't rain. The kids arrived about 10—foodless. The electrician didn't show until about 11. He and Dennis stood around and hassled about placing those outlets differently. He also said the inspector could'nt make it until Friday; and then he flew off on "an emergency call from Gold Bar," saying he'd be back. He never came back. And so there I was—all ready, and all that mess,—and put off again! It just seemed to go on and on and on...forever...

Not knowing if that guy would be back, Dennis started fussing at me about where to put the lights. I was weary of the whole thing by then, and the kids were cross and fussy, so I finally left Dennis some money for the 2x4's and Abbie and I took the kids and left him doing odds and ends chores, and we went to the store to get food.

We bought \$27 worth of stuff altogether. This about blew my reserve. I'd gotten a notice of a raise in retirement income in the mail that morning...it would help—but a whole \$8 a month!—I didn't exactly feel rich!

When we got back, the guy still hadn't showed up and the kids were fussing about going swimming. So, in spite of the glum weather, Abbie and I took the kids down to the pool and I went in with them. But it was no fun; it was too cold. I gave up and got out and just watched the kids and then showered and washed my hair and then—just as we left—the sun came out. Sort of.

Back at the cabin the electrician still hadn't showed up. Dennis had fixed the railing and the counter frame in the kitchen. The place was a mess. We all went down to the picnic area and sat around and drank wine and beer. It was cold, even with the bonfire the kids insisted we build. Then Abbie and I got dinner and we ate it down there. They just **gobbled** it all up—they so hungry! and broke!

Then we sat around the fire, lazy. That part was fun. And then the kids left. They said they wouldn't be back till maybe Wednesday—something about Godfrey and looking for land—that they might stop on their way back. (If they did, they'd be broke and hungry again, as Dennis said he'd discovered that his unemployment would run out in 3 weeks instead of the year he'd thought.)

Added to the chaos left me, Dennis had tipped over the food shelf in the cabin while the rest of us down by the fire. Crash!—but nothing was broken—just stuff scattered all over. That was mess enough; I was glad we'd been able to talk Dennis out of felling that tree. I'd had it with messes!

**Recalls:**

- \* They had found a strange, white, ghostly "blossom" in the woods. I got out my book and all gathered round as we tried to identify it—Sarah giggling away in her T-shirt with "giggle, giggle, giggle" written all over it.
- "There it is!" Dennis cried.
- "Fungus—Indian pipe—ghostplant", I read.

\*At one point, the radio had come blating on: "The Mt. St. Helens ash from May 18th has now gone two times around the world. The ash this time—from this latest eruption—is going clear into Canada!"

"We got out just in time," I said to Dennis.

"Yeah," he said.

\*Dennis had improved the porch railings, done the sink counter and changed the kitchen spotlights. "Was redundant!" he cried, "to have them all pointing the same way! Tell the guy if he doesn't like what I did...I'll change it."

\*I'd laughed, watching Dennis, so big and tall, eyeballing with that little runt, Marsh...

\*As they left—"You've done a good job!" I told Dennis.

He took a piece of the cedar he'd split. "Gonna make you a toilet paper holder," he said.

"Well, now I'm enjoying! I feel like I'm being alive again!" I'd said.

"We've noticed the difference," they commented.

**July 24, Thursday.** I wake up wanting to weep when I see the bright sun after the guests go—and that cold, grey day when we wanted to go swimming. (How come there's no sun in here in the mornings?" I'd asked Dennis. "The leaves," he'd said.)

I start wondering: The electricians: Is that guy going to come back today...or not? Do I stay here and wait, or am I free to leave? Everyone says it seems so strange they don't finish up one job before they go on to another. Indeed it does! When did they first come? Monday? I quote them: "It will only take a day or so." But they are taking all week to get this "little job" done! And they come and go—one never knows when they'll be there or leave...or what...

I go down and pick berries for breakfast. It sure takes a lot of work just to get a few!...I am furious that I can't find the machete...!

**1:30 p.m.** Such a lovely day! I regret it wasted on cleaning and organizing the kitchen...am tired, bored, lonesome...

**3 p.m.**...am reading on my "lawn"...startled by cracklings of brush..and footsteps in our woods. Carroll's dog barks. Then there is a rush of footsteps and it sounds like someone saying "Shh! Shh!" I am scared! I wish more than ever that I had the machete. A small dog crosses our picnic area. There is more of the same...footsteps... a big white dog goes through our land. But that is all. I return to work.

**7:17 p.m.** Sunset. I'm awfully tired, but awfully happy. I got all the downstairs and porches cleaned and organized. I didn't realize how tired I was till I "ran" down to the store..I plant my ivy from Vancouver on a mossy stump...see what it does...What is this animal invasion today? Now a white cat comes strolling through...

I never did find the machete. Blows my mind. It isn't that I couldn't get another, but that one has sentiment—a story to it. It was the first tool I bought for the cabin—(I hope I told the story someplace? happening on it in that pawn shop—?) There are only two dim clues—Dennis asking to borrow it once—but he never found it—and that (retarded) pest kid of Parker's down the street who coveted it so...

**Evening:** Radio is going on about Seafair in Seattle and all the traffic accidents, but not to worry? Dennis and Abbie are off on a trip for a week.

**July 25, Friday.** I wake full of apprehension and tension—on edge. And then realize why: the electricians...the electrical inspector...and the PUD hookup. Also, no money for the rest of the month. And the phone guy...coming Monday?...And Wednesday Dennis and the framing inspector...and Dennis and Abbie broke and jobless...and Bishop coming Saturday—when I'm broke? And all this all up in the air and my income and outlay all confused...and I promised the kids I'd buy them a refrigerator the first of the month...

Radio: "Excellent weather through Tuesday." Curse. Swimming weather...and only me to go? No! Pool be crowded—week-end; not me want to bare my "old ladyness!"

Electricians: It's Friday. The electrician said the inspector would come Friday. But how can he inspect if they haven't gotten anything done? I suppose if they don't show I'll have to go down and call them again...But when is the work day over? About 4:30?...I wonder why those guys don't have their name on their panel truck like most service outlets do—a form of advertising?...I fret and worry...

5:40 p.m. I'm exhausted. The weather was hot and sunny today, but not as warm as yesterday—hazy. This morning, I barely had time to throw some clothes over my bareness when I thought I heard footsteps—and here, without any warning or knocking—walked in the young assistant electrician, Mike. He was loaded with tools. And then here came Marsh.

They both set to work frantically, taking over the whole place, so that I couldn't even fix myself breakfast. I stood around trying to nab Marsh and tell him about the changes Dennis and I had decided on. But it took a long time; they were too frantic. When I did finally catch him, he quibbled a bit, but then he said "Ok." I took my tools and fled to work on cleaning out my "front lawn" and to get out of their way.

Hungry and tired, I was glad when they announced about 11:30 that they were going to lunch. This day they were not any fun at all, like Marsh had been the other day. They were merely...polite. I sneaked in and fixed a sandwich and then went back out to battle blackberry briars in the driveway. It seemed to me they sure were taking a long lunch hour...

I was cheered when the garbage collector—nice young man—late with his pick up, called out friendly-like, "How's the A-frame going?" even though I hadn't approached him.

I was through with that job and wandering around aimlessly trying to think of something to do when the electricians came back.

"Inspector been here?" asked Marsh.

"Nope."

They began their frenzy again. I wandered around tired and sleepy. I would have gone out to lounge chair in the woods, but I wanted to be there when the inspector came. I finally decided to go down and wash the volcanic ash off my car, even though it was hot as hell down there; at least I'd know when he came.

I checked with Marsh before I went out, after putting my permits on the table. "Who's the inspector? Bob...uh...Mecord?" (He the man I'd talked to in getting the permit.) "Yeah."

Well, it was 2 p.m. before a state car with an antenna on it rolled into the driveway behind the electrician's truck. I had moved my car out to let them in. I just plain advanced on that guy. He was a nice-looking, well-dressed, genial-looking, middle-aged guy.

"I knew where to come!" he said, as I walked him in, giving my usual cue about my connections with the Highway Department. "I've been here before!"

"Oh?" I said.

"...the temporary permit," he said.

Mmmm. For some reason, my spirits lifted and my sense of humor came back. "Jiggers!" I cried to guys, "Here he is!"

And then it was fun! He pretended to give Marsh a bad time. I wasn't too sure if they were really kidding, but I joined in and made quips and cracks. I was sort of ignored, but I felt rapport with this inspector. (State office guys I was used to.)

"Where's the permit?" he snotted at Marsh.

"Why...uh...it's on the table," I said. "And it has your card on it!"

"You're supposed to fill this out and sign it!" he chided Marsh...

Who said, "...Oh?" and then "Hey! why don't you drop by after work and have..."

They went on talking, kidding, I assumed, and I played along with (the game.)

The inspector just made a cursory look around. His only question was to Marsh, "You're going to put in a 3-way switch for that stair light?"

"Oh sure! sure!" Marsh had said.

And then we three leaned on Dennis' new front? back? railing and chatted. Vacations...and "You get a cost of living raise?" I asked him..and so on...

Meerd was talking to Marsh: "I knew where the place was. Darwin (the electricians' boss) gave me the wrong address," he was explaining, and then, turning to me, "Everybody's talking about your place!...Even Markley." I made a face. "Oh, all good!" he said.

"Even...Markley?" I bleated.

"Oh yes!"

"Well, he jumped his price on us," I said. They laughed.

"His wife wanted a vacation!" they said.... We chatted on...

I was amazed at the change in Marsh; when he'd been working here—just he and I alone here—he'd been gay, joking—a bit smart-alecky. Now he was suddenly very obsequious around these guys, and I got a feeling he was trying very hard to "impress" me somehow.

Bob gave us his OK. "I'll turn it in Wednesday," he said.

"Wednesday!?" I wailed. "Oh, please! 3 years we've been working on this! I need a bath!"

"Thought I smelled something!" he laughed.

Later, when Bob had left, Marsh asked me, "When did you know Bob?"

"Why...why...I never...did," I said, at a loss, "...just Highway people...(clan)".

So, Bob left. I went out and worked on all that volcanic ash on the car some more, suddenly feeling in a much brighter mood. I had just gotten through—it was 3 p.m.—when Marsh called out, "We're leaving!"

I dropped everything and ran back in. "Anything to sign?"

"No. Suggest you go down to PUD Monday...they might (expedite things)..."

Marsh acted a little too rushed as he left.

I had a feeling maybe something left undone? So, weary after seeing them off, I went back to the cabin to check things out.

Cripes! There were no switches for the stair light and...and...other things.

I meant to check it all out, but I was hot! tired! dirty! And I wanted to celebrate! Three years this had been going on, but maybe?...in one more week?

I wanted...a cool beer. I wanted very much to gloat or rejoice with someone. I tried to think of an excuse to drop in on Cases or McNabbs—maybe—advice? (I'd been given dire warnings about the difficulties of connecting the hot water tank.)

I cleaned up and got in the car and set out. There was no one home at Cases', and I found myself too tired and hungry to stop at McNabb's. I went on down to the store and bought a 6-pack and hungrily devoured an ice cream bar, the price of which had gone up 35¢ since I'd last bought one. And then I stopped at McNabb's on the way back.

There, we sat and chatted awhile—till I felt rested enough to call the kids. Noah called Dennis to the phone.

"Oh, I was hoping you'd call! We almost came up there!"

"All's ok," I said—and told him, too weary to summon excitement.

But Dennis was so glad! "What'd they say about the place?" he asked.

"Oh, they said we were 'famous'," I said. Dennis chuckled.

When I was through with my call, Marv said, "That water tank—me—I could check it."

"Why, sure," I said, "I'll drive you up." And I did. They both went with me.

At the cabin they both went in and fussed with the thing—and fought so with each other I was sorry I'd agreed to let them come. They couldn't do anything with it; it still leaked. I said we'd leave it for Dennis.

I had asked them for a rake so I could move that gravel and make room for two cars out there, but we had forgotten it. But some remark of Lu's about a shovel made me realize I might use my snow shovel, so I let it go.

"I like it here!" Marv cried. "It's cool!" (meaning temperature).

"Oh, you!" Lu began, for he was the one who claimed he did not like trees. Then they got into another marital spat, making me glad I wasn't married any more.

They left, saying they didn't mind walking down the hill.

I tried the snow shovel and found it would work, but I was too weary to do anything about it then. I went in and opened a beer and stood looking at the heaters:

"Oh, they're neat!" I'd told Marsh. "Are they 5000 watts?"

"...er, no," he said, "1450. 5000 are commercial heaters."

I surveyed the mess they'd left, but...I was just too tired.

I'd asked Bob, the inspector, when we walked in, "How many A-frames have you checked out in Snohomish County?"

"Oh, lots!" he said, a certain grim tone in his voice surprising me. "But, they're all different." But he added no more.

"Well," I chattered on, "Snohomish County sure gave us a bad time!"

I drank my beer and fell into bed. The electricity was in at last—almost.

**July 26, Saturday.** I woke early, so tired I just wanted to roll over and sleep the day away; or, I just wanted to get away from it all for a day or so. But there was no place to go, and I decided I'd better stay with it while the weather was nice and try to get it all back in order again before the last week before it would be in working order. Besides, I was anxious to get it done, as I needed to get to my desk and paper work. So I got up and got with it.

Soon I was working again, patching up the hole in the floor we'd just gotten all sealed; battling heavy things like that big old bed—having the lamp fall down—struggling, struggling...I had slashed my toe when I tried out the snow shovel...that didn't help matters...

It would be another week before I could flick switches and turn on lights. It had all certainly taken patience; patience with all the bureaucrats, tradesmen, delays, etc. etc.

Nor had I been cheered by Lu adding new problems by saying, "Well! You're going to have a lot of cold air going under that cabin! You're going to put 'skirts' around it, aren't you?" (as they do mobile homes.) I hadn't thought of insulation! And I wondered how they could say we needed it when I could no longer hear birdsong from inside, and the heat out there didn't seem to be getting inside.

I took time out from my tasks and put gloves on and went down and picked blackberries to use up the cream that was about to go sour, the ice gone. I just went in my robe and white hair all awry and...whoops!...Carrolls were out in the cul-de-sac "training"—though it looked more like beating to me—their dog. So I hid until they left in their car. And then I began to pick berries, laughing at the image I must have made—crazy old woman in her nightgown messing around in the bushes! But it was fun! the sun was warm on my back; birds were singing; free food for the picking—even if thorns were clawing at me like insistent relatives—crazy, but fun. And a far cry from the slum on Simpson Avenue!

I went back in and slept for about an hour and a half. I woke feeling depressed and lonesome and finding I'd lost interest in getting things in order. Besides, I wondered if I should leave it all dismantled till after the framing inspection, since I wasn't supposed to be living in the place. That hassle to come yet. Maybe that was why I felt depressed?... Would it never end?

2 p.m. Been working hard. But all I have finished is the bathroom put together. Am tired and hungry and discouraged. The hot water tank is leaking around the bottom—(I'll never have hot water!) It's such a nice day and I want to be outside, but I feel I should work on in here, for Monday I will have to go to town, and then...those guys coming?...and Saturday I'll have to be ready for Bishop coming.

4:14 p.m. Ye gods! a man coming down the trail! And me looking like...I have only a loose sun dress on and my hair pulled up in a rubber band...!

The man calls out, "Nice A-frame you have here!" That pleased me.

Well, it turned out to be a fresh, unctuous, sticky real estate man looking for lot #8—a "charming" drunken salesman reeking of liquor. I showed him where lot #8 would be, fending off his arm-slapping familiarity. He took my name and gave me his card and said he'd be glad to be of service at any time, although I could not think of why I'd need the services of a real estate agent.

6:30 p.m. before I was through, after returning to my work. I had the downstairs in order and the kitchen "roughed in". The rest would have to wait till Dennis fixed the counter. My back was killing me from moving all that heavy stuff. The thermometer read 82° as the sun, setting behind the trees, shown in on the table and me. It was very pleasant. I had closed and locked the entrance way door and fixed the windows so I could open them by merely loosening Dennis' screws. The (west) door opened onto my new "cribbed in" porch; I felt safe and cozy.

The thought went through my head that some people drive one hundred miles or more to enjoy what I had. The birds: I heard an owl? Or a dove? And a flicker? And a house wren? flew right past me to a nest in a porch joist as if I didn't even exist—fearless. And a big bird flapped off a branch down there. And a robin had also walked right up to me, perfectly fearless.

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**Cabin work:** Because of the position of the heater, I had to rearrange the bedroom; so it is not according to my plans. Neither is having the bedroom door become the front entrance! But the rearranging ended in the bedroom looking more like a den. So this is good.

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**The electricians' work:** I find myself angry. First, I was unable to find any off switch upstairs for the stair light. Then I had assumed they'd run the wires between the rafters. No. They assume all houses will be finished in sheet rock, so they did it the easiest way; the result is that I have an ugly maze of wires all over the walls. Too, they claimed they did not want to cut into the rafters, as they were the supports of house. Yes,, but they sure made swiss cheese out of the rest of Dennis' careful carpentry. And, the wire nd copper wire I cleaned up today—they sure aren't frugal with my money!

Dogs. Lu was so upset about my report of those two dogs, the small black and the big white. "Nobody has those kinds around here!" she'd said.

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**Evening.** I sit and enjoy. Everything seems white around here:white moths, white butterflies, white blossoms. I can't see the moon for the leaves now. I wonder if in winter, when the leaves are gone, I'll be able to see the moon and stars—and the first snowfall—I find myself looking forward to that. The alders are gently swaying as if in time to th e quiet music of the radio..I am in the chaise longue on the porch, the seat of which reminds me of an airplane seat, so tired and my back aching so. I wish a nice airline hostess would bring me a nice steak dinner...but all I had today was cold beans..I find myself dozing off...

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**July 27, Sunday.** I wake to the woods and cabin bathed in sunlight. I can't believe the thermometer. I thought it was broken when it stayed at 80° yesterday. Now it reads 70°. I don't believe that, either,for it's cold in the cabin. But it will be nice to be able to open the windows; the insects are not all that bad yet.

It is nice to get up to everything orderly and "to hand". Today I want to get to the loft and my desk. This week I'm going to have to really stretch my few remaining dollars. And I have some grim tasks ahead: PUD, telephone, inspectors; write a nasty letter about my car insurance up so; Dennis coming up to do some more work on the kitchen counter will mean I'll have some more messes to clean up.Then there's the water heater leak problem. The rush on Friday to get ready for the expected visit from Bishop and his family (bet they'll beg out.) Sad tales to listen to about Dennis and Abbie and their troubles; check with the electricians about that switch; write Mike and pay for the electricity; get Dennis to bring that wood, even though I have no place to store it. Friday go do a wash...

Lu is right? That chill seems to come in through the floor?...I sigh. But maybe I'll soon have electricity and hot water..and maybe we'll pass inspection. And maybe I'll be able to get by on my money...and... The beans and onions I planted have sprouted!...I get up and start to work.

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**11:15 a.m.** Have been having rather fun! Needed clean underwear so washed some out and then went down and put a clothesline up between the trees down there where the kids had their swing. The sun shines in there more—and my intimate garments cannot be seen from cabin! It's very nice out there. I discover a bird's nest low in the trees where I put the line up..and a clump of mushrooms!

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I went back and made pancakes for breakfast. They tasted good. I sat and enjoyed the beauty of the woods reflected on the panes of the opened windows so that it looked as if the woods were in the house, too. It was really as picturesque as I had imagined it would be. The thermometer went back up to 80° again.

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6-7 p.m. I am sitting at the picnic table. The afternoon was fun, too. I felt like a damn kid dressed only in those too-big boots and a sundress pinafore and flies biting at my fat bare knees. Those flies! Such a nuisance! I wished I could flick my skin or twitch a tail the way horses do! I found the creek hard to work in—too boggy. But that's what I was trying to do—not channel change it—but get the water flowing so that it would quit being such a mosquito birthplace.

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I went back to the cabin, weary, but I changed my clothes and went to the store. I enjoyed the scenic drive down and appreciated the sanctuary of my cabin even more as the radio talked of "four hour waits to get on the ferries" and I found the highway bumper to bumper cars full of machotypes and bummy people.

In the store, wondering how I was going to get through the month without money, I asked the gal if they had charge accounts. "Uhh...No," she said. I headed back, thankful for my nice place and for what a perfect day it was!

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Back, I lay down in my "front yard", face down, sun on my back—lazy-dozing—sleep in the sun... Then I got spray out of car and sprayed weeds along the trail and went back in.

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And made myself tackle that loft. It was darned hard work. It seemed like everything weighed a ton. First, I had to move the bed Dennis had concocted. He had built a heavy frame for those old box springs and mattress from Ed's house. It was heavy and there were no hand holds. It was a struggle to move it. And then I had to move those large, heavy sheets of plastic wall board Dennis had laid flat on the floor and under other things. It weighed tons and was ornery to move. I finally managed to lean it up against the rafters—only that blocked out the light from the windows. And then I fought all those big boxes of papers "to go through sometime"—the ones I'd marked "heavy" for Dennis! and here I was trying to move them! And then I tackled for the umpteenth time in my life all my heavy, cumbersome portfolios of drawings and artwork.

I kept at it because I had a deadline to meet: I simply had to get to my desk and set things up so I could pay some bills. I puffed and groaned and worked, reminding myself that this was the moment I'd waited for all my life: my own loft! at last! A place to stash away all this junk that I'd been moving and battling with all these years—papers, drawings, diaries, art desk, art tools, boxes of family keepsakes and papers—at last I'd have a place to store them all and not have to move them again!

I was hysterical with weariness as I tried to commemorate the occasion by trying to hang a few of my best drawings. But the slanted "walls" of the A-frame were "impossible" and the nails wouldn't go in or work—I was weeping before I got through and too weary even to consider any desk work (it would have to wait till the morrow). But I was surprised how little room that stuff took up once it was organized into one place!

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I retreated to the west porch and the lounge out there and a rest. But I was too bumbling weary; I knocked over my treasured ivy plant and spilled dirt all over...

I fell asleep out there and it was eleven when I woke but there was a moon and the radio was softly playing...

I managed to get to bed and then woke later in the wee sma' hours and picked things up a bit and fixed my hair. It was almost dawn before I tumbled into bed, very tired, but with a good feeling: I'm moved in! the big, hard jobs are over! And the place was beginning to feel familiar. I felt as if I wrapped it around myself—my home.

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**July 28, Monday** I wake to sunshine, which I realize I'll miss when it goes. This day I have to go to Monroe on "business". I decide to dig out some good clothes and go down to the club and take a shower and dress up; I've been in grubbies for too long—feel the need of a change.

Later, though ready to go, I find myself stopping to clean windows...because the sun was shining on them made a good time to do it. Besides, to gloat on my hard-won casement windows—I love them so! And I breathe in all the fresh air and beauty here... so good!

I went down and showered. And that felt so good! Lu was there and chatty. She had bad news; it seems they found something wrong with the swimming pool. I told her about the real estate man. She agreed that he was just prying.

Back at the cabin, I gloat about how nice it is there in my "driveway" off the cul-de-sac, where I park my car—so private, after all those years and years of public parking. And my very own blackberry patch! I've gotten the gravel scattered enough and my car farther in so that there's almost room for two cars in there.

I go in and dress in my blue suit, noting with satisfaction that I am thinner. I eat, though there is nothing but bread to toast left.

**The trip to town.** I stopped at McNabb's to phone the telephone company. The card they sent me said to call "Johnnie". I was astounded to find "Johnnie" was a woman when all I could get was their answering service. Angry at not being able to complete any business with them I gave up phoning; I'd have to write.

I was delighted when McNabbs told me of a discount market where I wouldn't have to pay those exorbitant "recreation area" prices.

I went on into Monroe, again enjoying the pretty road and the nice weather. But I was late getting there, for I'd delayed and battled papers and my financial situation at my desk. The cabin fund was getting very low; I had only about \$250 left in it for August and I owed it \$134 for my move. When I went to the bank, there was only \$5 left!

I went to the "OK Electric" office and had a nice chat with the gals there. They said that Marsh was not at work that day; and that they'd come up and finish the job "sometime." Then I hurried to PUD before they closed at 5. There I tried to joke with the woman, but she was "stiffish". Again I was told they'd be up "sometime."

My business over, though, actually, nothing much accomplished, I went and shopped **very carefully** with my \$5 left. At the bakery where a loaf of day old bread was cheaper, gave me leeway enough to treat myself to a cup of coffee and a doughnut. I sat down at one of their little tables there and tried to socialize with the people about me, but I got no takers. So I borrowed a paper from a couple and sat and read and enjoyed myself anyway, music softly playing one of my favorite songs.

Then to the hardware to splurge 59¢! on some pipe repair stuff in case Dennis does come up and wants to fix that water heater. Then I into Safeway where I hid in corners and counted my pennies and then bought...toilet paper 43¢...ice 60¢...eggs 45¢..canned ham spread 33¢. Deciding that would be enough to tide me over, I approached the check-out counter, trembling. Whew! I had 85¢ left over! I almost wept as I sat in the car and counted it.

**Back home.** Before I went in I set my car radio to local stations, one of my "move in" jobs on all my many moves. When I opened the door of the cabin it smelled of warm wood in there—nice! I flew around racing the last rays of the sun to finish cleaning the windows. Then in my evening sojourn on the woods side porch I noted, a bit sadly, signs of waning summer—the sun setting behind the trees as soon as 7 versus I'd been sitting out there till 9 p.m. before.

I sat and reviewed my day; these small town people! they seem to do things only "when they get around to them!" Sigh. But maybe a slower pace is what I need?

**July 29, Tuesday.** I wake up in the loft and lie and survey my A-frame—and life?—from a new angle; one does get a new slant on things in an A-frame?...Dennis sure went crazy with a lot of wood! all these beams and joists!... I look at all my life's artwork piled around and marvel; all that hard work and agonizing all gathered into this one small area. it made what always seemed to me like rather a successful career seem minimized and kind of pathetic, somehow. My so-long wanted studio—something lacking—what? I realize it hasn't the flourish and success look of a man's studio; it just looks like...a lil ole lady's...hobbies.

**Dawn.** There's a bird out there that goes "coo" and "hooo-ha-hooo"; an owl? dove? And that tiny bird—a house wren? bush tit?—sitting, unafraid, on the railing not two feet from me. I'd like to know what all these birds are.

**Later.** Down for the mail. Disappointing; nothing but ads. It's warm down there; cold in the cabin. I nibble blackberries...

**Afternoon.** I am puttering around in the driveway, looking a mess in an old sunfrock, when a PUD truck drives in with two men. They come in and look at the connection "OK Electric" made outside. One man is nice; the other—the one who was here before—is cross, ornery.

"OK did that"? he says to the other guy, as if he sore about something. They are looking at the outside connection into the house. He frowns. I wait.

"Tell your son," he says, indicating two of the smaller trees along where the wires will come in, "that he'll have to take out those two little firs; they're dead."

Well, they weren't firs, and they weren't dead and Dennis wouldn't be too happy about taking out any trees, but I didn't argue with them. I did try to kid with them, but no use.

"Call us when that's done," he said. And they left.

And left me despondent and with even more problems; this would mean another delay; another mess; and another expense—money for a chain saw. And I had no way of getting hold of Dennis to tell him to bring the things needed. And the mess that would make would destroy my flourishing little onion patch I'd just planted there. I'd also put in my treasured little red oak tree seedling the guys way back there in the Seattle office had given me. (Post hoc; Not that I wanted an oak tree there; just curious to see if it would grow. It didn't.) I sighed. My hopes for hot water and lights delayed again. I went back into the cabin depressed.

**Later** I went out and worked in the driveway again, cutting brush and felling those little alders growing in the gravel pile. I also put my name and address on the mailbox with those stick-on letters I'd bought. It was a sticky and nerve-wracking job. I hadn't intended to put them up until after our final inspection, for it made the place look lived and I wasn't supposed to be moved in, but it seemed a good time to do it with the neighbors below gone and I wouldn't be seen and maybe tattled on.

It was nice down there, not too hot; not too cool—and quiet and I was all alone. I worked till I was exhausted and driven too crazy by the flies.

In my evening rest on "woodside" porch, I summed up the day: I had put a shelf up in the loft. (Dennis had left me materials to make it) and I had more or less solved a place to hang my many coats up there—at least temporarily...I realized my disappointment in the mail had been because I'd hoped to hear from Bud and Paula as to when they were coming up.

And I had talked to the PUD men. Their obvious displeasure with "OK Electricians" work rather disillusioned me about me a bout the competency of my merry little Marsh man and his pal; had they done a bad job?...

A check later showed me those trees could be taken out without damaging my garden try.

I reviewed things to be done: Poor Dennis. We had both hoped he'd be able to get that kitchen counter done. Now all these other things had to be done, the trees to fell; the hot water tank to fix...He had said he might bring some wood...oh! I hadn't yet rearranged the other wood to make room for it...

Rested, I finally hied myself up and went and did that chore. It wasn't all that bad. Plastic put up rather hastily as wind/rain protection and I was through. During this that Ron brat and his cousin were screaming like banshees down the street so annoyingly I started to walk down to investigate, but they silenced before I got there.

I planted some more scarlet runner beans around those big ugly rafterfoundations that had cost us so much money and woe. I hoped they'd grow and soften the starkness and add some color—to match the red roof—and also give me some beans to eat...later. That and my onions and my asparagus root was all the garden I was going to attempt...for now.

Later, I thought about the electricians, for, while I was down there I was horrified at the careless job of the wiring installation. Wires were carelessly tacked and looped and draped all over, all tangles and mixed up. Somehow I'd thought they'd be all neat and tidy and follow the framing. "Did Darwin do this?" that PUD guy had snapped to his helper, angrily. Darwin, the boss. Heck, I hadn't even seen him since hed' come up and made the estimate. And then these two guys I'd never seen before had come up in that unmarked truck and had started madly drilling holes in all of Dennis' careful construction. I sighed. Three years was it now...?I'd been so blithe and excited...and naïve.

I gave up and went in to bed. Two more days of this month and then, at least, my checks would come in and I'd have some money again.

**July 30, Wednesday.** I wake late...to continuing sun. This is the day Dennis said they may stop on their way back fromm Okanogan. If they do come, they'll be late—tired, hungry, hurried. I have no idea if or when they'll come. And no way of finding out. I'll just have to wait and see. Seems like that's all I do is wait...and delays, delays!

And when people do come, I have no warning: I'm caught—like yesterday, unready. What happened to the custom of old days when people would call out "Hello! the house!"? when approaching an isolated dwelling? I'll have to figure out something to do about that...a bell at the entrance to the trail? Something to make them hesitate; or to give me warning? As it is they amount to almost prowlers, just walking in the way they do. Wonder if Dennis could build me a gate? with—I laugh—a cowbell on it? What can I make a bell out of? In prowling around (it's ok for me to prowl) I come across an old porcelain ceiling fixture in Dennis' barn salvage loot—hey!can use in bedroom? save money?...

I hurry and get dressed,. Will I have guests today or not? There is nothing in the mail to let me know; the radio has a traffic alert for construction on a certain route, but I don't know which way they'd come and also says clouds coming in...so besides my unhappiness at being out of food, out of money, out of guests-info, I will be out of good weather, too?

**Evening. 8:00 pm.** The kids showed up just after the above lament. And there were troubles...but we got them ironed out...thanks to Dennis. It went like this:

I was in a very low mood. I had been out cul-side trying to construct some kind of alerting device out of tin can and pebbles. And I was on my way back in to the unhappy task of writing to my car insurance company to find out why they'd, inexplicably, increased my insurance although I'd moved from a dangerous city area to a safer rural area, when I heard...voices?

I went to the window to look and could not believe my eyes! Down the trail, out of the trees, marched Noah, dressed in white shorts and a colorful shirt and waving a long peacock tail feather—like some medieval page in a pageant. Behind him was little Sarah similarly armed with a peacock feather. (It seems Godfrey has peacocks on his place.) Then came Dennis and Abbie, laden, not with food (we were all broke) but snacks—fruit, homemade cookies—that sort of thing. But I didn't know about the food until later; I only saw that they were laden. I was never so glad to see anyone!

Dennis came up and presented me with a beautifully crafted toilet-paper-hanger he's carved from a piece of one of our felled cedars. I was thrilled with it! We had a few happy greeting moments and then I broached, "You ready to problem solve?"

Dennis. "Well...what?"

"Well—one: the water heater leaks." I got no further.

He went into the bathroom and for the next hour or so battled that thing, more and more hopelessly, while I chain-smoked my few remaining cigs till I got a splitting headache waiting for the verdict. Which was—

We got a faulty heater; he'd have to take it out and return it. He showed me the trouble; some poor work at the factory on the valve. It was just too much—after all that wait; seemed I was never to have hot water.

"I'm jinxed!" I wailed.

Meantime, Abbie took the begging, complaining kids down to see if the pool was fixed. While Dennis worked on the tank I'd gotten out bales of papers searching for the sales slip and the warranty. Abbie came back and helped me and we finally found them.

She reported that they were fixing the pool and they'd go back later and see. This meant whiney kids till that settled. Dennis was still cussing at the water tank. I had a bad headache and a bad case of "nerves" by then.

"I need a new copper coupling", Dennis said.

"But I have no money!" I wailed.

This went on for quite a while. Then, desperate, I tried a last resort: I sneaked up and stood behind Dennis and silently fingered my "good luck talisman"—the St. Andrew's cross—(Please! I prayed.)

"Hey!" Dennis yelled. "I think I got it fixed!"

He did a lot of testing...it was OK! We decided if there were more problems we'd turn it in—later.

"Ok, what's the next problem?" Dennis asked.

The kids were fussing about going swimming. "But we have to fell the trees first," I said. "Don't you want to see that?" They did. Well, that was a long, dramatic session, everybody pitching in to help. And then when those two so-called "dead" trees came crashing down, there was a mess all over and they hung up on the other trees.

Dennis let out a cry, "What is this tree?" (the younger, healthier one.)

"Uh...cascara?" I ventured.

"Yes!" he cried and he was terribly upset about it. As far as we knew it was the only one on our property, and, Dennis said it was against the law to cut cascara, on state land, anyway. He was so mad at PUD!

Abbie and the kids went off to the pool then, and I held the ladder, nervously, while Dennis climbed up and denuded branches for the blasted PUD.

Then, while he worked, I kept going in and trying to find the PUD number to call and figure my money to see if I could buy a coupling for the water heater. I ended up resorting to writing a "bum check" to cash at the store for we'd need food and things, too.

Dennis came in with a strange thing he handed to me. "A piece of cascara bark," he said. "Maybe you can sell it," he kidded. "Why don't you go to the store while I clean up here?"

I set out in a nervous frenzy, stopping at the pool.

"We're swimming!" the kids cried, proud of their amateur attempts to.

I went in to McNabbs and finally found the right number to call PUD.

"Trees down," I reported.

To my surprise, the gal said, "Ok, Lorna!" as if I were an old friend!

I was late, then, and I fumed as workmen and trucks blocked the road and held up traffic as I raced down to Sultan, where, luckily, the hardware had a coupling.

"Where do they buy cascara bark?" I kidded the woman.

"Here," she said.

"Really?" I cried.

"Yes, but it has to be very dry when you bring it in and then we pay by the pound."

I left very excited about telling the kids how they could earn some money.

I went to the store and when I go back the family had the trees all cleaned up and the wood stacked and the kids were very excited about the bark (not much of it) they had gleaned to sell. Dennis was still upset about the

trees—and I missed them—the two stumps were like broken legs. We planted cascara seeds all around them, hoping.

**Post hoc: [to delete?] The cascara story:** The seeds sprouted, but plants didn't live. Meantime, we found a huge cascara tree there safely growing in the front half of our property. However, by time the bark dried, and I took it down to "cash in" for the kids, many, many months later, the market for cascara bark was gone; they weren't buying it anymore—or so the woman said.

Everybody was very happy then. And Dennis was glad to see the beer I'd managed to eke out of my few dollars. He fixed the heater pipe and then he took the kids swimming again, while Abbie and I sat at the table, I kidding her about how the sun in the window behind her made like a halo around her hair. We chatted as she knitted on the bedspread she insisted on making for me. She said they were serious about buying that land up in that remote country,...but that it wouldn't be until spring.

"Let's have Christmas up here!" she cried.

Dennis came back, glowing. "We're getting there!" he cried, as they came in. And "I love it here!" And, as they were leaving, he said he'd be back next week...with the inspectors...he hoped..and he'd finish the sink and then..."We're free!" he cried. They were excited about my gate idea; Dennis wanted to build it out of cedar, and Abbie said she had some bells—nice ones— we could put on it. We stood and leaned on the porch railing and fed our tame little house wren. Everybody was so happy; I hardly noticed how exhausted I was.

They left amidst glad cries an invitations. Bless them!

Later, the full moon came out.

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**July 31, Thursday.** Getting the mail only made me angry again; there was nothing from Bud and Paula, so I still didn't know if or when to expect them...a notice in raise in rates in the garbage service and a bill from "OK Electric"—this despite the fact that I'd told them I would not pay until that 3-way switch on the stairway light was in. Anger created a "need" to smoke, but I was out of cigs.

I decided I'd go see if I could buy a pack from Cases...if they were there...

They were. And Edith/Max? (I never did know what to call her—she going by both names) gladly gave me a pack of cigs. And they insisted on my having coffee. My mood brightened; it was good to have nice neighbors. I was unloading my latest woes on them when a PUD pickup went by headed toward my place? I left and went up to see.

It was the man who'd been so cross that other day, but he was quite pleasant this time.

"Yes," he said. "The trees are ok. But has Darwin been here?"

"No."

"He was supposed to have come," he said. "That insulator has to be removed." This was the first knowledge I'd had of what had displeased them.

I told him about the 3-way switch, though I felt as if I were tattling on my friend, Marsh. "Maybe they can fix that at the same time," I suggested. "Do you want me to tell Darwin?"

"No," he said, "I'll talk to him." (I was glad to be relieved of that task.) "Maybe we'll be up tomorrow," he said.

I intimated that I might not be there. Silence. But then he said, "You just buy the place? Or are you the person I talked to a long time ago?"

"The latter," I said.

We parted on very friendly terms.

I went back to Cases', but was a little sorry I had when they began to heckle me about carpeting and fancy appliances and finishings they thought I should put in the cabin that I had no intention of doing. I told them about the puzzling raise in my car insurance.

"Oh," Case said, "your premium is based on the number of accidents in the area where you live."

That made me mad (so we good drivers have to pay for others' bad driving?)

I left and went back and then set out for town.

On the way I could see clouds and mist forming over the mountains, but the day stayed warm and sunny.

Near town, I was dismayed to find my roadside fishmonger not there, though he'd said he'd be there every day; I had hoped to buy some salmon to feed all those guests that promised to come. His fish was such a good bargain price, especially compared to the news lately that the price of salmon had gone way up again. I wondered if there was any relationship between the price discrepancy and his being gone...?

I went to the bank. Yes. My first check was in. "...and the Social Security checks will be in tomorrow," the girl smiled at me. I went out with \$75 in my purse and felt jubilant! Money!! Again!— after all those lean weeks!

I then went to that "Prairie Market" where I'd been told things were cheaper. And I shopped for two wearying hours in that dingy warehouse. I really splurged; spent \$51, determined to feed me a celebration dinner after all that stintin. Also to stock up. Never again would I let the larder get so low! I even bought stuff for hot dogs for Bishops' kids, preparing for that promised visit, though I chided myself (dreamer! you know they won't come.)...and fresh corn on the cob...all those summer goodies I'd been missing.

The corn was advertised as "fresh from Yakima" but it was strange looking; the insides were ok, but the husks were dingy, dirty, wet and soggy, and strangely black and blighted looking. As I waited in line at the checkout counter I remarked to a woman there, "Looks like some ash fall on it."

(Yakima had gotten the brunt of the Mt. St. Helen's ashfall, remember.)

"Looks all right to me!" she sniffed. I gave up.

Since this "Membership Co-Op" bargain mart was way out on the edge of town and did not carry fresh meat, I wended my way back to Monroe's dingy, tiny little "Mall" to finish my shopping. I went into Safeway for meat and ice.

There, in surroundings much more pleasant than the "bargain" mart's, I found their prices about the same.

And then I smiled wryly, for I came upon the woman who had signed me up at Prairie Market, extolling its advantages, herself shopping at Safeway! But I, still fresh from the city, decided maybe she was just "spot checking", comparison shopping?—those merchandising and marketing games? I shrugged and left.

A stop at the hardware and I left Monroe, car loaded and I weary, and headed back "for the hills".

### Fire! Fire!

As I drove into the cul-de-sac my nearest neighbors—that young couple—the Carrolls—had a huge mountain of woods clearing debris they were burning right beside that enormous overturned tree root. The flames rose halfway up into the trees around. It frightened and angered me. That fire was so big! and so close! I had gotten and tried to honor a brochure that said there was a limit on the size of a pile you could burn. And they were also doing it at the very worst time: forest authorities were currently warning of danger of fire in tinder dry forests. It further angered me to see these kids blithely burning up half the forest and good wood that I could have used—that would keep me warm all winter!

I was putting my groceries away and anxious to unwind and relax and enjoy my first real meal in...a month?—steak and fresh corn—and just eat! and then go to sleep...had been a big day. The door open, I was checking my expenditures and trying to figure where I'd stash all that food when—

Loud <sup>hissing</sup> noises outside. I ignored, assuming they were just putting the fire out. Then sounds of male authoritative voices...Marvin Mc Nabb, the caretaker? He seemed to be angry. I worked on, though keeping an ear out. There were men calling...giving orders...then it got quieter (they had it under control?) but then...

The sound of fire crackling again—

I was getting worried. (Would I wake up dead? And all this burned down after all this effort? I wasn't scared, exactly...I was annoyed! Oh put that fire out! I want to celebrate! My good, pay-day dinner—finally!) I got annoyed. And, laughing, (I'll go down and scream Fire! Fire! Alarm!) I put my car keys in my pocket and walked down.

The fire was still burning, but there was no sign of people or activity. I walk down to Cases' where I mention my concern, but they so blasé about it, I just shrug and start back...But Case opted to walk back with me "to check it out".

As we walk up the street, all hell breaks loose: dogs barking, people coming out...Everybody is being so polite and so phoney, and Case starts acting...embarrassed? Carrolls come out and they start talking to Case, only, completely ignoring me, standing there. They start talking, their faces averted from me, until I take the hint and leave. But not before I overhear—

"They were both going to buy guns!" Marty (as I understood her name) claimed there was supposed to be a bear going through here—and so on—I was rather amused, but people began to dissipate...wander away...back into their houses. I go on back to the cabin feeling a little "put out"... (and hoping the fire is?)

It was the first time I'd actually encountered these people. I got the impression that Marty is a city girl—not liking to be in the woods—scared to death. And the same with Edith, Case's wife who is always in negligée and watching TV and so insistent about the need for deep pile carpeting in one's home. I wondered why these people come to the woods?

As I continued my little celebration...fixed food, eat, and so on...some odd little recalls jumped to mind:

○ How come everybody in Monroe calls me "Lorna"?  
Don't know why that seems strange to me...

○ And Abbie and I talking: As I was totting up my money...how much would I need for the rest of my life...?

"Give me ten years," I'd said.  
"Oh...oh...no..no..."

I brushed her off. "S'truth," I said. "I am 65. In ten years I'll be 75.. beyond that...I shall be...(inept)..."

Abbie was silent.

As I fixed my dinner..(But I felt 16 today! I thought) and turned up the music on the radio...LOUD!

*(Handwritten scribbles)*  
(Fire! Fire! Alarm! Alarm!)

So ended JULY.



Man working -

AUGUST 1980

The next morning was dreary, both in weather and mood. My celebration dinner was a failure: the corn rotten and the steak tough. I just gulped it. And my neighbors' encounter was so opposite to the gay what-the-hell's-going-on-here-anyway? inquirthat I'd meant it to be that it left me feeling rebuffed and an outsider.

Now the week end loomed and I still had no idea of whether any of those promising guests would show up or not. I was certainly in no mood for them now.

August 1, Friday. As I get ready for the things I have to do during the day, I note that the new thermometer reads 58 while the old one reads 70. Looks as if the old one is no good; will have to give it up—one I've had since I worked in Seattle.

As I prepare a washing to take to town I wonder what use when I won't have hot water to keep myself clean? I am getting ready to go when—

Here's the PUD truck; this time with two different guys—ones I haven't seen before. Now they start crabbing about the trees—something about putting the lines through in a different place—but they go ahead and connect while I stay out of their way. It doesn't take them very long. They go, leaving me with yet another mess to clean up.

But I am all atwitter: I have the electricity connected! But I afraid to turn it on by myself—afraid something will happen and it will all blow up—the way things have been going. I do make an occasion of going out and winding up that 100 feet or so of that long, orange temporary cord. Thought I'd never see the day! Seemed as if I'd lived with that thing out there forever!

I go down to Case's to use the phone. I tell them about the electricity hooked up. Dwayne comes up and turns it on for me. Eureka! I 've got lights! heat! hot water!...

And no guests...after all that. For, my phone call to Bishop to tell them, "Come ahead! All's fixed!"

— He said they can't come. ●●●●●

Dwayne had gone on back home. I went down again to phone Dennis and tell him. Hallelujah!

I go on down to the store and buy light bulbs cursing all the way about being stuck with allthose buns and weiners I bought to feed Bishops' kids.

I came back and just ran around playing with my electricity. That hot water is hot! Almost too hot!

About 5 p.m. I am tired...and annoyed...

For there is crashing around in the bushes on...our land?...and a dog barking furiously. I grab the hatchet and a water squirter and advance; all this dog barking has got to stop! A dog keeps barking furiously, but I see no one. I go back in. In half an hour it all starts again. There must be people in there? I decide to go down and tell Lu.

I had a nice chat with her and got rested. From what she said, I guess my nice, quiet, private days here are over. People are coming to check on their land and lots.

I go back to the cabin and work. I finish the light bulbs; do dishes with hot water! Put up two shelves in kitchen. Meantime all that dog ruckus starts again. I just cup my hands around my mouth and yell into woods, "Shut up that damned dog!" It quit.

Then I ran around turning lights on and off and trying switches like a silly kid. Then, work over for the day, I plugged in my little toy piano and just sat and played my heart out: at last I had a place alone where I could do it without bothering the damned neighbors!

Later I climbed blissfully into bed. Tomorrow I'd have heat! And I could take a shower in my own place! and I could wash my hair! and...oh dear, what was that clicking noise? Oh, the clock radio there beside my bed...I'd have to move that... move it or.....I slept.....

**Saturday and Sunday. August 2 and 3**

**Saturday.** I woke to pouring rain after all that nice weather. It rained all day, and, I, not having any obligations and my expected guests having begged out, tired—I guess from all those preceding strenuous weeks?—I just collapsed and did nothing but lie around all day, glad I had the electricity so that I could use heaters to keep me warm. I gave up on Bud and Paula, too; they wouldn't be coming, as this was the last weekend they had before they'd start on their trip.

**Sunday.** Rested, I got with the desk work. And, the weather clearing somewhat, I did go outside and do some work. But I found it not as enjoyable as those quiet, private times when I camped up here. Now there was the sound of chain saws and bulldozing, and motorcycles and dogs endlessly barking that made me feel that, after all, I hadn't moved away from people din like in the city? Before, when I was up here, I had the whole place to myself. Now, it annoyed me very much; every time I set foot out my door or made any movement outside that dog across the way began to bark as if I were the intruder, not they and the people now prowling around.

I went in and took the first shower in the cabin! Was nice! the water was very hot. My cheap, tinny shower worked all right, but the also cheap shower curtain wrapped around me at every move. And Dennis had not crossed the pipes, so that hot and cold were on wrong sides, But that was easy to get used to. Later I marked them.

And there were other things I had to get used to after so long without electricity and appliances; all the noises they made—the house ticking as, I suppose, the wood drying out with the heat on; the click of the clock radio, the heaters clicking on and off—I found I couldn't hear the birds outside anymore. Again, it was almost like being back in the city.

Another thing I noticed—who needed bug killer? the bugs, attracted to the light of the skylights, trying to get out, exhausted themselves in slow suicide. Each morning I'd had to sweep up dead ones.

That lonely, people-invaded weekend...I began realizing that the end of summer was near and people who might visit me on their vacations would soon not be doing so, and I got the first taste of disappointment in the joy of my new home. Guess maybe I was too busy before to notice?

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**August 4, Monday.** But, Monday, when I woke to bright sun and birds chirping and a nice, clean house, and noticed, when dressing, that I'd lost weight, and, going to mail the electrician bill to Mike, that it was all quiet around again—the weekend people gone?—my spirits soared again and all the enjoyment came back.

I had a little scare when I first looked out the window—smoke!? No, it was just steam rising off the nursing log as the sun hit it!

My spirits soared again—until...this the day the electricians were supposed to come and finish it up. I, still a "city gal" had dressed up in People-meeting-clothes, make up—all that. I was anxious to get the business with those guys over with for I had quite a large washing I wanted to get done, now able to use my little portable washing machine again.

By noon there was no sign of the electricians, and I was getting fierouser and fierouser. Tired of this endless waiting, waiting and being tied down to waiting, I decided to go ahead with my washing. So I lugged out that heavy, "portable" washing machine we'd had such a time getting in here, set it up on the ("front") porch where they'd put in an outside convenience plug and put in a load of wash.

This little washer had saved me money in not having to put in another appliance outlet in my electrical circuits. The motor started fine, but then the water wouldn't drain, the pump wouldn't work. I sat down and cried.

I drained it then—by attaching the hose and letting it run off the porch—pushed the darned thing back in and gave up on my washing...and then I just left.

I wandered down below, in search of what I didn't know..help? or just a shoulder to cry on? Cases weren't home. I went on to McNabbs'. She wasn't there—gone to town. So I stood and talked to Marv for awhile.

He was in a big pique. Seemed the swimming pool had gone out again and he was waiting on the PUD, who hadn't showed up.

"It's always this way!" he bitched. "Wait! Wait! Wait!" (on these irresponsible workmen.) "It's a nice day and Lu and I wanted to go fishing!" That made me feel better; I wasn't the only one.

I asked him if I could use the phone, and I called OK Electric again. A man answered, who called me "Lorna". Nancy, the only one I had talked to in all this time was off on a two week vacation. Darn! but I told him my problem.

"Oh, the guys are out on another emergency..(they sure seemed to have a lot of them around here!)...They wouldn't be able to get up there...until..late...or maybe...first thing in the morning." So I was tied down again.

As I was leaving, two guys came to help fix the pool. The rather nice looking one—"Orv" they called him...Easterley? was very chatty and "sticky" and eyeing me up and down.

"When are you going to move in?" he asked. I tried to explain, but couldn't seem to get through to him—(Deaf?) Marv, too, had seemed "deaf" when I'd hinted about my troubles with the washing machine. So..I left and went back to the cabin.

I was mad. Dennis was supposed to come up the next day and I didn't want those guys here when he came; we had things to do. I tried washing the things out by hand and then, some sun down there,I put up a line in the woods, consoling myself that maybe that was more pleasant than sitting in a noisy laundromat? I went back in. the sun disappeared. Clothes not dry. I sighed. Well, at least, I knew about the washing machine not working; I'd have to figure out something else.

**The washing.** About a half mile beyond where the store was in the so-called Sultan "mall",there was another "mall"—a barren, unprosperous-looking paved area with a few unkempt-looking buildings, a hardware, a restuarant with a drive-in window, and a laundromat.I loaded up my washing and went down there.

I had to put my washing into one of the machines that looked so battered it should have been retired. Then I put my laundry basket with hangers, et al under a table and—it so noisy and dirty in there—informed the unfriendly old battle-axe of an attendant woman that I was going over to the restaurant and would be back soon. She nodded.

I walked over to the drive-in wndow, got an ice cream cone, and sat down at one of the battered old tables in a neglected field between the two buildings and read Time magazine. The entrance to the laundromat, where all those dingy people went in and out was in full view, not far away. I was dubious about leaving my things in that slummy place, but felt I could keep an eye on things from where I sat.

When I went back in my basket had disappeared! Nor could I find my washing! First, I found my basket; someone had moved it from where I'd left it. Then the battle-axe explained that she'd taken my washing out because the machine had again refused to spin out and drain. (Odd. Same trouble I'd had with my machine at home. All I needed!)

She had, meantime, put someone else's wash in that machine, so that I had to wait until that was done. Meantime she explained that she'd put my washing back in and pay for it, which she did. I was very annoyed that she wouldn't let me do it, for I had very shabby and ragged and stained underwear in that washing from my long camping unwash it was embarrassing to have someone else handle it.

I was stuck in there for hours and hours waiting for my wash and dry to get done; the dryer inefficient for anything but gobbling dimes. It was a long, dull, expensive session. I didn't get home till 7:30, about to die I was so tired and sleepy, and I had to lug all that stuff in and find someplace to put it away... and make the beds.

It was an hour before I was through and I in hysteria when I discovered my laundry basket missing and then a battle with a huge buzz-fly-type bug that dive-bombed me and refused to go out when I opened the door for it. In stead it zoomed into my hair, at which I just collapsed into a blithering fit. "Oh, go ahead and die a long, dreadful death trying to get out the skylight then, damn you! I'll sweep you up tomorrow!"

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**Tuesday, August 5.** This is the day Dennis, the electricians, and the inspector supposed to come. I awoke to pouring rain and it so dark in the cabin I couldn't see to do anything. I cursed, cursed, cursed and was in a foul mood. Surely Dennis et al wouldn't come in this dismal poring rain? And, if they did, what if the kids wanted to go swimming?

Curses! Yesterday all that fine weather and nobody. And all that fine weather we'd had, the picnic table and area I'd worked so hard to get ready, never even used.

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I turned on the radio for info: "No good weather again until Friday". I cursed again. I went out in the rain and reparked my car to allow room for them to get in if they came. I went in to lament my woes. **It was about 10 a.m.**

I barely got in and was facing the prospect of a day alone when here came Dennis and family—despite the rain.

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A day alone? In toto I had ten people at cabin that day—eleven if one counted that neighbor brat, Ron, who intruded later in the day. Dennis and Abbie and the kids came first with Abbie's sister, Mary, and her two adorable little girls. Then, as Dennis began working on the kitchen counter, the two electricians, Marsh and Mike, came. Then, later, the inspector.

What chaos! What a mess; they all here at once!. And to add to this the mail brought a card from Paula saying they would come up...in September. (At least it wasn't that day, eh?)

It was mad and wonderful confusion. Dennis working on the sink and the electricians using the electricity, they in each other's way, so we had to feed the hungry kids out on the (woodside) porch.

Abbie and Mary then took the kids and went to see where they could get some blueberries on the U-pick farms around. I, left alone with those men, just stood around and tried to move stuff out of their way. The mood was good, though; everybody was laughing and joking.

The electricians left. I was joyful; I had everything fixed! I was through with them!

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The girls and the kids came back. it seems they couldn't pick with the kids with them—it was too wet. And it was still rainy and wet outside.

"I can't work with all of them in here!" Dennis cried. "Besides, this goop I am using is toxic! they shouldn't be in here breathing it!"

What to do? What to do?...All those weiners I had...

"Hey, kids!" I went and built a bonfire, despite the rain and gradually lured the kids and the girls down there to roast weiners. The rain let up a bit. All was OK. The inspector had not come yet.

Then there was a yell from Dennis in the house, "I need more goop!"

Though we had no money to squander, I said I'd go and get more. Dennis had the first coat of goop on drying and said he could watch kids till I got back. So we left Alicia and Noah with him, and I took Sarah and Emily with me, and Abbie and Mary went off to go pick blueberries.

We were just going down the trail when \_\_\_\_\_  
here came the inspector.

He was a fat, smiley, unctuous young man. I heard him say to Dennis, as he went in, "Haven't I seen you before?"

"Yes, when I came in about the..."

I left them talking and went on, hoping and praying we'd pass inspection?

I got the goop and came back. By that time the sun was shining and I was just stopping to go in and check with McNabbs about the pool when the inspector went sailing by. He smiled and waved so pleasantly that I took it as a good omen.

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Back at the cabin, the kids having gone to play in the woods, and Dennis and I alone, I asked him about the inspection.

"Good news; bad news," he said. "All was ok, and then, at the last minute, he switched just when he was about to put an ok on the final inspection. 'Oh no! he'd said, Ya gotta have **insulation on the roof!**'"

I wailed, cursed. Dennis and I then spent half an hour blasting away at inspectors, bureaucrats, codes, etc. Dennis revealed that this seemed to be a **substitute** inspector, filling in for the regular guy.

We were a little wiser now: the other inspectors had "winked us by", and Marsh and Mike had sort of filled us in about PUD and "the games people play"... "A substitute, eh?" We looked at each other.

"Aha! We'll cheat!" Dennis cries.

It seems this inspector had said we had until June to comply with this latest, to Dennis and me, unreasonable demand. the roof, it seems, **all** of it had to have 6 inches of a certain kind of insulation. (Our experiences were beginning to show us that there was always some new product being promoted and insisted on that, later, more often than not, turned out to be not only inefficient, but sometimes downright dangerous.

As Dennis said, that requirement, alone, would cost as much as all the electricity had—thousands of dollars, whereas, as Dennis claimed, the air space between the roof and the paneling that was to go up inside later would insulate just as well.

"Besides," I lamented, "I don't want to be all all that muffled! I've gone to all this sacrifice to live in the woods and enjoy the sound of birds and rain on the roof!" I'd found that we had already lost some of that with just what we had done; the whole idea of "living close to nature" was being ruined. Besides, I simply did not have the money or any way to get any more. Nor did I have the time. Dammit! I'd been three years building the place already and wanted to get in and enjoy it before old age and death caught up with me!

**Other inspector "code" demands:**

**The stairs:** We'd have to close them in more." There had been no problem about them not passing code even after all that flak they'd given us, but now—picky, picky—the landing, which I'd figured would be convenient place to set things on to take up to loft—now:"had to be closed off: code."Another good idea ruined.

**Porch eaves:** "Ya gotta cover the inside of them; that plywood will weather." Grr. That was the least of my weathering problems; I was more worried about the weathering on the porches. that is my main worry but nothing was said about that. Besides, I not intend to be alive that long!

**Vents in "A' peaks.** "You didn't need to put those in; you're only losing heat that way." All that dangerous work I'd insisted on Dennis doing. Why? Because, trying to decipher all the illegible xerox copies of the code they'd given me, I interpreted them as necessary. "Oh, all that's been changed!" this guy says.

Dennis and I talked the anger out of our systems and he went back to work.

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He wanted the kids out because of that goop. \$5 I'd paid for that stuff! when I examined the label it was no more than the rubber cement I'd worked with for years and had been warned of its toxic effects? but I shooed the kids out and we spent a happy hour or so with the kids giggling and roasting weiners and gobbling them like mad. But not faster than I cooked and gobbled one myself. I was starved!—hadn't had a chance to eat before all this descended on me.

The sun came out and the girls came back with lots of berries. Abbie kept the bonfire going and we all shared our small quota of cigs. And the baby

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went to sleep. And Dennis was happily banging away at my sink. Noah cooked his dad a hot dog or two and then the kids went happily off to play in the woods. It was very nice and pleasant after all. And, when Dennis got through, I was rid of that rough, water-gulping particle board around my sink area! Whee! It was all very peaceful and lazy...and then...

Here came Ron, that neighbor **brat**, uninvited, intrusive...my hackles rose...

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Perhaps I should explain about Ron: he was the only child of that rather strange couple that had just rented that trashy, neglected trailer down the street. He was rotten spoiled, or—they seemed to have no money—overprotected? There was certainly something strange about him—perhaps retarded? he was very thin and pale, almost an albino and peered at one with crossed eyes behind bottle-bottom thick glasses'lenses. He was certainly and uncontrolled. I did feel sorry for the kid; obviously something wrong.

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Here comes Ron. And all hell breaks loose! he came in like a little devil bringing troubles. I didn't want him there and tried to get rid of him by patiently but firmly telling him we had company. It was very hard, for I could see that Abbie and her sister thought I was acting like a child hater.

But the kids sensed, as kids do, that I wanted him out and they started to try to evict him. Noah, the only male, began to chase him off. At which, as I followed on the trail, Ron began throwing dirt at the little girls—both actual and vocal dirt. I never heard such foul language in a kid! All the shouting and uproar and vulgarity. I was worried, And so was Dennis. "Noah! Noah!" he shouted and we both went down the trail after them. The girls stayed. But Ron had disappeared. Dennis just shrugged and went back to his work.

There had been, though, a rather funny incident in the kids' Ron chase. That morning I had found a pile of dog shit by the corner of the cabin. I had been explaining to Abbie and Mary that that was one of my reasons for being annoyed at all the neighbors' dogs coming in around the cabin. They had been telling me about the epidemic in Seattle of diseased dogs—the "coughing dogs", some kind of flu that was destroying dogs. that only made me madder; that there might be disease-spreading dogs around? Whatever. when Noah chased Ron, Ron ran right into that pile of dog shit and slipped and fell. this, of course, made the kids (and me) roar with laughter.

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Now, when Dennis went back and so did the kids, I couldn't figure out where in hell that kid had gotten to...there seemed to be no one home down at his place...and I was...suspicious...Then I looked up.

By the side of the cul, at that time, there was an ancient, rotten cherry tree. I treasured it because, despite its age, it was the first spot of beauty each spring—white blossoms there by the entrance to my place. There was Ron, perched precariously in the top of that rotten tree.

"You get out of there!" I yelled, concerned both about the tree and that clumsy retarded-acting kid hurting himself. "Get out of there! That tree's rotten!"

"Oh, it is not!" he snotted back. "It's a real climbing tree! I climb it all the time! (which reinforced my sneaking hunch that he spied around; he always seeming to know when the kids came.)

My face feeling grim, I stayed with it until he, finally, crashed down, taking half the tree with him. and he disappeared down the street.

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[Note: The case of the disappeared machete: in all those cleaning sessions I never did find it. Noah said once that he'd seen Ron with it. Dennis had shut him up. I don't know: the machete was **never** found.]



**The goop fumes:** "Get away! Get out! This glue is sticky!" Dennis had cried to the kids. I laughed like crazy: Sarah and Noah went zap! off into the woods "glued together". later, when they snuck in with kleenexs over their noses, still "glued together", Dennis looked alarmed.

"Well, you said it was sticky and stinky!" I explained.

Things were a little different, this visit. Experience? We live and learn?

**Heat.** I was a little dismayed. Finally! Finally! We had electric heat. But Dennis, working on that kitchen counter, had all the doors and windows open to let out all those fumes—and all that expensive PUD electric heat!

**Wood.** "I thought Godfrey's wood would be a bargain," Dennis said. "I was going to bring you some. But he wanted \$85 a cord for it." So he didn't bring any.

Abbie, tending the bonfire out there; I noticed she was feeding it squaw wood and scraps instead of heaving in the stove wood splits as she had before.

**Safety.** They had gone to Godfrey's to look at some wooded land there they contemplated buying. But the guy jumped his price on it when he found out it was "sought after", so they let it go. Kids. And the bonfire—**this** time. "You kids quit playing in that fire!"

**Other fun things** that visit: **The electricians**—much joking and chaffing when they were working. They were trailing wires around trying to find a place to put in that 3-way stair switch. Marsh, from the loft, "Mind if I lie in your bed?"—the only way he could reach to put the wire in—he called. "Not if you're not there too long!" I joshed back.

**Music.** We were all down around the bonfire. Dennis came flying down. (Oh, oh, trouble, I thought.) "Something wrong?" "No, I was just playing with all the switches up there!" he cried. "I'll be back!" Later—the sound of his playing on my little electric organ.

Abbie had brought me some very interesting Tibetan? cowbells someone had given her—for my "doorbell".

It was a very nice day—barring Ron and the inspector.

**As they left,** Dennis apologetic, "I'll be up again in a few days...but I...gas...charged to you..but I think I can get on to work at Sears again..."

Heck! I didn't care! Where else could I find "free" labor?

### After they left

I cleaned things up—yet again! and went out to the smoldering campfire and burned some trash from their visit and all the workmen's messes. A column of smoke rose high over the trees. It was August. Tinder dry. There had been fire alerts...

As if on cue a small plane came and circled right over my smoke column. (Fire patrol? I shall be reported? Can I trust my neighbors?) But it went away and I put the fire out—and all was well.

It was a good day.

**August 6, Wednesday.** I awoke reviewing new woes and setbacks. This new demand by Snohomish County delays all things even further; I feel as if I **belong** to them! I can't get an assessment on the worth of the property to pay Mike or get fire insurance or pay taxes until we fork over another \$1000 or so. Meantime we drag on and on. Dennis can't keep neglecting his life and wasting time trying to keep up with their endless foolish demands and my time to enjoy my home is fast slipping away...

I got myself going by thinking: but at last! I can assemble my kitchen!

When I went for the mail a thousand dogs barked. The gas bill that Dennis ran up. I'd told him I'd just paid it. There was another one for \$62.

**Later: Working on the kitchen,** but not enjoying. The only radio station that I could get about drove me nuts. I spent a lot of time trying to put up a wooden bar to hang pots on. The struggle I had made me decide I didn't like carpentry. Besides, I'm too little to reach places, and not strong enough for correct use of tools and I can't see well enough...

**My new kitchen:** All that planning—in my house I would solve the lifetime problem of dim, dim kitchen work areas. My new swivel lights over the kitchen work areas I'd splurged on and thought would be such a brilliant solution I was not happy with. They'd put them up too high; I couldn't reach them to swivel, and couldn't have anyway, for the only ones I'd been able to find had narrow metal shades on them that got too hot, didn't disperse the light to overlap like I'd planned...

**Later**—I am unpacking all my kitchen "pretties and goodies". Hell. I've got too much stuff..and too many duplicates..certainly too much stuff for this place. I continue on the mess, realizing it will be a long, long time until I can get to the fun part of putting up my "pretties" (décor).

**Later.** I leave the mess and go to Sultan. I go to the laundromat and ask about my lost basket. Nope. She claims there was no basket. I am furious!

I stop at McNabbs' on my way back—just to chat. The old scotsman made me pay my phone bill! It was his 70th birthday. I sat and listened to their tales, but it was kind of boring.; I'd heard them all before. And I was piqued they showed so little interest in my stories and victories. They said Marv had had a bad fall on his fishing trip, but they claimed he was ok.

I stopped at Cases'. They had company and dinner cooking, but insisted I stay for dinner. They offered beer, but Edith and I the only ones who drank any. It wasn't much fun. They separated into guys and gals so that I felt like an intruder. Edith and Wayne bickered. And Edith bored me with long tales about her darling son. The guys talked male talk together. The wife was nice, but just sat, dull. Before I left, her husband, who was rather nice looking—older—pulled that old line about "haven't I seen you before someplace?" Not that I knew of! I escaped and went home to my dark, quiet lil hut.

I begin to work on the kitchen some more, while I sort of wonder about the vague plans for the next day. Dennis said he **might** be up. Perhaps I'd wait until afternoon and see. One thing I'd have to do was cook up all that food, which was starting to spoil because of the ice about gone. If Dennis not come, I'd go on into Monroe on errands, bank, gas, and so on.

**About 9 p.m.** I gave up working on the kitchen, swearing wearily. I am tired of doing the same thing over and over! I have organized about a thousand kitchens in my lifetime of moving!

I woke at dawn, happy in my little bed alcove with the radio to hand, but unhappy I hadn't gotten my hair fixed or the food cooked. Screech! at a huge black beetle in the washbasin...puzzle again at what that **clunk** noise is in the bathroom... I regret that, after all these years, I still have a flat sink drainboard that doesn't drain...I meant...I fall asleep again...

**August 7, Thursday.** I wake late, sorry I'm missing some of that rare sunshine outside. I work until early afternoon. The radio says a warming trend through Friday. Good! I finish the kitchen. I check my "vegetable garden" Things are not doing so well; no sign of the asparagus and onions wetting "leggy".

I take a shower and then—dumb!—sit in the sun and get all sweaty! It is very quiet outside, not even a dog. I take time to look up plumbing—that **clunk**. "Banging in pipes." Oh dear, Dennis didn't put in an air chamber, as book says? (and the inspector didn't even notice!?)

**About 3:30 p.m.** I am busy organizing and cleaning things up when  
**the kids come.**

**10:22 p.m.** They **just left.** They say they will be up to stay overnight on Saturday. It was a rather expensive visit, but a great one. it was the first meal I've put out in my new house with my kitchen "all together"! We had a very fine picnic dinner.

Dennis put up some of that fake wood paneling in the bedroom. He hinted about wanting money for the insulation so he could get started on the end walls, but he caught me before I'd had a chance to study up on insulation and get ready for all the questions and decisions he'd want.

I "settled" by giving them \$35 for things they need that they are doing for me; best I could do.

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Things were a bit sticky when they first came. I had just finished cooking all that food and hadn't quite gotten things cleaned up and was not too happy at the prospects of more mess. I had gone ahead when it had gotten so late that I'd given up on them. They said they were late because they had to wait for the mail and their check. They also said it was very hot in Seattle. Abbie seemed moody and upset and when I asked she said she and Dennis had had a fight. And the kids kept impatiently begging to go swimming.

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But things got better. Abbie took the kids swimming. Someday I hoped to be caught up so I could go, too. Dennis decided it was too late to start a big project, so began to try out some of the paneling. While Abbie and the kids were gone, I got the place cleaned and marked the boards where I wanted Dennis to saw them for shelves.

Dennis had investigated that wet spot on the floor and came up with the unhappy news that the shower leaked. He was happily gluing up some of that paneling and I was trying to peel hard-boiled eggs I never seem to be able to cook right, when Abbie and the kids came back.

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Then she and I and the kids went to the store. It was the first time I, the city gal, walked out "as is"—without make-up or good clothes on. We got beer for Dennis, wine for Abbie and me, and ready-to-eat fried chicken.

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I got dinner. It was hard work, but fun!—my first meal prepared in my new kitchen with all my stuff to hand—after a year! the kitchen worked out fine! very convenient. Abbie got to rest this time. Later, she did the dishes, crowing over the hot water! I fixed the eggs to "devil", made a salad, put the chicken on and spirits brightened as we adults broke into our canned and bottled "spirits".

I had cleaned the table off, hoping to avoid all the lugging of stuff out and in for a picnic, as it was late and evenings shorter and I tired. But Abbie and Dennis wanted to eat out and it turned out to be no problem.

Noah and Sarah finished the eggs and then they lugged all the stuff down. Sarah doing a fine job of setting the table with all my "goodies": salad bowl and tongs and other refinements unearthed at last. She was having fun—like a busy little housewife.

Dennis was working, happy with the paneling. It looked and worked great; we all admired. But, was he ever annoyed when, after taking pains to cut everything very straight, he found the electricians had slammed everything in crooked—like the heater. So he had to re-do.

We were all ready to go down to our fine meal, everybody helping. And this time with all the conveniences and tools—something I'd been waiting for for three years! But Noah sulked: he was going to eat in the cabin alone—not with all those bugs down there. But, after we all went ahead, he came, too. Abbie had sat playing the organ while the kids and I worked. I was surprised! didn't know she could!

"Oh, this is fun!" she cried.

It was gloaming by the time we got out there, but the day was warm enough so that we didn't bother to build a fire. Everybody just wolfed down the food and praised it. "First good food I'd had in weeks!" Dennis cried.

We stuffed ourselves. I was so proud that everyone was pleased; it had been so long since I'd cooked a meal for others.

I had only two flashbulbs left, but I took a couple of pictures to add to the four rolls I hadn't been able to afford to get developed yet. Dennis and Abbie sat and idly talked and sipped our brews. The kids ran around happily playing the organ, and in the woods, there was no Ron, this time—thank goodness! It was a bit chill, but it was so quiet and nice, not even any dogs barking. We were very happy. "We love it here!" we cried.

Even the kids didn't seem in their usual rush to get home. We sat out, appreciating the new porch light illuminating for us. Then, what I'd feared, "No dessert?" the kids began...

"How about...popcorn?" I asked, having discovered the packet I'd hidden from Steve on their visit. "Hey!"

So we all rushed in, they all helping to bring things in while I happily got things ready. It was so nice to be able to find things! " Hey! Which plug?" I asked, looking at the array of electrical outlets I now had. So I was able to move the hot plate to the table where we all had fun! not at all like the sulky Steve session before. (And I got rid of that tired butter!)

"First time I've ever seen one of those things work," Dennis said,(the instant popper packet.)

It was happy times. Abbie played the organ and the kids sang. The snotty Carrolls down below were beginning to make threatening counter-noises, but I didn't care. Besides it was dark then: I just closed the windows.

I headed off the "whinies" in the kids by producing paper and pens and they were busy and happy again. Dennis just sat and beamed.

"It sure is a nice place, now!" he cried.

We finished the wine and the beer, which may have accounted for my sudden generosity? Abbie mentioned that she was just about out of yarm for the bedspread she was making for me and Dennis was being "itchy" about getting insulation. That's why I wrote the check for \$35.

"Why don't you come and stay all night Saturday?" I asked. (The weather supposed to be nice.)

"May we?" They couldn't come Friday as Noah had a party to attend.

"I could get a lot done!" Dennis cried.

I was puzzled that they all seemed so relaxed; they'd never stayed that late before. But then we'd never had lights before, either! Everyone was having so much fun, trying out porch lights in the dark, and so on.

"Hey, can I take a shower?" Abbie asked. She was serious."I haven't had a shower in years!" What she meant, of course, was that she's only had the use of bathtubs.

"Why, sure!" I said. And was able to get out towels, turn on the heat lamp and all in my own home! We all sat and laughed as she splashed about and sang in there!

It was about ten then and we all beginning to yawn. They began to gather their stuff and Sarah lighted us down trail darting ahead like a dancing firefly. with my little flashlight,

"What happened to this one?" I'd asked, getting out my big one and finding it wouldn't light though I had just put in a new expensive battery, for it was my "scare-off" light.

"Oh. Noticed the kids had left it on the last time we were up." Dennis said... Ah well.

\* \* \* It was all fun! What we'd been waiting for! \* \*

"Hey! Look!" everybody cried. "Stars!" We all stood in the cul-de-sac and exclaimed over the stars."Been so long since we've seen them!" we all cried. You don't—you can't—see stars anymore—the city lights—

It was too bad if we disturbed the neighbors watching in the floodlighted-from-fear, ugly little, city-type jerry-built houses down there with all our glad cries and goodbyes. It was all great!

Dennis even reported that he found his unemployment extended and he thought he could get back on at Sears. He estimated that the insulation would cost about \$250.

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**August 8, Friday.** This was the day I'd have to go to town and borrow some money to give the kids to buy a refrigerator. I wake to rather unhappy things: the bathroom pipe is really banging; news says thunderstorms today; and King county got ash fall from Mt. St. Helens.

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Later, I took the garbage out and let out a loud "Oh no!" There is ashfall—and not light, either—all over my car! I feel very sad; I thought I had escaped that stuff. Back under the trees there is little evidence of ash. They stopped it, which is good, but I wonder what rain washing it down onto the skylights will do to them—ruin them?

The telephone problem I'm still working on and evidently will be, for the mail brings me about the silliest piece of thinking I've ever seen. A card from the telephone company:

"We could not get ahold of you by phone about your request for a phone. Please phone us."

...after all that explanation to them about why I couldn't phone.

I got ready and went to Monroe, stopping at Cases' to borrow their hose to rinse off the car. The ash fall was not as bad in town. People seemed not the least concerned about it. That's because they are so lethargic about anything that happens, and also because they have no idea of how bad it can be.

At the bank, charging \$200 for the kids on my charge card was much easier than I had thought it would be and payments will be only \$10 a month.

While in town, I happened upon a big remnant of russet nagahyde material and got it with the idea I might put it down temporarily on the bathroom floor to cover that splintery particle board that I hate so—the way it stains and soaks up water. Because it will be one of my ideas that will be laughed at, I hid it when I got home until I had a chance to experiment with it.

I hurry home from Monroe for it is hot, crowded and ugly down there and I have some things I want to get done before the kids' visit.

9:00 p.m. I am exhausted. I got the cabin all cleaned and organized for their visit and Dennis' work areas cleared for about the umpteenth time. then I went up and tackled the shelf for which Dennis had cut me a board .

The shelf. I had two reasons for doing it then: (One) I was excited about doing it and didn't want to wait for a better time. (Two) I was sick and tired of all those bales of papers sitting around in the way there. And I was sick and tired when I got through. For it turned out a real big, hard job, though it was nice to have electricity to be able to work at night.

It turned out crooked. I knew it would; my shelves always do. But it is not easy to put a shelf straight in slanted walls! And then...and then...it finally done! I put all the papers on it—

and it all came crashing down!

In the ensuing cussing scramble I hurt my back, or it gave out on me. It is very painful. But ————ouch! I did it!

Wearily, I banished the clock radio from my bedside to get rid of the annoying clicking, dug out my hot pad and went to bed. The thunder storm never materialized.

I slept until the radio woke me at 7...and things were better. I just lay there, enjoying the sun flooding the cabin and dust motes floating in the rays, and the sun peek-a-booming in trees outside. The house was neat and clean. I'd discovered a teeny tiny half egg shell on the porch beneath our pet bird's rafter nest. We are a "family"!

It was all so nice compared to the news coming in about the world out there: Seattle all socked in in fog; Mt. St. Helens glowing and threatening; and a minor earthquake off the Oregon coast. I was glad I was where I was.

August 10. Sunday. Afternoon. The kids just left. I don't know for sure what time it is—the clocks off. We had the electricity off and on so much—about 2:30 p.m., I think. the weather was sunny and hot the two days they were here. And now, just as I predicted, the minute they left, it got all dark and muggy. The thermometer reads 80° in here and it feels like a thunderstorm coming. I should go out and haul things in in case of rain, but I am too exhausted, physically and emotionally. And, again, I have a grueling all day cleaning job to do.

### ~ Overnight Visit ~

Exhausted. Depleted. For this visit was as bad as the last one was good.  
They say they'll be back Tuesday. Umm.

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They came about 10:30 a.m. Saturday. I was all ready for them except that I had a splitting headache and backache all day for some reason.

We talked over coffee and the delicious blueberry muffins Abbie had brought. The leisurely two days they'd expected to spend here were not to be, it seems. They had to leave early and go back and tend Godfrey's rabbits which might die in the heat we'd been having.

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So Dennis went to work frantically, while Abbie and Noah went to Monroe to shop. Sarah and I walked down to check out the swimming pool. Lu said there'd been no ashfall in it, but I could see sandy grit in the bottom.

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When Abbie came back I offered to take the kids swimming, thinking they'd enjoy being alone together for awhile. The pool was no longer empty. It was just crammed with unfriendly, rather unpleasant people I didn't know, mostly women and kids. It was my first swim that year and—oh! my aching back!

But all better once I got in and the lazy summer feeling came over me. I fooled around with the kids for awhile and then got out and sat in the sun and did my toenails, an ill-bred thing I would not have done around people I cared about. The kids were very good. They stayed in two hours, but then, hunger and chill, I made them get out. And they were very good about that. We went back.

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Abbie said it had been nice. She'd spent the time on the west porch. We had a lunch of sandwiches to Dennis' laments he wasn't going to have enough stuff to work with. This, and my back bothering me again, I was relieved when he took the kids swimming again later.

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Besides my back I was bothered by what seemed to be some kind of trouble going on between Dennis and Abbie. And I was confused as to what their plans were. Things became a bit uptight. They had also brought their cat with them, which complicated things a bit.

The days were getting shorter now; it was getting dark early and we were running late. I got some hash browns going and they went down to get their hibachi broiler going. We didn't have Ron again, thank goodness, but the kids were kind of wild, chasing the cat around and I was unable to distract them to keep them out of Dennis' way.

After we ate and I had done the dishes, Dennis chased me out, saying he wanted to work some more. Abbie had gone down and built a bonfire, even though it was so warm, and she sat there and fussed with it endlessly and egged the kids on to build it higher and higher. Dennis had said she'd expected me down there. So I'd gone down and sat there. But it was strange.

We had already drunk the beer and wine I'd bought. I was hurting and Abbie seemed moody. But we all sat until Noah whined he wanted to go to bed, so Dennis took him up to be with him and I went to arrange sleeping and so on. I'd told Dennis and Abbie to take my bed; I'd sleep on the divan and the kids in the loft.

When I went back down to Abbie, she was polite enough, but moody and uncommunicative. She said she'd like some more wine, and when Dennis came back down, he said he would, too. It was late and all the stores, as far as I knew, were closed. But Dennis insisted he knew of a place in Sultan and so we pooled what little money we had and he left as the kids put up a wail, "Who's going to stay with us!?"

"I am," I said. Abbie was still down there moodily nursing the fire.

The kids were now fighting over which one was going to sleep in "my" bed up there and Sarah was crying. I put the dishes away, hoping they'd quiet down for I wasn't "supposed" to discipline them. But I finally yelled at them, "I'll give you ten minutes!" At last they were quiet and asleep by the time Dennis got back.

So Dennis and Abbie and I sat down by the fire. There wasn't much wine and I would have liked more than the sip I pretended was all I wanted, for I was tired and aching. We weren't very gay down there. Dennis finally went back up to the house to work some more.

I sat and watched Abbie burn up all that wood Marylyn and the boys had gathered for me. She seemed so obsessed with keeping a big fire going that I began to kid her about being a pyromaniac. Dennis had come back down and was trying to tell her how to build the fire. They began to snap at each other. I left them for awhile and they talked privately and then they, too came in.

It was about midnight then and Dennis said, "I could use another drink." To head him off any more chasing around on the highways, I 'fessed up to having some watered-down whiskey. So we drank that.

They were really snapping at each other. I tried to play mediator and cheer things up, but it didn't work. Then, suddenly—  
"Oh la de da!" Abbie cries. "I think I'll take a shower!" And she comes out with her hair washed.  
"Drink?" I ask her.  
"No."  
"Pie?"  
"Yes."

While she was eating her pie, I tried to brighten things: "My your hair looks pretty!" and "My, sure is good pie you made!"

Dennis and I started to talk. Abbie suddenly goes to the piano and starts playing "Home on the Range" (the one song Noah could play.) this, of course, woke him up. Finally, Dennis said he was going to take a shower. Somehow we got through the night.

I do not know what the friction was between Dennis and Abbie. they did not say or talk in front of me. From conversation subjects brought up once or twice—a clash over their future? different wishes concerning like style anent their considering bying that remote piece of land? a major decision to make? I could only guess.

When I gave them the money for the refrigerator, I was surprised at their reaction: there was no excitement or thanks. They just pocketed it with a grimace and look at each other. Puzzled, it suddenly occurred to me there'd be no electricity at that land they were contemplating? It sounded too primitive, not even a road in. I began to hope they wouldn't do it, but I said nothing.

**August 11, Monday. New ashfall from the mountain! Will it ruin the skylights? Ashfall on my car! I will have to add washing it again to my things of things to be done.**

Mail brings me a big envelope of District 1 employee news and a letter from Bishop, containing another promise to come up. And he says he has a ticket for me for a tour of their new Mormon temple he'd invited me to see way last October.

Beginning clean-up—**Dismay!** My expensive straight-edge drawing board in the loft; the intricately balanced wire is **broken!** The kids? I must find a way to keep them out of the loft and my art tools.

- Morning projects;
- I made a chart of our electrical circuits and posted it inside the circuit box and padlocked it. Someone had told me to as they do have cases of people tampering with the boxes.
  - I finished connecting up all my electrical lamps where I wanted them.
  - I got the loft all cleaned and ready for Dennis' next construction mess.
  - I cleaned up outside—the "yard".
  - I washed the ash off the car. The hose didn't reach so I lugged water down, but it turned out to be not too big a job for the ash seemed to have mostly disappeared.

**That night—12:50 a.m.**

What a panic that was! I woke and found it so warm inside that I opened the door to check if it cooler out there. Warm! I debated; the news had said there'd be a meteor display that night, which it wouldn't be possible to see in cities because of all the lights. This was one of the advantages of living in the country. I wondered if I wanted to walk down to the cul-de-sac and see if I could see them.

I wanted to, but I decided not because they were to be in the northeast where I couldn't see the sky because of the intervening hill. And there might be clouds. Also, it so quiet down there, if I went down I'd start all the dogs barking. I sighed and went back in. And started to pick up the mess in there. I went out to the west porch to put some food in the cooler.

Oh no! The door locked! I couldn't get back in!

And had I locked the other door—as I usually do? Then I remembered the emergency key I had finally gotten stashed under the front steps. Was it still there?

In panic and heart pounding in the utter dark I felt my way along the path alongside the house with my bare feet. By feel alone... amidst the poisonous spiders?...I found the key. Tried it. No! I'd locked the deadbolt. Frantically, I shook the door, the windows, even the little bathroom window. No, Dennis had just put the new latch on it.

I was locked out! Nor could I sleep in the car; my car keys were inside. What in hell should I do? Wouldn't I look a fool when Dennis came the next day and I'd spent the night on the ground in the woods? I wept. And then I desperately and futilely shook and pounded on everything. No. All well locked. Should I break a window? Oh no! no!

Then—Oh! the key unlocks the deadbolt, too...it's very difficult; the lock set in a bit askew...but...Mike had shown me how to do it when he put it in, insisting I must have very secure locks...I got in. Phew!

I had very secure locks all right.

**That evening** I had taken a shower, feeling as if I were in a city apartment again with all my new niceties and luxuries and I rather missed the adventure of the "camping out" days...I cooked zucchini, a neighbor's gift that Abbie had brought me. I spent the evening measuring and sketching to show Dennis what I had in mind about some things.

I felt as if I were back in the city again. The woodsy things seemed to have receded; even my little house bird gone. Dead. Sarah had found it dead. We did not know if the cat had killed it or not. It made us very sad...and I missed it.

I wondered if I'd ever get my house in order and just be able to relax and enjoy it. When Dennis is through? Maybe when the kids are back in school? Dennis had said this time, "I'm tired of driving up here all the time! Maybe I won't come back up for awhile."

And I'm tired of constantly cleaning up messes.

Perhaps we need a bit of time out?

**August 12, Tuesday.** Thus far I'd always managed to be up, dressed and ready when the kids came. This time I got caught. I was just getting up—about 9 a.m.—still in my robe—when Dennis came, unexpectedly. He alone. To work. And he very anxious to get at it as he said he'd have to leave by three.

But we took time over coffee to discuss what needed to be done and go over the sketches I had made the night before—(we clashed on some things.) I showed him where I'd cleaned out places for him to work, but it seemed he had other ideas.

"Well, first, we have to go go get some lumber." He had made some estimates.

"Oh, \$25 or \$30," he said. "You got that much?"

"Oh, sure," I said, though I was trying to hold out money for Mike.

"Sure?"

"Sure."

"Let's go." I rushed to get dressed.

We went down to the bottom of the hill, to Smith and Carlson's, a place I hated but Dennis seemed to prefer. I waited around and let him and that young guy hassle about green and dry lumber.

Then Dennis told them, "No!" and walked out.

"What's the matter?" I asked him outside.

"Shot down," he said. "They want \$200 for what we need."

We sat glum, lamenting; we didn't have \$200.

"We gotta give up," Dennis said, glum.

"What alternatives do we have to cover the walls with?" I ventured.

"Well..."

We went back in and looked at other things, debated a bit, and then walked out again. There was nothing.

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"You want to try Dunbar's?" I asked Dennis, who was ready to give up.

"Oh...yeah..."

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So we went, (I praying hard.)

"You got any cheap T&G?" Dennis asked the man.

"Go and ask (so and so) in the shop."

We found what we wanted! For only \$50!

I stood around nervous as hell, and smoking, wondering about the money; if I'd be able to make it, while Dennis loaded up his station wagon himself, bitching and bitching about what all that heavy stuff was going to do to his car.

And when we went back in to pay the bill, I noticed they had a sale of really good saws. We had only that old, bent, rusty one.

"Shall we get a saw?" I asked. "Oh, let's do it!" I cried and wrote out a check for \$66.

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We drove very carefully home, crawling, that car almost down on the paving with that heavy load and Dennis bitching and bitching about whether we'd make it. We did.

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And then Dennis was in good spirits again and wanted to get right to work.

"You want a ham sandwich and glass of beer first?"

"Oh, yeah."

Then he got to work and I just roamed around more or less attending him.

We were very happy then, working along together.

"Clean out under the stairway," he said. I did, though that job was not one of my priorities. What a mess and chaos! Then he decided he wasn't going to do that job.

"Ya got the heater directions?"

"Yeah."

So he went to work dismantling the heaters and taking out the insulation from around them; seems it was dangerous. (Why hadn't they told us that when they put them in?) He spent half his work time on that. And I was very thankful: I hadn't known about that risk!

Then he wanted to finish the loft end wall, again a job I would have postponed, but he went up and worked on it while I fussed and puttered downstairs. He was working frantically against time now. But we took time out for a beer and we got the giggles coming up with crazy ideas for a tiny doorway for that understairs storage closet.

He went back to work then, agreeing to my fixing him a brown bag lunch to eat on the way back. I warned him when it was 3 o'clock.

"I know! I know!" He rushed to finish up...

and left.

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**August 13, Wednesday.** I woke to dreary weather outside. Dennis had said he wouldn't be back until maybe the week end...I've had no reply from Mike or answers to letters I sent off about other problems. I decided to just stick around and putter: go to McNabb's and phone about that telephone again; tell Case I gave Dennis his number to call if they need to get hold of me...I could get stoned on preservative stain for porches...those termites I found! bothered me...

I would like to get the big projects over and have September free, for I have dates in Seattle—the Hambly party and so on.

I very much wish we could get this construction mess over with; it's been a long, hard summer.

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**Tuesday evening:** I hadn't been using the stove, depending on the little electric heater during the warm weather. That night I decided to build a fire in the stove. The stove was jealous of the heater?—mad at me for not using it? for it bit me! The lid slammed down on my right hand and gashed my thumb joint. All I needed! Next thing I heard great sobs; I was crying. It was all just too much.

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Dennis had agreed to hassle the inspector again. Then I had a distressing thought: Oh no! the telephone! I forgot in all that chaos; they wanted to put in the wiring before the paneling was up and Dennis had finished it! But they hadn't come when agreed upon. Again I raged about the erratic, undependable, rural tradesmen; one simply couldn't get any good service at all!

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I did some **summing up:**

- My fret about not hearing from Mike about the electric bill; I was appalled to find it had only been a week since I mailed it to him. And it didn't seem possible that it had been a month since they'd left.

- Dennis and Abbie. I checked: they had been up 6 times in July, 4 times in August equaled 10 times in 2 months. Dennis came alone only 2 times.

- The electricians: It took them 12 working days before they finished the job. Of this time they spent only 4 days actually working.

- The telephone. It'd been 2 weeks I'd been trying with them.

- It's been only 4 days since the ashfall.

- I'd been here 56 days—1 month and 26 days. Everything sure seemed longer than these actual times.

- The weather? Well, I hadn't kept a complete record, but about 29 nice days—say a month of—not bad?

- Money? I have \$136 left; \$61 in cash. And I'll have to pay the telephone out of that. And there are 19 days to go before my "payday" again. Oh no! checks-due day comes on a holiday again! And ouch! Dennis had said he had a big gas bill for the car coming to me.

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**Evening:** The day that had started out so gloomy turned out to be a social and productive one, after all. It was 1 p.m. before I was ready to leave. And then, woe; my car was a mess—covered with ashfall again and this time worse, for all mixed with aphid "honey". Another job to do. I would have to use Case's hose again. But there was nobody home either there or at McNabb's. I went on to the store.

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My one big aim for the day was to contact the telephone company. McNabbs were still gone when I came back, but Edith was home alone. She was in curlers and drinking coffee. We chatted. (I find her very dull; she has no sense of humor whatsoever.) I told my tales and troubles. She offered the use of their phone.

So I called the telephone company again. This time I got them, but what a long mess and runaround. It was a very uncomfortable session; my voice was a croak and there was no chair by the phone till Edith finally brought one as I argued with the girl that answered and tried to explain my long, complicated story.

"I can't hear you!" she said. "I don't understand what you want. Wait!"

I sure did wait, all the time nervous about the expense of the call and Edith listening, perhaps critically? The people I finally talked to—some girls and one man—were alternately nasty/impatient and sickly sweet and "charming", "Well thank you for waiting!"

"You should!" I snotted.

"What?" (Oh never mind.) I tried to get through to this woman. "A-frame—you can run wire underneath," And soon after, I'd confessed to the paneling already in, to which she said,

"Oh then we can't!"

Edith was making pertinent and common sense remarks, such as "That call should be free!" and "How do they put wires in finished houses?"

"Look," I finally said, a bit impatient, "This Johnnie Slack offer..."

"Hunh? Oh...that!" I gathered it was just some kind of a sales gimmick.

We went on quibbling, getting nowhere. It was a mess of a call and we ended up still confused. All I got out of it was that they'd call Case's and let me know if and when someone would come up.

Price-wise, Lu said they were paying \$18 a month for a private line. Edith said they paid \$4.10 a month for a 3-party line and she'd already had trouble with some drunken bitch on the line.

I asked if I could use the hose to wash the car off? "Sure," she said. It turned out to be a longer, harder job than I'd anticipated. I did it alone. Case had come back, but didn't show. I left wet and dirty.

And went back and waxed the car in the cul-de-sac, finding it difficult as the wax wouldn't dry in the damp climate. While waiting for it, I went down and found McNabbs home and told them my tales. How we laughed...and bitched at "services" around here.

They filled me in on some of the happenings around—the Carroll's fire and things. And Marv tried to sell me a ticket to their pancake feed the day of the parade—Labor Day. Their phone rang and they had to go; something about a dinner date with the Easterleys. I was envious: that dinner date sounded so good and I was famished!

I went back and polished the car and dug out some plastic and covered it. Then I worked on those two little alder stumps that blocked space to allow two cars to park out there. One stump gave; one didn't. I gave up.

August 14, Thursday. I woke, refreshed, at dawn and began to work on my cabin files.

Insulation required was a Federal ruling (for FHA and HUD.) So it would be no use hassling Snohomish County about it? But I not on a loan; this place paid for—cash. Therefore I exempt?

Electricity. It took 3 months to get the electricity in—all that hassling and waiting. Reviewing Markley's and Darwin's rather informal "bids", I decided that my choice of Darwin ("OK"Electric) had been cheaper; at least I'd kept it under Mike's limit of \$1400.

Lu had asked me, one day, when I'd been bitching about the poor work by "OK", "If it's any of my business, how much did they charge you?"

"\$1312."  
"Mmmmm," she said and her eyes "thought" and she made no further comment.

Telephone. Figuring where...I don't want a wall phone—have had them—I can't see to dial(bi-focal glasses). Desk phone cost more, but...worth it. Party line...ok...for the difference in price (and maybe I can catch some of the local gossip!)...mmm...be odd to have a phone again...

? ? ? ?  
Maybe? Maybe? Soon I can get it all done and start having some fun? If I can just get this house working! September—a lot of things I want to do: the local parade for the Fair; Seattle, the Hambly party; visit to Aunt Alice...and to Arnie and Merla... and to Bud and Paula (when Mimi and Joe will be there) and then...October.. the tour of the Mormon temple Bishop promised...Maybe? I can get my good clothes out again and start—traveling! and having fun! ? ? ?

(Edith had said, today, "But ya gotta socialize!" She can't imagine anyone living alone—her kicks are clubs and bowling. "Bet you'll go back to work!" she said.

Electricity. Going through that file earlier, and coming across an article about what to do when the power goes off changed my mind about putting away forever all my camping gear: sterno stove, candles, flashlights...maybe I'd better keep them to hand?

- Laundry. I'll have to find some solution about that...
  - Lu: tied down at home (Marvin ill)...I'll miss her visits up here; enjoyed.
  - My garden. It isn't doing well at all...
    - Dennis' gas bill: \$65! Ouch!..
    - Radio news: West Seattle draw-bridge stuck—the route Dennis and Abbie have to take—will complicate their getting up here?...

Afternoon. I spent most of it cleaning out my cabin file and was glad to note that we seemed to be making some progress...and then... I ended up doing one of those jobs you don't really intend to do, y'know?

Like...It all started with realizing I could get out my electric toothbrush now. But to do that →  
→I'd have to put up a shelf to put it all on, but I couldn't put up a shelf until—Dennis wanted the walls sanded ←→  
→ which couldn't be done until the cracks are filled in so ←→  
→ I'd just fill in the cracks around where I wanted the shelf →  
→ but I'd have to sand, first. I actually plugged in Dennis' electric sander, and, scared, used it a bit →  
→ and then I mixed up some caulking goop, but →  
→ got the recipe wrong and had to mix more...  
and so on, and so on...

Did I ever get the toothbrush out or the shelf up?  
Hell, no!

I spent all afternoon filling in the big cracks in the bathroom walls where the green lumber had shrunk. I ended exhausted, but glad to have that biggie job over with.

Another job I did. In my file I'd found something about wood could be bleached with ordinary household bleach. So I wasted a lot of electrical heat leaving windows open to dispel chlorine fumes as I tested washing down the blackened areas where lumber had been left out in the rain. It worked. At least I got rid of some of that black...fungus?

Another job done. Garbage rates going up Sept. 1, I checked all for garbage to put out and was pleased to find underneath cabin surprisingly clean. And that I'd no longer need all my myriad electrical extensions I'd had to use in that slum apartment in Vancouver; now I had plenty of outlets! code said there had to be som every 6 feet!

That evening. I heard something rustling in the bushes down by where I'd put the chaise longue in the salmonberry patch. I saw the bushes wiggle. I stood and watched, trying to be quiet; evidently something was down in there... then...I jumped! as...the hatchet fell behind me! But it didn't seem to disturb the mysterious intruder.

Then there was a boom! boom!—two very loud explosions and branches and leaves rained down all over in the woods down there..and...whatever it was...fled. With much noise.

Was it the grouse? I don't know.

There was another chore I should have done; clean out area under stairway where Dennis wanted to make a storage place, but I was too tired to do it then. I went and stretched out on the porch, noting that already the long, warm sunny evenings when one could lie out there were about gone..a touch of fall in the air...dogs were barking frantically somewhere about something... I thought about how I really should build a fire in stove to dry out that wood I had washed down, but a fire needed tending and I was too tired; I was the one that needed tending! — — — —

I thought about the difference in people's approaches to the woods; how Edith had told me that Case wanted to cut down that huge, beautiful evergreen on their lot. "Why?" I'd asked her.

"Why, he says he can build a whole house out of the wood in that tree!"  
Somehow I was shocked.

August 15, Friday. I awoke early again to a glum morning and glum thoughts: August was half over; the summer about gone.

I would have to get with those outside painting jobs, the windows, the porches. Would September be a nice "Indian" summer when I could do these things? I didn't know. I decided I'd better buy some paint.

• Summer about over: Bob and Dave, my two nice helper guys from Vancouver job  
• had sworn they would come up to see the cabin. Bishop and his family had  
• never come, but now vacation times would be over soon..  
• ... The telephone company; they sure weren't beating my door down to get my

service in...The pancake feed—whatever in hell they are...that fool fair...

I went to Monroe. I went to the bank and was dismayed at how low on money I was; I wouldn't have much to spend at the fair.

I stopped at McNabb's and phoned the kids and had kind of a family conference about what we were going to do about the fair. They said they'd come up but had no money so they wouldn't bring food. Dennis said he'd gone back to work at Sears—thirty hours and \$300 a week—but, of course, wouldn't be paid for awhile. I wondered if he went back to work if he'd ever have time to do all that carpentry work.

I went on home not very happy.

There I began to check the painting project. I found the paint was the wrong color. And then, before I could start—that gal had said one absolutely had to wash down and destroy all fungus on the wood or the preservative would not work. That was a gruesome task I hadn't counted on. But I decided, even though nightfall nigh, I was going to prepare, at least, that little bathroom window to paint; I'd waited three years for this!

7:25 p.m. Oh, that was fun! I got started—at last!—on my long-treasured windows. The man at the lumber store had told me how to repair that badly beat up little bathroom window: "Have to be completely puttied; use linseed oil."

Well, that was fun! I worked in the waning light by the new bug light I'd gotten for the porch lights. While i was doing it some really big bird flapped through the tree, reminding me of things Lu had told me: that the black dog had encountered porcupines again, and that a hawk got someboy's chickens. These bucolic things never happened in the slums of Vancouver!

I overdid, of course. With the putty and the tools out I checked all the downstairs windows and, as usual, one thing led to another and I found myself preparing all those windows for painting. Beginning to realize what a job it was going to be, I got the bright idea that maybe I could con Abbie into painting one? Not the ones I had to fix, or the ones that would be in Dennis' way, but there was that one by porch she and Sarah could "play with"...Could I get a crew excited about working?

Thoughts while working...  
The fair: I'd have more money coming the first of the month—why not go for broke and really treat the kids at the fair? And—a trick I learned while entertaining Chris at Seattle Center: put the kids on the most sickening ride first—save money that way!  
That episode while I was shopping: Things that happen to you when you get old: A little boy didn't have quite enough money for his purchase. I gave him the two cents difference. The old lady at the cash register said, "Did you thank the old...err...nice lady?"  
Those bits of carpeting I bought: feel so nice under my bare feet. Would be nice if I could afford carteting all over...  
Dennis: Too bad. With that hard-won college degree, he has to slave labor in a warehouse!

**August 16, Saturday.**

**Morning.** Clouds predicted for the week end; that's bad news...I found a slug inside that old camping ice chest the kids loaned me. Unbelievable! The only way it could have gotten in was through that tiny drain hole! Ugh.  
11 a.m. the kids still hadn't come. I began to fret...car trouble again?

**11:30 the kids came**

By that time I had the place all cozy with a wood fire going and carrots cooking on same. It thrilled me to cook something on the stove after seeing it sit unused in my garage in Vancouver so long.

**August 17, Sunday. 4 p.m. The kids just left.**

The weather was very nasty all day. Rain. But we had a good time and got a lot done. Everything is all used up: my stock of food, my money, and Dennis used up all that wood and needs more and some more other stuff to work with again. It seems like it never ends.

But we're getting an awfully nice house here. We enjoy and love it.

Dennis got the sink wall in and a cupboard up there and the storage closet under the stairs done, and Abbie got almost all the pipes wrapped underneath, and I got one window partly painted. All this in the miserable rain.

They had come foodless and rather jolted me by announcing they were going to stay all night. That was ok, but I would have appreciated a little warning.

Each time after they leave, I find something broken. I suppose by the kids, though no one ever informs me. This time it was the handle on mother's little aluminum tea pot that works so beautifully sitting on the stove for an instant cuppa when the fire going. I should have know better than to serve the kids cocoa in it.

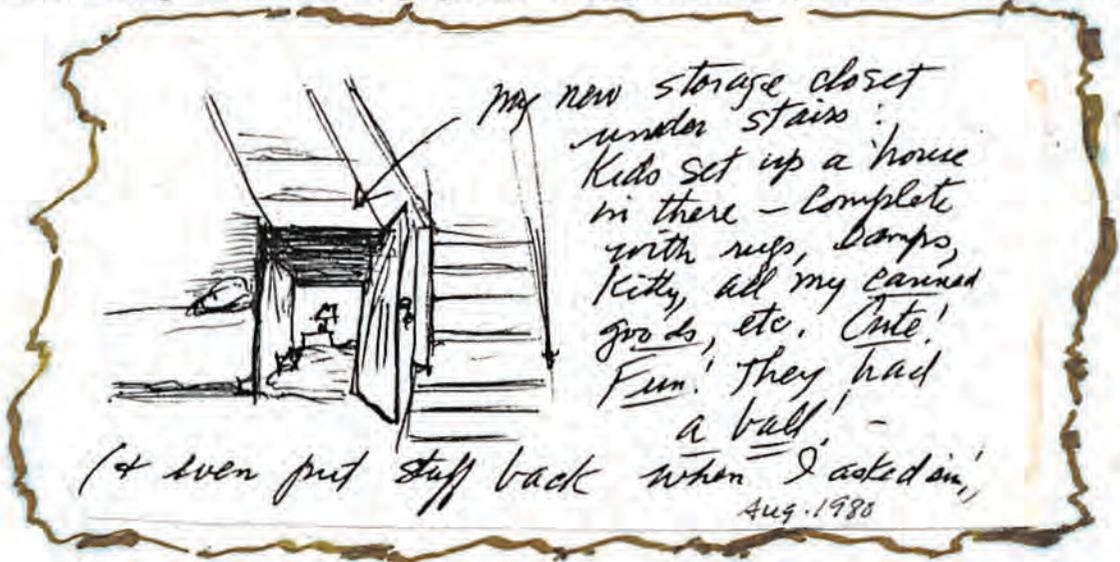
There was no swimming this time. It was too cold and we were all too busy. Saturday afternoon was our only nice weather. I must say the kids were very nice about it. They had brought their bikes and a new kitten, which was no bother except that we had to keep the doors closed to keep it from wandering off.

In our initial chat they informed me that they had lost out on the land deal near Godfrey's and that Dennis was back at work at Sears. I was relieved at both bits of news.

Dennis set to work then and Abbie and the kids and I went to Monroe for food. I enticed the kids away from staying and bothering Dennis by offering to treat them at that ice cream parlor. It was fun, though expensive. We spent a long time in there, grandma wanting the kids to try their old fashioned treats like penny candy and so on.

I had wanted to exchange that paint, but Dunbar's was closed.

After we got our groceries, we went back and the sun was out a bit. Dennis had finished the bathroom counter as per my request on priorities and was beginning on the understairs storage space, which, as soon as he finished the kids immediately turned into a playhouse asking me if they could move stuff in.



They began moving almost everything I owned in there—canned goods even. And they made a bed for the kitty in there and really had fun. We all enjoyed their fun with it. They even slept in there all night, which permitted me to sleep in the loft, also finished now, where I'd be more comfortable.

The dinner was good and we all laughed and enjoyed ourselves and the cabin, proud of our accomplishments. Abbie knitted on my bed spread which was almost done; Dennis worked hard on the woodwork and the kids played house; and I puttied the bathroom window. It was very nice, with the fire going and just enough wine and beer. Abbie began planning to have the holidays in the cabin.

The kids bedded down, Dennis, Abbie and I had a little celebration party. We got pretty boozed up. It was three a.m. before we got to bed. Abbie had begun playing the little organ, not heeding my warnings that Noah was waking up. So then I took a turn at it, and then Dennis took over and he and Abbie had fun going back through all the old music, "Remember this, Abbie?...and this?" and so on.

And then Dennis took a shower. (They all took showers this trip—a treat for them, having only a tub at home.) And then we went to bed, though I spent a rough night sneaking up to get an aspirin and cussing at that darned cat they'd put a bell on wanting in and out—in and out...

**The next day, Sunday,** wasn't quite so nice. We awoke to rain which never stopped, as said. Then we found that the cat had killed our little warbling house wren that nested up in the porch rafter. Dennis was furious; the bird had become a kind of mascot.

I then took the kids out and kept them busy transplanting ferns to the bared spot over the septic tank while Dennis worked and Abbie slept off her hangover.

I tried to let the kids make pancakes for breakfast, but it didn't work out very well; I hadn't the right equipment, for one thing.

And then, later, Abbie took the kids and went off to buy some things Dennis was out of and needed; seemed we were always out of something! She was gone so long I feared car trouble again, but they came back all right and reported that Monroe was wide open and jumping despite the rain.

Which, in spite of, we went ahead and worked anyway. We had every light in the place on trying to see in the gloom.

I got a bit uptight, what with the noise of Dennis' hammering and his asking me all the time "What do you want here?" or "What do you want there?"—all those decisions to make—while I tried to keep the kitchen clean enough for room to make a lunch of soup and sandwiches.

There were a couple of bad moments; once, when Noah began complaining that his jaw hurt and he couldn't close his mouth, and Abbie told me that he'd been having trouble with his tonsils.

And another time: Dennis was working on the paneling around the switch boxes, moving them where the electricians had not done as he'd asked them to do it. He called out for Noah to pull the circuit breaker for the area he was working on. Wondering what Noah would know about it I ran out just in time to see Sarah stand on her tiptoes and pull the main breaker.

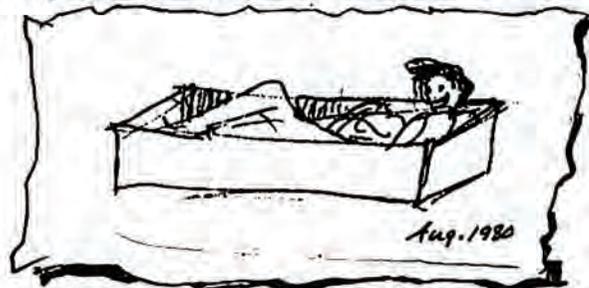
There was a roar from Dennis! "What happened!?"  
"Your daughter just pulled the main switch!" I cried.

And, later, when I found the kids playing at pushing the buttons on the electricity panel, I was mad and scared, and blew my stack and bawled them out. "Don't you kids ever do that again! Never! That's dangerous! That's not a game!" Subsequently I got a padlock and put on the box.

Once, I had expressed doubts about my being able to take being alone in such gloom in the winter. "Oh, it's always gloomy in the winter," Abbie said. While Dennis said, "Wouldn't a snowfall be beautiful in here?" "Yeah," I'd said, "but—snowed in? I'd sure like a cupboard for storing reserve supplies."

So one of the things Dennis was working on was that: a high shelf for reserve supplies. And I was so pleased and we all admiring his craftsmanship he put into everything; like a rope handle for the storage closet door, and now he'd carved curved supports for this cupboard, which he'd made in the form of a "box".

How we all laughed when, before it went up, Noah climbed into it as if a coffin. Funny!...  
(if a bit macabre.)



Dennis asked me which lumber I wanted for the storage closet walls: should he get new or use that salvaged "ship lap" he seemed to like so? I wasn't fond of it; it was weathered to a dreary grey, but I chose it because of expediency and cheapness. Later I learned to like it—rustic.

And I was disappointed in the "azure blue" window when I painted it, but we all talked ourselves into liking it.

Dennis didn't get the closet shelf in or the living room walls sanded as he'd wanted to do, but he couldn't stay as late now; he has to get back to work.

**Their leaving:** They all left happy. "Aren't we glad we got all that lumber used up outside before the rains started!" Abbie cried.

Dennis said he's going to buy himself a chain saw, and that they would have to get a new car soon; theirs was ruined by lugging all that lumber for the cabin. (that didn't make me feel very good!) He wants to get a pick-up and fix up the Jeep Abbie's dad gave her. All this despite the fact that his job at Sears is only temporary—until after the Christmas rush is over.

They announced that after this they wouldn't be up for two weeks, which disappointed me, as I'd counted on them to go to the parade and the raffle and all with me the next Saturday. But Abbie and the kids were going to Yakima and Dennis had to work and might not have the car. But they said they would be up for the Fair the week end of Labor Day. They talked vaguely of bringing the refrigerator up then, but nothing definite was said about it.

I gave Dennis a post card and Case's phone number so that he could communicate with me. "Let me know!" I said, "When you'll be up again!"

"Well, I may get bored (when Abbie away) and come up anyway," he said. "But...no gas!"

"Get some!" I said. He still had one of my gas cards.

It was after 4 p.m. when they left.

After they left I began thinking about the winter I'd have in cabin and things to be done before...~~heat:~~ the thermostatic heaters, I suppose ~~d,~~ would keep me warm. And Abbie making a heavy blanket...~~fire:~~ I would have to be very careful with fire and cigs: we'd made a hell of investment in wood here! ~~wood:~~ the mildew that had formed on the lumber left out. But I couldn't possibly climb all over the place and preservative it. And the termites were swarming...how long? how long? Ten? Twenty years? Well, I wouldn't be here then...

**That evening:** I fell asleep with weariness. I woke and reached to turn on the light.... There was a **flash!**

And a roar and rumble. Thunder and lightning! The house shook. The first storm!

**The next morning** when I got up I couldn't tell what time it was; all the clocks were off. It was hours before I caught the time on the radio. My first thought was it was due to the kids tampering with the circuit breakers...until much later, I caught the news...

21 transformers knocked out in Seattle!

**August 18, Monday.** I woke to very soggy woods and rain; a steady downpour ruined all my plans to paint. the only reason I got up was ~~perhaps~~ the telephone man would come? I certainly did not want to get up and face cleaning up that kitchen and putting it all back together for the umpteenth time. Maybe there'd be only two more dismantlings to go?

I lay and listened to that plumbing pipe banging. Dennis said he thought it was only the expanding/contracting of the pipe. But it still annoyed me. I listened to the deluge outside. I wondered if we'd ever be through and I'd get a chance to just live in the place without constant dismantling and reassembling.

I sighed, got up and tackled the kitchen. Through. All neat and clean again. I turned. Clean?

There was a huge live slug right in the middle of the floor!

I sighed. My post-visitors cleaning up was more so this time for the kids hadn't brought their sleeping bags; I had sheets to clean—and no washing machine. How was I going to do my washing? Even if I took it all down to a laundromat, my lugging cart wouldn't go through that cut in the nursing log on the trail. Dennis hadn't gotten around to widening that yet. I'd have to lug it all my hand?

I went out in the rain for the mail, chiding myself that, in spite of all I **did** love my house. At last! Something in the mail! In the usual (needless) bales of paper from my insurance company was a short, curt note: "My rates went up ;because I moved into a high risk area. Please remit." Puzzle: Why would these remote country roads be more high risk than the big cities I'd lived in before?

I opened another piece of mail—with foreboding. At last, the letter from Mike! His usual short note, but I let out a gasp of relief and joy: he sent a check and said he'd only expect payments of \$50 a month on repayment. And he said he'd been worried about me, not hearing. I went back in and wrote a post card to Dennis and Abbie with the good news.

And then I turned on the radio to see if I could find out about how close that lightning and crack of thunder during the night had been. The cabin had rocked as if in an earthquake. That's when I found out the storm had knocked out 21 transformers in Seattle—and yet our puny system was ok!

And I was dismayed to find that even that big storm had not cleaned the skylights. They said the storm was over, just as the sun came out where I was.

I went out to judge my blue windows and decided I liked them. (My idea on the "azure blue" was, the thick forest shutting out the sky, was to bring some "sky" "in.") Dennis had asked me if I was going to paint the door blue? Maybe I would! It depended on how much paint I had; that gal had a hard time mixing that color and wouldn't be able to match it again.

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**Early afternoon:** I went on with my housecleaning. I got the bedroom all neat and clean again just in time for here came the cutest gal from the telephone company. A gal to do that work! She was very pretty and charming and dressed in overalls with perfume yet!

She just raved about the cabin. then, my clean bedroom became a mess again as she and I spent an hour, she under the house and I above, trying to snake that wire through the tiny hole she'd drilled. We finally got it done. She said there were two more stages when the guys would have to run the line in, but I wouldn't have to be home. When I asked her how she'd found the place she said she'd called Case and asked.

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After she left I woefully surveyed the new mess. But then I just left it and took a break and went to the store. Only to feel dismay again when I found the plastic I'd put over the car hadn't done any good; there were too many holes in it. But I was cheered to see and feel the sun on my way to the store. Until I got back and found it still chill and dark and gloomy the the cabin. And the radio announcing that the good weather would not last—that it would be bad again by the weekend.

Despite the gloom in the cabin I went ahead and vacuummed and unpacked, getting the worst over. It took me till 8 p.m., but then I was ready for the fun part—so long awaited; I could unpack my "pretties" and start to pretty up my new home at last!

Ah no...Another disaster: my big green chair was busted—the leg on it. Odd;it hadn't been—last week. I had to sidetrack and battle that difficult job. It was 9 p.m. before I had the house all vacuummed and all boxes unpacked. But I felt moved in at last. At least only the final stages remained: pay off the electric, finish up the phone battle, and one more inspector to go.

My back was killing me, but I was elated to get on the scales I'd just unpacked and find out I'd lost weight! I was so tired, but I made myself cook some food, only to find what looked like a worm in that ground meat I'd bought in the store down the hill. I ate. And then I gave up and crawled into bed.

Dennis had apologized for not being able to come up for 2 weeks; I was glad of the reprieve: I had lot to do.

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I woke in the middle of the night and showered and washed and set my hair to be ready to go to town the next day.

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**Tuesday, August 19.** I was delighted to wake and see the sun streaming in, but I was also annoyed; it would be a good day to paint, and I had to go to town. And I hadn't gotten that putty on the window. It would have dried in this sun.

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When I got up I found myself stiff. And I was puzzled by a few things: radio said there was not sun in Seattle. Odd. And the cabin floor is so cold, and the house shakes when I walk; I don't remember it doing that before.

Going out to post a letter I found there was still volcanic ash on my car. Later, after I'd made out a check to pay the electricity off and was alarmed at how low my money was getting, I was delighted to get a refund in the mail of \$23 from "Ma Bell" telephone company in Vancouver. I wished I were back with them! What a difference in the two companies!

An inspection tour showed, as I walked around enjoying the sun, that the storm had flattened my bean vines that had started to grow around the cabin foundations where I had planted them.

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**Monroe:** My day in Monroe was great! I dressed all up since I would be seeing so many people. I spread the car plastic out to dry while I was gone. And I left loaded with money: Mike's check and the telephone rebate. It was a good feeling to have money again after so long.

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I went first to the drive-in window at the bank, where the girl made a mistake and got all fouled up, but I left with money.

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Just before noon I went to "OK Electric". Having learned it was hard to find a place to eat in Monroe, I had brought a sandwich to eat. I was so excited: I was going to pay off the electricity at last! So I was very disappointed when my fun gal, Nancy, whom I'd worked with so long, wasn't there. There was just that very dull woman.

"Would you give me a receipt?" I asked.  
"Well...yes...," she seemed reluctant. "Ok. If you just sign this bill."  
I did. She wrote something and then added "paid in full". What a thrill!  
I tried to kid with this unkidable woman. "Uh...about insulation...I want to ask Darwin about it..."  
She made a note. The telephone rang—a long distance call.  
I gave up and went out to the car.

Outside I ran into Lu and Marvin who were buying some big electrical equipment from a man who, if it were Darwin, seemed to be in no hurry to answer his long distance call. (the woman had said it was for him.)

"Whatcha buying?" I asked Lu.  
She gave me a kind of "none-of-your-business" answer and seemed to be in a hurry. "We gotta be in Snohomish!" she said.

I was just about to leave when Marsh and Nancy drove in. Now the whole gang was there! I tried to kid and joke them and have fun.  
I signaled to Lu (Is that Darwin?) She nodded. "Uh...that insulation you said we had to have..."  
But he only quibbled and gave me conflicting run-around answers.  
"You'd better be nice to me!" I joked, "I just paid my bill!"  
But he just said, "I've got a long distance call!" and fled.  
I tried to chat with Lu, but she still seemed nervous and said again that they had to be in Snohomish. (Well, hell with them all; they aren't any fun) As I left, Nance and Marsh waved to me.

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Next I went to Dunbar's, and there I did have fun! with that cute, nice artist gal that had mixed the paint for me and her boss. "That (blue) paint you mixed for me was ok!" I said to her, but this sale item I got is not the right color." They let me exchange it.

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The I went fooling around Monroe, loathe to go back so soon when all dressed up. I made a search for the library, but I couldn't find it. I picked up a few things for the cabin, feeling rich..a thermometer was one of them. I tried to quip and kid with everyone, but they all acted as if they didn't know what I was talking about. I gave up and went home.

---

I was very excited. I had all these new things for the cabin and reprieves in time, money and weather, I stopped at Case's, feeling friendly, but this time there were no glad cries to come in and have coffee. There were different cars around and Case was outside. And he kept me out there, acting so nervous that I just left, puzzled.

It was such a lovely day and so pretty in my woods. The car plastic I'd spread out to dry was—dry. Before I even changed my clothes I opened that new paint to check it. Yes! This color would be right!

I went out to cover the car again. As I worked on it Ron and his cousin? were yelling and shouting like maniacs down below there on the street. The one boy called to the other, "I can't hear you!" Thinking I was just muttering under my breath, I said, "Well, I can hear you!" "Hey, that lady up the street says she can hear us both!"

I was so eager to get with my chores while the weather was nice. The storm had washed away all signs of the ashfall. I decided I'd better get the porch steps done while the weather would dry it and before the horde came back to track through it. I started to work with that "poison formula" to take off the mildew. it was not fun; it was hard work. But I got excited when I got down to the original wood: two or three years of mildew stain were off! Then I did the puttying of the windows.

Now I was ready to paint those windows I had bought so long ago from those fun people !

As I worked, I thought about the day's encounters: . . . . .  
: Buying some primer to put on the bathroom walls, I had asked that gal, "About that paint—can I use it inside? outside?"  
: "You can use the outside in but you can't use the inside out."  
: We giggled. "Are you ok?" I asked.  
: . . . . .  
: I thought of Case and his saying he wasn't going to the Fair... "never heard of it," he claimed." Besides he had a meeting to go to."  
: And I thought of how much better and more blending into the setting my nice wood-colored house would be than his black and white painted house. Heck! He'd made his look as if in city. And I puzzled over the sudden switch in him: they'd been so fun and friendly until now, he and Edith. I hoped they weren't mad at me for some reason? For I needed them; they were the only neighborly neighbors I had!  
: . . . . .  
: I thought of the town of Monroe. I might change my opinion, but at that time I liked it; it was corny and ugly, but such "easy livin'"—no frantic big city hassles and I was starting to make a few friends around town. But prices were higher; like they wanted \$10 for a haircut, and I paid twice what I'd paid in Vancouver for a stationery item.  
: . . . . .

I worked on. I felt so happy and free and content! I was exhausted and the place was a mess again by the time I finished, But I was so excited; I was ready to paint! This was the fun part—what I'd been waiting for so long! I could hardly wait for morning and hoped it would be as nice a day as that day was so I could paint. I was beginning to "see the light at the end of the tunnel"!

In the evening I just sat at the picnic table and gloated. It had been a great day! Then I wandered around the half-acre admiring my work. Later I went in and went to bed, leaving all the heat on—expensive—but I wanted to dry out all that washing down I'd done. Oh, how I hoped for another nice day!

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**August 20, Wednesday.** Ready-to-paint day. Thud. I awoke to no sun. I went and checked the pre-paint work I'd done—porches. Had it really dried? or just soaked in? It was very cool in the cabin, only 60° in spite of leaving all that heat on the night before. Those electric heaters I do not like; they are so noisy! I can't hear the radio or what goes on outside...  
I checked the painting directions...and cursed. I'd thought I'd just open a can and start painting, but all this mixing and preparation and chemical warnings...Our modern miracles—sometimes I wonder...

What to wear to paint didn't matter; the only people I could expect to encounter would be the telephone guys...and I doubted that! I knew for sure there wouldn't be any friends dropping in, though it would be nice to have Lu or Case drop up as they used to, but unhappy changes there: Lu used to walk her dog my way. But now the dog was gone and Marv sick so she couldn't leave. And now Case's (estranged) wife was there with him, he seemed tied down and grumpy.

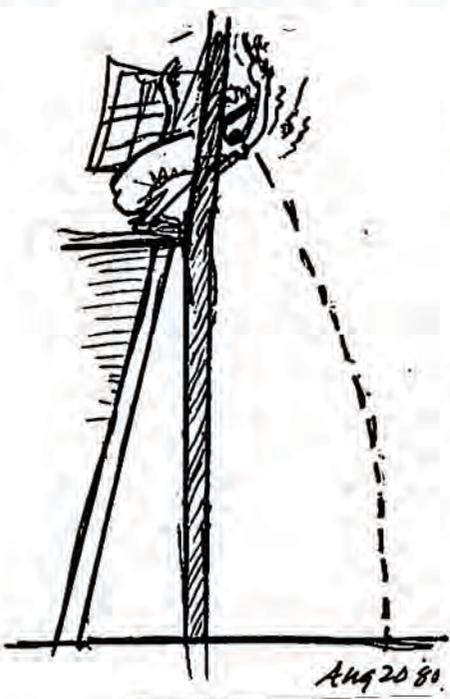
**Later in day:** I was in puzzlement and despair. All that slaving to make the wood destruction-proof—there was a little pile of red sawdust out of a tiny nail hole by the window frame that wasn't there the day before. Termites?

**Nigh noon:** I was furious. I was all ready to paint. I was waiting on the sun. Radio said sun out in Seattle; but not where I was. It was so dark I couldn't see to do the good job I'd have liked to do. Frustrated, I fooled around on other prep jobs waiting for sun. It was 3 p.m. before there was the first glimps of it.

**7:45 p.m. Finished!** I managed to get only the prep and primer done, but I did a good job! Two disasters were discovered in this period: one: right beside the smoke alarm I found two burn scars on that T&G paneling Dennis had just put up. What in the world? Didn't the thing work? Had there been a fire? then...relief! I remembered Dennis said he'd have to fill out with some imperfect pieces. But of all places to put them, Dennis!  
Two: water seemed to have come in from the porch to the living room. There was a leak?

I finished doing the two casement windows. And then I tried a crazy thing: to hasten the drying, I used my hair dryer on the closing parts of the windows. I did not want paint stuck windows like I had to suffer in that slum tenement!

I left the loft window till last, because I knew I'd be tired, but a sloppy job up there wouldn't matter so much. This was a mistake?



For I hadn't realized the height of that window and there was nothing to hang on to.

**It was scary!**  
I had to back out over that open space, hang on with one hand and reach behind me with the other and paint blindly.



It took me two hours to do just that loft window!  
And I didn't get through with them all until 6:30 p.m. Barred casements are...cute!  
But they sure are hell to paint! Especially when I found they'd need two coats.  
It was hard work!

And I spent the whole day playing games with the sun. it seemed personally and deliberately malicious: when I rested, it shone; when I wanted to work, it didn't. And it was cold and too dark to see. Cruel! cruel!...I'd waited

two...three...years to paint those windows! But...

The birds sang musically to me while I worked!

I was so tired when I got through that I was only able to dash off a letter to Mike and just fall into bed.

I awoke at dawn, and, to be sure that letter was out there to be picked up in case I overslept, I ran out then to post it. On the way I crashed into that temporary shelving I'd put up in the kitchen and everything came crashing

down—  
A mess! "One step forward and two steps back"!

But I only paused long enough to check that nothing was spilled or broken.

\_\_\_\_\_ To hell with it. \_\_\_\_\_

Outside, I, still hoping for more nice weather with which to finish, was dismayed to find it all foggy and the sound of dripping—yet no rain drops. Puzzled, I just went in and back to bed...

**August 21, Thursday**....and I didn't wake until after ten. It was gloomy and wet, but I was determined to get those windows done. It was noon before the sun came out and I was painting...blue...in more ways than one; it was now a chore and a bore.

**7:35 p.m.** I worked practically non-stop all day. But I still didn't get it all finished. It would take another day. If I could only get the outside done...then...let it rain.

The stain was nasty, greasy stuff to work with; a linseed oil base. It took awhile before I discovered, after laboriously using a brush, that it could be wiped on with a rag. The color was darker than I'd wanted, but at least it was a "warm" color and better than that depressing weathered grey. And it pulled all the various colored woods together in color.

I rushed so, against those conflicting weather reports on the radio that it was doubly exhausting. As mother used to say: "It isn't the work; it's the hurry." Then, through for the day, I contemplated the results. I'd gotten the "street side" done, all except the outside of the loft window. One more day. I couldn't, of course, reach the high places, but the effect was there; it looked...better.

**August 22, Friday:** Oh, my aching back! And hunger! I out of food. I'd taken rest breaks perusing those domestic magazines Abbie had left; All those yummy food pictures! Hunger drove me to get up in the middle of the night and consume a can of pickled beets..all the "instant" food I had.

I'd have to finish the painting this day, for the next day was the Parade in Monroe. I surveyed what I'd done. Yes—good. the stain color blended in with the color of the surrounding dirt in the woods. It wasn't the color I'd meant, but it was ok. The cabin looked had a more finished look than it'd had before. I had dribbled stain on the particle board by the door—just color for the interim. Looked fine.

**Evening.** Another full day of painting. I was tired, but it was a good tired. It was sure nice to have it over with. Oh, I still had the scraping and cleaning of panes to do, but I found other pains were concerning me more at the moment! I was sick of turquoise paint! and the color was...a trifle bizarre? but it matched accents of the same color I had in other things...and...  
...Yes, yes. It was beginning to look more like a new house instead of something made out of mildewed scraps....

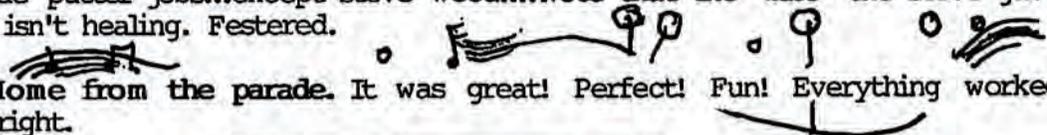
I left everything and went down to the store and bought myself a steak. When I got back—the first impression impact—Oh, I loved my little place!  
It was maybe...eccentric? but ...

The weather: I had moved my two thermometers. I had put one outside and one inside. I compared temperatures: 62 out; 68 in. In August!? That seemed cold! but...later in the winter I'd think back and...wish...?

- I wondered how come I hadn't gotten lonesome or afraid? I had been there most of the week all by myself and had gotten up in the middle of the night and pattered without even a thought of fear, even though there were lots of outside noises and "down there"—the street below—one night a car raced into the cul—really freaked out. The next morning there were wild skid marks on the road. And a lot of incessant shooting went on during the day, but I still just thought—to hell with them.
- I realized I hadn't heard from the telephone people. I sure wanted to tell them that I'd like to take as long paying my bill as they did giving me service!...
  - ...signs of termites again?...I got out my pancake feed ticket for Parade Day McNabbs had talked me into buying...I read the paper—the Fair—really crude and corny ads and all about horses, farmers...real hicks! I sure wouldn't need to dress up for that!

**August 23, Saturday. Parade Day.** I wake to overcast.

Review of tasks done and to do: Glad I got that painting over with; it was a biggie job...All major things done except cussed telephone...Am down to inside putter jobs...except stove wood....Note that the "bite" the stove gave me isn't healing. Festered.



**3 p.m. Home from the parade.** It was great! Perfect! Fun! Everything worked out just right.

I did decide to dress up. Had been a long time; I had been in grubbies so long. I put on my blue "silk" suit and took a raincoat, unsure of the weather. It felt good to be dressed up again. I felt more like me!  
It was a nuisance to unveil the car out of all that plastic, but a pleasure to find a clean car underneath.

I got downtown by 10:30, still not sure of parade time. Parking was easy—one of the advantages of a small town. People were already gathering, wandering in loose-knit family groups all over the narrow streets.

I was excited! I parked and went to find the (what-club-name?) hall. It was in a corny, dingy little building on a side street, down in the basement. "The hall" was not very big and there were very few people there. But it was decorated prettily with bouquets of fresh flowers and places were set for the feed.

Marv and Lu greeted me and treated me like a VIP. Lu rushed to serve me while others waited. My seat mates were dull and mute until I insisted on starting conversation and then I found them interesting. One guy, who didn't look the part, said he was a livestock auctioneer and had been up half the night preparing. I'd never met an auctioneer before; I always thought they were flamboyant types. This guy wasn't; he was just an ugly farmer.

And then the other couple I talked to—I was amazed!—they were from Australia! Imagine meeting them in this little boondocks town! Then the other couple used to live in Vancouver, WA! It was fun—we trading stories and so on. The food? Well, it wasn't too good, but they meant well, and certainly all those rural men and women worked hard.

I left then, and went to find a position to view the parade. It happened that I found myself leaning on a General Telephone truck! I kidded the guy, "No wonder we can't get any service! You guys go to parades!" He joshed me back. That was fun.  
Other people weren't very friendly, though enough so when I intruded and chatted with some anyway, kidding with children and trying to be nice and friendly.

The parade lasted an hour and forty-five minutes! It wasn't nearly as corny as I'd expected. People had come from all over, each with an act. I, with my romantic "Scottish" claim, thrilled when Ascots Highlander band from Seattle wailed and strutted by. It was very enjoyable—if a bit lengthy.

After the parade I went back to that (oh! what's the name of that fraternal order?) where Marvin and Lu were, to rest and have a drink of—orange juice—as it turned out. Marv introduced me to a courtly old octogenarian man as if anxious to show me off?  
I kidded McNabb about how he had missed the bagpipes, and was rather taken aback when he snapped, "I hate bagpipes!"  
They had to stay there, so I left, thinking I'd tour the street fairs, as I had been doing earlier.

There was one booth that had attracted me: women that seemed to be part of an arts group I might be interested in joining? But, when I'd talked to them, I was disappointed. "No, they just met and worked with kids in the schools in the evenings..."

The booths had displayed so much good home-baked foods and fresh vegetable produce that I had intended to stock up—until I found out the prices they were asking and then—no way! so I hadn't bought anything, but I came out again intending to stroll through the side street full of people and noise and booths.

**They were all gone!**The streets were utterly deserted and empty!

One wouldn't have known there'd ever been a parade, with all that jiggling flesh: fat ladies on quivering horses and young gals with bare thighs jiggling as they pounded out prance steps.

There wasn't a soul! I'd expected to jostle bodies, as I had before. There weren't any. Puzzled, I went down to the Fire Department raffle to see if I'd won anything. It was all over. Nobody was there. And I hadn't, of course (won anything)—a list of winners—all natives.

I sauntered back down the empty streets, deflated. Where in the hell had they all gone? I'd expected to have a real fun afternoon.

Out of self-pity, I ducked into a dingy bar. It was dark in there and full of local yokels, all buddy-buddy.

"Order?" the frowzy woman asked me, as I sat down alone at a table.

"Oh...scotch," I said, feeling it appropriate, and braced myself for the price. It was only a dollar. Cheap!

I joshed a bit with the party of drunks, but not asked to join, I moseyed out.

I walked the empty streets to my car, stoppd at Safeway and bought some eggs and ice and went home.

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[ Post hoc: it was much later—years?—before I found out they all troop to the Fairgrounds the minute the parade is over.]

When I got home and walked in, my cabin looked nice!

My intention was to take off my finery and get to work finishing those windows and "spackling" the bathroom. I didn't. By the time I made notes on the parade, the mood—and day—were gone. And the neighbors—that young couple, the Carrolls, below were tearing the air apart with a noisy chain saw.

I gave up and put it all off until...tomorrow.

August 24, Sunday. I awoke to overcast sky and postponed chores. I noted it was odd how, even when retired, Sunday still seemed like "a day off".

The day started with a problem: the bedroom heater wouldn't come on. Cussing and in panic, I checked the fuse box and found it only because the breaker was off—a bit crooked. Able to forget that problem and finding that the sun usually came out in early afternoon, I found myself lured to "the onion patch", as I was currently calling it.

It was the place Dennis had cleared for the septic drain field and where we'd thrown some grass seed and I'd planted my "vegetable garden". It was gorgeous out there: warm, sully, silent. I weeded and checked things. Some of the onions seemed to be ok. There were dead slugs all over where I'd put the slug bait. The little oak tree the guys at the office had given me was still the same. There was no sign of the asparagus. The grass was really filling in, as Dennis had said it would. I noted with a sigh that the vine maple was already strating to turn color. Fall.

I went in and faced my desk in the loft. It was piled high with postponed chores. I started to work up there. It was the first time I had seriously spent time in the loft. It was very pleasant. I got out my art desk and started to organize and set it up.

All those letters I had to catch up on! I moved the typewriter over by the window in the loft. Wonderful! At last I could have a private place to type where I could concentrate and not fret about bothering the neighbors as I'd always had to do in the paper-thin-walled apartments I'd always lived in. My hands flew! Typing! and then...

I saw Marty working outside down below two lots away. I could hear every word she said! So? She must be able to hear me typing? I sighed.

6. p.m. The sun was already setting. (The days were getting shorter?) I went to take my evening rest on what I called "my lanai"—the porch on the woods side. But, my attempt at a quiet rest was ruined by Carrolls down there with that roaring chain saw. So, after I cleaned up all that paint mess, I took a stroll around in the woods.

The woods were dappled with sunlight. I tried to take a picture, though I'd found it too dark for my camera. The creek was a bare trickle. When there was a break in the chain-saw noise I could hear the shush of breeze in tree tops. I wondered again how people could ruin such calm with chain saws and motorcycles.

I went in, for the sun was already off the porch and sinking behind the tall trees to the west and it was getting a bit chill.

I spent the evening inside working on putting that "Spackle" on the bathroom walls, trying to cover the green wood shrink cracks with it. It was fun until I got too tired to try to make it nice and smooth. I decided I'd get by with that by calling it a "tired texture". After tightening the bolts on that tinny, bangy, cheap metal shower and getting my letters ready to post I gave up for the day.

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August 25, Monday. I woke to sun, but it was chilly in the cabin. It occurred to me I should keep record of the temperatures to check the efficiency of the heaters. I was anxious to get the bathroom in order-tired of no place to groom. I had meant to get it all done before the kids came back, but... I got to work on it, though my hand and arm were lame from painting. and I was tired of painting: I would rather have been outside while it was still nice.

I thought as I worked:

- Telephone. I hadn't heckled them, because, in a way, I found it rather nice to be without one. If I had a phone and still nobody showed up, I would feel neglected, wouldn't I?...
- That precision drawing board. I looked at it. It was really wrecked. I could have wept. I had waited so long to set up my own studio permanently; now...my tools were ruined.

I began to get awfully weary of painting. I took a break and went outside...to the "onion patch" clearing. It was very beautiful out there, the sun streaming in warm, birds singing, the grass now filling in enough so that I could lie on it. Beautiful! though it was beginning to look fallish; so many leaves on the ground already. The blue windows with the blue sky behind them from there. I decided I liked them; they lightened the heaviness of the cabin—an illusion of "see through"—pieces of sky further down.

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After my rest break, I made a quick trip down to the store and came back and started to work again on the bathroom. It was so warm I worked with all the doors open—no need for heaters. I worked until 8 p.m. and then I just had to quit; my legs were giving out. I had cramps in them from teetering on that uncomfortable step stool Uncle Howard had made me.  
I almost fell off the stool several times.

I took a break, cooked myself a good dinner, found a good book to read and fell fast asleep.

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I awoke at midnight and forced myself to go back to work on the bathroom walls. At 3 a.m. I was through. At least I had finished two walls—all I could manage. The one I'd done first I saw would have to be done over-cuss! Moral: Don't ever build with green wood! those blinkety blank cracks!

Before I fell into bed again, I puzzled over such a bright light...? I went out on the porch to investigate. There was a full moon!  
I stood and contemplated it. Memories...(and here I am).  
I didn't know anybody could work so hard as I had been doing at age 65—and survive! But, except for weariness, I enjoyed it!  
I fell back into bed.

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4 a.m. I woke again. Talk about obsessions! Next thing I knew I was working on the bathroom, this time "perfecting"—doing fun things—like putting on the shower non-skid "mushrooms"(that Mike and Marylyn had given me in their little house-warming package); and all my little treasures and talismans away in our new home. All would be done for one last Labor Day party with the kids. And then, the summer would be over, and I'd face my first winter alone in my cabin. It had been worth the effort after all.

I fell into bed again.

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**August 26, Tuesday.** I woke late—about 9, for I had had a hard time getting back to sleep. It was cold, but I was happy to see the sun. I dug out every warming thing I owned: the snuggly comforter Mike and Marylyn had given me, electric heat pad, electric massage set and sat huddled and used them all, thinking how a good hug and a good fire would do as well—but there was the sun: I was anxious to get up and get to work.

To dispel the chill, I turned on the electric heaters. Troubles! the bedroom heater went off! I unlocked the fuse box and threw the breaker. All ok. then the **other** heater went off. I repeated the fixing. All ok. Then they both went off! Panic! then I noted the living room breaker was off. I reset. This time all seemed ok. I tried to think what the man had said about those new circuit breakers:

"No, no, they go off quicker than fuses; it doesn't take much."

I review my tasks for the day: I would have to do a washing.

- My "portable" washing machine I had gone to so much trouble to "portable" it up to the cabin, and then had had that trouble with the pump not working. On one of my trips into Monroe I had gone to the (only)(one man?) appliance repair shop in town to ask them about fixing it.

He was a very unfriendly guy and very discouraging. "Nope. No good. Can't repair. Obsolete. Can't get parts. Throw it out."

So I'd stopped in the laundromat next door and checked their prices. Ouch! So now I was still stuck with my laundry problem. The laundromat in Sultan was **so** bummy...maybe I'd have to postpone washing and resort to the one in Monroe after all.

- I had to finish the bathroom—that shelf. Do it right this time. That would be the hardest job of the day.
- And then maybe I could clean it all up and get tools put away and quit working and start living?

When I go out for the mail, I note the blackberries are ripening and it's clouding up.

**6 p.m.** What a wild cacaphony outside! I run to look. Birds out there. Jays are like an hysterical mob. They are going utterly crazy! Weird!

The day sped by, I cleaning up tools and fighting that shelf. It was 5 p.m. before I knew it. And the rain had started about 3. It's odd the chill that comes in the house when it starts to rain. Maybe the roof does need insulation? (Oh no!)...The first dousing of my painted porches; I got them done just in time?

...The storage closet—now I have it I can't think of anything to put in it. What I need is a tall broom closet....

I think about my trip to the store the day before and note that in so many of the new lots cleared only the big trees are taken out. And there are realty FOR SALE signs all over. The rape of all this prettiness is starting; soon it will be like downtown.

My evening here...I.....

go grab something to sketch with: My  
New Spotlite - flood lighting my Stained-  
rugged underpants hung up to dry.  
(Sure glad no one drops in.) +  
just now - pile of orange, white  
& brown towels lit up by skylight:  
Pretty!

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8:30 p.m. Weary. I've been sorting and eliminating stuff...linen...towels...trying to find places for them. All my camping stuff—that era over—might as well...no, no...better leave some candles and things out in case of power shortage. But, things stashed away—at last! I am so happy I begin to dance around the room.

There is another big ruckus outside. I step to the porch. Dogs are howling as if the end of the earth had come. What is this? When I painted yesterday that dog howled and barked until I nearly went mad! I took time to walk down the trail and (futilely?) yell, "Shuddup!"

I started to work cutting that nagahyde to make a temporary bathroom floor covering until I could afford to get linoleum. I was scared to start cutting into it, but, realizing it would make a good pattern for the linoleum later, I went ahead and worked away at it. I took a pratfall into the shower trying to fit a corner (ouch!) Through. Tired. The judging...well...it looked...??...too tired to tell. I fell into bed.

It was dawn when I awoke. Still raining. I sneaked a look at the bathroom. It looked good!

I lay in bed and ruminated:

This move of mine; it didn't turn out as expected. The situation I thought I was moving into is no longer so: the new friends of my age I'd counted on making in this place are now all either sick, tied down, or gone.. A new younger, incompatible crowd has moved in. But there is nothing I can do about it. I just can't sit here and feel sorry for myself the rest of my life. So be it. This was all too dearly bought and won to lament over.

**August 27, Wednesday.** It was high noon before I woke. Lazy? So? I'd done a lot of work this week.

The rain had stopped, but it was overcast. I went out for the mail. How nice to be able to go down the trail at noon still in my robe; no one around to see! (the Carrolls both work.)

As I go in water is "balled" on the porch; that means the preservative works?

Besides an ad pertaining to the starting of hunting season there was a letter from Mike, very short, as usual. It fussed about "our not getting to our final inspection...\$50 a month payment on loan to me is ok...And what do I want for Christmas?"

Trouble with the heater again. I fussed all morning with it, for it was raining again and chilly. It took two, three tries before I got it going again. And then loud static on the radio and the heater goes off again...on... off The crooked circuit breaker spat! at me this time. I go out on the porch to get food from ice chest. An **explosion!** thunder!

Maybe that's my problem?

Then the radio mentions they are having power troubles. Ye gods! I may be electrocuted before the day is over?

Oh, it's dark in here! Will it be this way all winter? Times like this I wish I had a phone. I build a fire. It's just pouring outside! I note that with the fire the temperature has shot up to 72°. The heaters don't do that! But even the downpour doesn't clean off the skylights; looks like worms on them.. The sun breaks out. I try heaters; off again. I don't feel a bit like working...I just mess around...

5 p.m. A deluge again. I decided I'd better cover car; that bent fender -it leaks. I put on poncho and go. Something I never thought of; there are puddles—lakes in the path. I cover car, retrieve my umbrella in it and start back.

Yipes! something leaps in the path! A frog/toad? just sits there and looks at me, brown on brown. "I see you, frog prince!" But it doesn't move. Feeling like a true old witch o' the woods, I poke at it with my umbrella. It leaps off.



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I go back, checking for flooding. All seems ok. I go in. With the fire going it is warm and cozy in there. The teakettle is simmering with water for tea. The rice I put on has cooked. Now it's kind of fun! I am cozy and content. I put another piece of salvaged wood from Ed's old fence at Alki in fire. Later, I am suffocating it is so hot in here.

But I start getting depressed. I am using up all my **dry** wood. I am depressed about the heater: why did it have to be the bedroom one, where I really need the heat? For I found that heat lamp in the bathroom does not really heat it up enough for a shower...and it's noisy! I also need the heat there to dry up the shower, which stays damp for days after use. But I am afraid to tamper with that heater any more.

**About 10 p.m.** I have showered, shampooed, changed the bed, picked up the washing, done all twenty nails—I even did a little washing-by-hand. Everything is neat and tidy. Now I judge and decide I like my little improvements, though the kitchen "linoleum", the green nagahyde, I couldn't finish for there is that wet place near the sink all the time.(I am so **sick** of that exposed particle board flooring!)

It has rained all day. Does it have to do this in August?

**August 28, Thursday.** It is still raining, though gently. I need heat. I try the heater again. Nope. It doesn't work.

This incessant rain. I'll have to lug my washing around in that? And I can't use the cart: Dennis hasn't covered the roots in the trail yet.

I turn on the radio:

"Terrible in Monroe last night! The Evergreen Fair drenched! And animal pens all flooded!"

I get ready to go to Monroe. I try the heater again. I dared that crooked breaker again. Heater comes on. By time I load the car and back, it's off again. Odd. It must be the breaker, for the heater works. Did Darwin cheat me? "Oh, I'll give you a 200 amp fuse box for the price of a cheaper one," he'd said.

I'll have to get to them...if I can ever catch up with them.

And I intend to do something about the telephone—only I can't find the card.

I am all dressed in winter rain clothes. By the time I get ready to leave, the sun comes out.

**5 p.m.** Back from town. It was a good trip! A good day!

I take time here to enjoy a lovely moment; just like I always wanted it. The sun is shining in the forest. I have a clean house. A clean me. I have a small fire crackling and a couple of books to read (I found the library)...

The vine maples! Seems they have turned red overnight!

**Monroe:** there was no evidence of all that water as I drove down. The earth seemed to have absorbed it. Until I got to Safeway and there the whole parking lot at their "mall" was one big lake! I quipped to a clerk, "Looks like a bad engineering job out there."

He agreed vociferously, "The whole town's mad about it!"

After my bit of shopping there, I went on to "OK Electric". Again the guys were not there. Nancy was, but she seemed a bit wary? "Got a problem?"

"Yes!" I showed her my sketch of the crooked breaker and explained my theory.

"Oh, yes. It must be the breaker," she said. "Will have the guys come out—next day or so—and fix it. No charge." She was vague and busy with a pup she'd brought into the office.

I left dissatisfied. (Hell! The holdiday week end! Those guys would'nt show up until the next week end...if then!)

I went on to "Green's Laundromat". "Help you?" a little fat battleax of a woman asked. She showed me how to use the machines, but didn't seem too friendly. At first it was unpleasant—real bummy people and kids all over. But later it thinned out and the old gal got quite friendly and helpful, even putting money in for me when (I must be jinxed?) for the dryer I'd chosen didn't work.

It was a nicer place than the one in Sultan and machines cheaper and faster. And I was cheered when the bums' rush was over to see nicer, better dressed people come in—not that they were any friendlier. We'd stand side by side without speaking. But people just aren't friendly any more.

This city gal knew she'd moved into a new kind of life when she looked up and saw a huge sign: "Please, no horse blankets or saddle pads."

I had asked the woman where the library and "The Monitor" (local paper) were.

I went to the paper first—to sign up for a subscription. I liked the sharp looking older woman with neatly and stylishly cropped gray hair sitting there. And they had art supplies, all so new and virgin I just drooled after having just unearthed all my battered stuff.

"Help you?"

"You don't have a straight-edge board, do you?" I explained.

"No."

Well, I wanted to sign up for your paper. I saw one and liked it!" I prattled on about being new in town and how I'd found it useful to keep up with things local." You deliver?"

"No. Sent by mail. Once a week."

"How much?"

"\$7.50." (Ooch! went my strained budget; did I want it that much?) "But today a special...new customers...\$5.50."

"Well, sign me up." Uh-oh, I didn't have that much money with me. I explained.. "Grandkids...Fa in tomorrow..."

"Ok. Will hold." She went back to work, while I fingered and coveted all that new art stuff.

I went out into Main Street, tickled at the local characters—like people who had walked out of a freak show. I prowled around.

There was an old-fashioned grocery store across the street—like those I remembered from my youth—with an old-fashioned butcher shop! (vs. the modern ready-packaged) I decided I needed a steak. The crusty butcher argued with me when I objected to the price.

"But, lady! That is tenderloin!"

I splurged and got it.

Then I went to the library. I was astounded. It was a very charming, landscaped building not too new; not too old—modern. the lady inside had a slight accent—from Germany, she said. I liked her. She was a typical librarian type. I got books and left, surprised that one needed no card. "Just sign your name."

Then I headed for home, stopping at McNabbs' for one more try at the telephone company. "Here I am again!" I said.

Marv kept giving me advice as to how to do it, making me nervous.

"Call this number," he said. "Business number...toll free. All ya gotta do is listen to the music. And tell them you're alone! And you need a phone!" he began and kept it up all through my call.

I called. And waited and waited and waited, listening to canned music. We three about cracked up. When the gal finally came on, I quipped, "Now can I quit listening to Musak?" Not funny.

She began an inquisition of me: "Who are you? What are your credentials" type of thing. "How many long distance calls are you going to make?"

I was getting madder and madder.

"Your new number is..." she said.

"But I don't have a phone!"

"But we can't get there till Sept. 8."

I tried and tried to explain to her.

"We have no record," she said.

"You mean I'm not even signed up? Then why in hell did that gal come and pre-wire?"

I got no straight answer. I hung up utterly confused and disgusted.

A blue car that I'd seen at Case's roared by. "Who in hell was that!?" Lu cried.

"Oh, Case's son," I said. "He's been working on that car."

I left.

I went on home. Exhausted. I lay down and didn't wake until late evening.

When I awoke...what was it I was going to do?...Oh! that expensive steak! won't keep just on ice. I got up, built a fire, and cooked it, discovering that those Spanish pans Tiny, my younger sister, gave me worked very well on the stove. I had a late, late dinner.

Oh. I'd told McNabbs about the heater "gotta be the breaker," Marv said.

**August 29, Friday.** I slept in. During the night, I had again puzzled over the bright light in the cabin, and discovered it was the moon, this time shining through the skylight. First time I'd seen that!

**At 10 a.m.** I was still undressed and my hair in curlers when I saw Marsh coming down the trail—fast! I didn't even have time to get decent before he was at the door.

"You can't do this to me!" I cried and ducked into the bathroom while he ran out to "get his glasses".

Then he (hurriedly) checked the problem. He said it was the heater. "A ground wire hitting a hot wire," he said.

Embarrassed at my breaker theory, I murmured something about Dennis having fooled with the heaters. "You can charge me," I said.

"Uh...no no..." Rush, rush, frantic, he worked on it. Then all jolly and cheerful again, he says "All fixed!" and rushed off.

Hallelujah! Then...the heater went off again. I threw the breaker. It spat at me. My day was ruined.

I found it was a warm day outside, but not warm enough to open up my cold, cold house. The mail: a card from Dennis: "Will be up Sat. for overnight. Go to the Fair. Let me know if not ok."

And a letter from Sultan Estates. (Now what?) "A meeting—Sept. 14. Also vote by mail against the dog kennel illegally put in here." (The Buford Dukes [sic] down our street had kennels full of dogs.)

I nearly froze as I searched for—the "OK Electric" phone number and (uselessly) my State Noise Pollution papers. No luck. Though in no mood to, I frantically made lists and went to **Monroe**.

**That evening.** My check had come! I sat and relished having money again.

In town, I had shopped for **four hours** and spent **\$150!** The gal at the bank reminded me not to flash \$20 bills at the Fair.

On the highway there'd been a cute lil ole lady selling seafood from a wagon. I bought some oysters.

"What happened to the young man selling fish here?" I asked.

"He probably got taken in by Health Authorities," said the fish lady. "I've been in it for years. Have to keep 'em iced."

Now, too busy to fix dinner I nibbled one oyster raw and put them on porch in ice chest, reminding myself not to forget to eat them, as they wouldn't keep. "Don't you slugs eat your cousins!" I said and went back in.

And gloated over my riches. I had a whole trunkful of food out in the car to bring in. I was stocked for—anything! At last. I wished I could have warned Dennis and Abbie how thronged Monroe was—our little town—cars, campers, bumper to bumper—shops, bakery, everything sold out.

I was sure glad to get back to my quiet, cute little house. That porch light shining was so welcoming. I kept turning lights on and rushing out to see how they looked. Ralph Carroll was out viciously training his dog. (The Sultan Estates dogs restriction letter?)

In Monroe, I had stopped at the Monitor to pay for my subscription. They had a display on a bulletin board of really corny local art work.

"Oh, you display?" I asked, thinking what fun to show my work sometime.

"Oh yes, but we're booked up till December."

"Oh, that's all right," I laughed and I told her about working on the Highway Dept. doing the drawings for getting that stop light put in up there on the highway. It'd be after December before I was caught up and ready to display, I thought. She didn't seem impressed.

This was a different gal from: the one I'd talked to before.

"I came to pay," I said.

"Oh, but you're booked as having already paid," she said.

"Oh, in that case," I joked...and I made motions of leaving. They all laughed. I paid.

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**August 30, Saturday**—The day of the Fair and the kids coming. I woke early to a gloomy looking day.

By 11 a.m. I was all ready for the kids and they hadn't come. I was feeling self-pity—such a miserable day weather-wise; it was so dark you couldn't even see all the painting and work I'd done that I wanted to surprise and impress the kids with.

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\*\*\*INTERIM\*\*\*

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**Sunday, August 31**  
**Evening:**

The kids left about 6 p.m.

Now for the report...

Dennis stayed at the cabin and worked and Abbie and I took the kids to the Fair. It was great! I enjoyed it. And I was so glad I'd gotten that rebate from "Ma Bell"; I was really able to treat the kids.

But troubles began when we came back with two very tired, cross kids. they began to bicker and fight and pick on each other. Meantime, Dennis had finished the sink, put in the door sills and the weather stripping around the door.

It was an exhausting evening. I fell into bed that night, sleeping on the couch and letting the new kitten sleep on my chest. (Quite a concession for a cat-hating grandma.)

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**Sunday**, (as I remember it) we sat around and, after Dennis was through with his work, we ate the spaghetti Abbie had brought. And then the kids had fun with the (expensive!) helium, balloons I had bought them. They kept floating up to the top of the A-frame peak and staying there!

I got the kids started on making popcorn and lemonade. And Dennis began to play the organ, finding an old song from his babyhood I didn't know I had ("Jimie crack corn...") it was all fun. I was sorry I had no film to take pictures of our party.

Abbie showered and Dennis and I summed things up. He said he'd given up buying a chain saw; couldn't afford it. (They hadn't brought the refrigerator and nobody mentioned it.)

"If there's anything you want done by Jan. first, let me know: we're selling the house and going to Spokane. Back to..."

"Well, if you could help me adjust that art desk...takes two...."

By this time Abbie was waiting impatiently outside, anxious to get home, but Dennis took the time, then, to help me fix the desk.

"We won't be back up for a coupla weeks," Dennis said when they left in the now nasty, cold rain again.

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After they left I tried to do the caulking, but it didn't work—came right off. I cleaned the Asian bells Abbie had given me with that virulent poison I'd bought at the Fair. And it rained. And I was cold. The heater put out ominous noises. I turned it off. I had no dry wood left.

I felt very sorry for myself...

"September Song"—yes—



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**SEPTEMBER 1980**

**September 1, Monday.** I woke up to a chill and cold loft, and angry; we were, indeed, losing heat through those vents, they only (afterwards) told us we didn't need. And the plywood roof I was surrounded with up there in the loft was chill and cold with the rain falling on it.

I lay and mused on echoes from the day before:

• When we went to the Fair, I had let Abbie drive my car, and was glad to have her sweat what I feared would be parking dilemmas, but it turned out easy.

• We had tried to find something to bring Dennis from the Fair, but we found nothing...

• That last scene, just before the kids left—

The sun had broken out and blazed through the cabin just before after a rather dreary, dark day and the loft was bathed in sun when Dennis helped me set up my drawing table.

And he had lamented, too, as I had (secretly) done while he insisted on helping me put the lamp onto the table, too, that the "studio" hadn't worked out too well—spacewise and the placement of the skylight and all.

And I had then realized that I had given up on further planning on a loft when that (then) Head Reviewer gal at Snohomish County had told me I couldn't have one, and that I had just gone along, grimly with "whatever", so I didn't end up with "the loft of my dreams".

It had turned out just a cold little garret full of broken and ruined equipment and other people's junk. And it had become, not a studio but a sort of bedroom/playroom for the kids. But,

"No, no," I reassured Dennis, "I'll work it out—somehow," and hastened them on their way.

That disappointment was part of my "September" mood of that last day.

Later, when I tried to build a fire—half my electric heat broken and useless—I realized I'd used up all my good firewood trying to keep the fire going and show off how I could cook on my little stove—a dumb thing to do when we'd had all the doors open...

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**September 2, Tuesday.** I woke up wondering where all that water from the rain goes?...sure is amazing how it disappears!

• Waking thoughts: Dennis decided not to buy a chain-saw as their latest dream was to go back to some treeless plain near Spokane...My next purchase I have to make: linoleum? I really don't want to bother-all that dismantling mess again...

That banging water pipe. I got so tired of it I got down and whittled some wood away from around it to see if that would help...

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**Afternoon.** Raining again. My finances: odd—how come I seem to have \$450 "free and clear"? I cleaned house and then...

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I went on a shopping spree with the "found money". I bought some paint. And I went to the Monitor and ordered a rubber address stamp for I cannot seem to remember that so unromantic cabin address.

It was nice to shop in a small town—everything within a few blocks; there was no chasing all over the countryside and burning up gas, though, of course, there was the 8 mile drive to town; but I am trying to keep it down to only two trips a week. And it was nice to be able to park for two hours and not worry about a parking meter.

I went to their "ten cent" store and bought a new shower curtain and accessories, though not sure I liked it. I also succumbed to a remnant of the (wrong shade) of green cloth simply because it was cheap and had a seagull pattern I liked and . I also bought a big clumsy machete-like tool called was a "corn harvester" to replace my lamented lost souvenir machete.

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**Evening.** It was nice to come home to a clean house. But a cold one. I'd found some scrap wood, so I built a little fire and then I fussed all evening deciding I didn't like the shower curtain and hoped they'd give me back my \$10 of foolish "impulse buying". And found I had no use for the remnant...and I fretted about what I could do to keep that Marsh guy from barreling in on me unannounced...something wrong about that..despite my not having a phone, it seemed they should warn somehow before they intruded...

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**September 3, Wednesday. The electricians.** Two days now and no show. Obviously they aren't interested. I tried out the machete. Not much good. It too heavy for me, and it had no point on it, but I used it to hack my way to the mailbox.

On the way I noticed there were strange little black "berries" on the ground. Rabbit turds? No! Another cascara tree! Dennis would be pleased... I decided I'd have to go down and borrow that pruner Lu said she had. I'd have to go to them; they never come to me anymore.

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I got the car out and went down. But neither Cases or Macs at home.

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I went on exploring down Pipeline Road. There was no place to turn around so I had to keep going. I came to a new road cut through the trees, a very bad road, but curiosity lured me in on it. And I was dismayed! There were many new, little junky, primitive-looking, half-finished houses in there. And realty signs. A new development going? I set my odometer and measured the distance back to our place—only one mile! There goes the neighborhood!

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**Evening.** I worked outside all day. I strung the little Tibetan? bells Abbie gave me across the street-side steps to maybe ensure a warning against Marsh? I got all the PUD mess cleaned up at last. I made two more trips down to borrow the pruner but they not there.

I prowled around, tempted to swipe some of those building scraps—or to take the pruners anyway, but I didn't.

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I went back and built a bonfire and started to burn all those construction cartons. It was kind of fun! I ripped off and stashed away—labels, billings, shipping labels for the skylights, the toilet—~~pleased~~—that's all behind us! I sat and looked at the embers of the fire...ember...September... Well, one more day..and I'll be ready for winter...once I get the wood done...

I was awfully tired, but I started raking leaves, wondering why? (Well, gee! I gotta keep this year's leaves separate from last year's so that the next ones can fall!?) No, no. I realized I just wanted to clean up the construction mess.

I went in, laughing at the bells stretched across the steps (Ok, Marsh, you "ding dong daddy"! Please ring before entering!)

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**September 4, Thursday.** I awoke to a nice, warm, sunny day. I went out and put the check to PUD in the mail. It was nice to have underneath the house all clean and neat.

I started to make plans: Another try for the pruners?...The next day I'd have to go to town again...but...the phone? did I dare leave? And nothing from "OK Electric" again? Looks like another battle on my hands? Odd. No response from anyone? No answers to my letters; no visits from neighbors. I began to wonder if I were dead? And where's the paper I subscribed to?... And seems like the pipe bang has gone away ?

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**Later:** I tried Macs again. Still gone. I looked at the pruner. Mmm. Old, clumsy—guess I won't bother. I stopped and chatted with Cases. They said Macs were dismantling the Fair booth.

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**Evening.** It was such a magnificent day. Balmy. I hated to think of it ending. I even had to divest my sweater. Indian summer. I worked outside on the front of the half-acre until about 3.

Tired. Went in. Ate. Then made myself spruce up the window hinges with "brass" paint, it being a good painting day, but I wished I could be outside instead.

I didn't finish until after "cabin" sunset. By that I mean, "sunset" came earlier in my woods. This had puzzled me at first, when I'd often be startled to find it still daylight down by the car when I thought "night" had descended. It took me quite a while before I realized the simple fact that the sun was dropping behind the tall trees, making a false "twilight" around the cabin.

One thing I did was to cover the exposed roots in the path so I could use my grocery cart. Doing so I'd discovered what Dennis meant when he'd said. "A half-acre and there's no dirt!" Meaning there was no bare earth, so dense was the ground cover.

When I got through, I was a little dismayed: although it all looked so neat, it was too neat—neurotically so. Had I done the one thing I vowed I wouldn't do: over-clear as everybody else did to the woods? I'd intended to let the plants "do their own thing"; now my place looked denuded, too!

It was all awfully hard work. I'd even tried to glean some firewood, but found there wasn't that much "loose" stuff left. I worked my way as far as the driveway and then, bored and tired, decided I'd curl up in the car and read, but...chain saws began..off and on..sounded like they were right beside me.

I gave up and went and slashed my way down to the creek with the new machete. The creek was almost flowing again, but the sun was gone by then. I roamed around and then came back and started to finish burning up those cartons. What had been fun before was now—boring. I did manage to glean enough wood to get by on, for the radio said another storm was coming.

I thought about my talk with the Cases. He said he is going to the meeting. She was mad because her precious cat had been chewed up by "cats allowed to go wild around here". She went on about wanting to start a drama group in Sultan Estates. I gave her a weary answer, implying I'd been there "Come on up, and I'll show you...(all Ed's theatrical stuff)." They promised they would.

I was tired, but I had enjoyed the day: I had a clean house, a clean yard, and \$400 in the bank (I hoped.) Now the only thing was to get me clean. I went in to eat and take a nap.

**September 5, Friday.** Another beautiful day! A few leaves are falling on my denuded grounds, but that's ok—one reason I did it: curious about the volume of leaf fall here (to have to clean up?)...

I fret about no electricians. Are they really slickies, as I've suspected? I thought I'd have it all over by now. I feel so powerless about them (no pun intended).

I fret about the phone. I thought I'd have it by this week

end. I don't exactly relish another all-alone-two-days-incomunicado....

Garbage day. My filled-in trail works. I can use the grocery cart. I enjoy the silence, the sun, blue skies, birds. those old apple trees down there are just loaded with apples! I wish there was some way to get down to them—just the idea of free food. Blackberries ripe—not very good ones, but—free. I nibble.

Mail brings me notice my address stamp is ready...

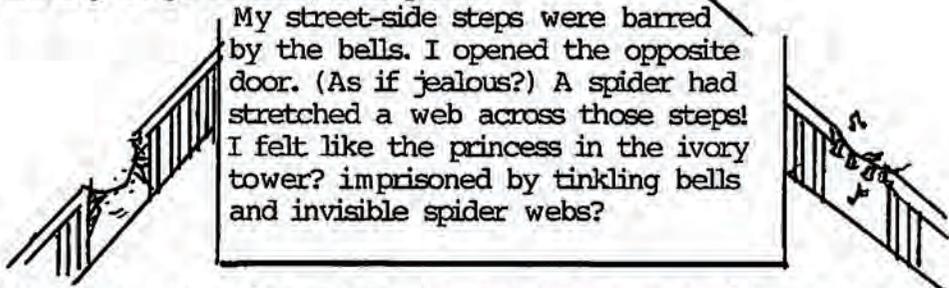
Is it only a month since I've had the electricity in? To get a refrigerator—the next big problem.

I spent some time trying to trim branches with those tree-loppers I bought on sale. Those vine maples over the path I wanted to cut back. Nope. I couldn't reach. I got a teetery step stool. Nope. How to solve? I fed my hand along a branch, pulled it down until it under my chin and cut. beautiful! It sprang back up. Problem solved. if you can't reach the tree, bring the tree to you! (Sometimes!)

Radio news: Riots, murder and fires in the Reformatory here, and also-Snohomish: rash of stealing of large equipment...

**Evening.** I've enjoyed the pleasures of my woodsy, quiet new home, though at Carrolls down below the sound barrier shattered by huge behemoth trucks dumping loads of gravel; they are re-making the world?—their way?

Starting to go outside, I laughed:



My street-side steps were barred by the bells. I opened the opposite door. (As if jealous?) A spider had stretched a web across those steps! I felt like the princess in the ivory tower? imprisoned by tinkling bells and invisible spider webs?

But I got out and went to Monroe to get my address stamp at the local news paper, where I expected a show of a lot of interest about our riot being on the National news and our governor, Dixie Lee Ray, being in town. But when I mentioned same to the gal in the office, she didn't even know what I was talking about.

I kidded her about my not getting my paper. She said she'd check and went into the back shop. "Oh the gal said she was so busy with new orders, she forgot! Here, have a paper."

I went out wondering about all these strange people.

Then, not having to worry about a parking meter, I sauntered into "Mom's Ice Cream Parlor" and ordered the day's Special: a hamburger for only \$1!

I opened the skinny local paper...and got absorbed:

\* Battles going on between the town and the Burlington Northern Railroad."We can, too, go through your town with a mile long freight train at 45 miles an hour..."\* Mistakes made by local councilmen interpreting what "developer" meant...\* "So, ok! We'll dig up the RR tracks again and put in a blinkety-blank sewage system"...etc. etc. etc.

I went out amused.

After exchanging my shower curtain, I eavesdropped on some fat gal—she worked for the police?—telling some juicy yarn to a gal in the liquor store. She shut up when she saw me. As I left, the other woman hissed,"...and then what happened?"

It was hot in Monroe. My car was like an oven. I was anxious to get back to my cool woods. I headed for the hills feeling steeped in "local color".

On the way back, I stopped at McNabb's for yet another try at the phone company. Instead of their usual cordial greeting, when I parked Marv stuck his head out the door and then slammed it shut. Rebuffed!? But I knocked anyway and hastened to say I couldn't stay—that I had food and ice in the car...As Marv got on the phone and Lu tried to be polite, chattering along with me about the meeting and the dogs and so on. Marv stuck his head in from the next room (where he'd been phoning?) Acting annoyed, he said, "Get that food on if we're going to eat it hot!"

Taking the hint, I eased out. Lu walked as far as her mail box with me. "I knew it!" I said. "Labor Day and the pool has to be closed...and then this lovely weather!" I told her about the apples in that vacant lot. "Well, just go in and pick 'em." she said.

I went on. Edith Case came out on her porch when I went by. I waved. I had bought some beer, for I'd invited them to come up and I was ready to invite them then. But she didn't seem to see me. So I waved again. Finally she just waved back. Dismissed? I went on home, puzzled about Monroe people. What was the matter with everyone?

Later, doing my evening chores...insects!... a light plane buzzing around overhead like some big insect...and where had all those big crane fly insects come from? And what happened to all the moths?

About six I noted it was already getting dark; the lovely long twilights were no more. I had been able to fuss around outside, but now I was a prisoner in my cave for the evening. But surely, though crispy, there'd be a few more nice days? and I'd be able to gather wood with my new work gloves I'd bought...and then, later...the really cold weather..I'd have to do snow tires, cover the car somehow...insulate pipes...settle things out with phone and electric to settle in...for the winter...!

I stood by the cooler on the porch and fixed myself a sandwich from food there—at night! It was so strange to have so much privacy and so much space compared to all my former cramped little apartments.

- Thoughts: I start hoping I'll get the phone tomorrow; I'm so tired of being stood up about it!...
- The loft, with everyone's mementoes stashed up there, is kind like a haunted place, with ghosts of things past...
- I think about Edith Case remarking that I must be lonely up there. "But I've been busy fixing up the cabin!" I had pleaded.
- "What are you going to do when that's done?" she snips.
- "Why...why...Oh, I've got lots to do!" I say....
- My décor colors...I disappointed in..bathroom—chocolate brown I wanted is too like purple, and the orange to make it bright for dreary, rainy forest days is more like red...It all looks kind of cheapie...

**September 8, Monday.** A nice sunny day. I waiting on the telephone guys. Mad: It's been almost three years now since they started heckling me to put in a phone!

At last! **The phone guy.** A little after 10 a.m. I looked and saw a truck in the cul-de-sac. It circled and parked, but whoever it was took his time showing himself. I had time to rush and put on some lipstick and go to the porch and take the bells down from across the steps. I waited there, as a dark, handsome, bearded young man approached.

He just came up on the porch and stood looking down at me—not saying anything—just looking. I was mentioning that I didn't want him to have to come through the bells, but he acted as if he didn't hear me.

Then he said, "So you live in the woods?"

"Oh yes!" and I blathered on about my son and his degree in forestry the reason we tried the woods and so on.

But he just stood looking at me rather impudently until I said..."You are...?"

"I'm the telephone man!" he said.

"Oh yes." So I let him in and moved the desk and showed him where I wanted the phone.

"Large hole," he said. And I explained how the gal and I had had such a hard time snaking that wire in. I asked him how long he'd worked for GTE?

"Oh, seven years...a bit of time in Kirkland. I'll be in and out," he said and started down the trail.

Since he'd be in and out I left the door open and saw him stop and pull that little hemlock tree way down. "Problems?" I called out to him.

"Oh no," he said. "I think I can get it in ok."

I ran and got my new lopping shears and gloves, but—he was gone.

Then he came back later and said he'd have to go down the line and check a few things out. He was gone so long I had time to finish dressing, make-up and all, and then I went out and cut another branch off that little vine maple.

When he came back I left him alone and busied myself in the house after asking him, "Do you just put in the wire, or the phone, too?"

"Oh, both!"

I was so happy! I started digging out all my telephone stuff.

He left again leaving a wire extended out there.

About noon he came back in. He was dragging the wire and winding it up.

"Afraid—bad news: you can't have a phone."

"Wwhhaatt!?" I gulped.

"Nothing to connect it to. All lines are full. Will have to wait till the engineers find a new way."

I just gripped the porch railing for a minute and then I started to sound off:

"They've bugged me for three years to put a phone in here!"

"Oh?"

And I told him. he seemed surprised and began to show a bit more interest and get rather nice. (I'd found him a bit smart-alecky up till then.) I brought my Highway Department EIS report out and showed him: "See? It says GTE is the telephone company here."

"Oh yes, we work clear up to Index. You see..the problem is..." he said. "Oh, it's hard to explain to..."

"Laymen?" I asked.

"Oh, no—not that, but, you see there are these—uh—hot wires, and uh—thirteen outlets and they're all gobbled up."  
 I nodded, and put in something about "'Ma Bell'having a baby."  
 "Hunh? Oh. Competition." He rambled on, having a time searching for words.  
 "Nobody will give their line to you. I tried."  
 I nodded.  
 "You'll have to wait for engineers."  
 Engineers!" I sniffed.  
 "Maybe you should have—before all these people came in here..."  
 I nodded again.  
 "You don't like engineers?"  
 "Well...", and I found myself telling him how I had to go to my Snohomish Co 'unty engineer friend, Al Grieve, to get action on our house plans.  
 He suddenly got very nice.  
 We thanked each other and laughed as he said, "Well, phone me when you get your phone."  
 "But what should I do?" I asked.  
 "Well, call the office; talk to the engineers."  
 "Ha!" I said, and get that Muzak put off."  
 We laughed and he left.

Oh! I was mad! Here I'd moved all that furniture and everything! And all these people who came in **after** us got phones and filled up the trunk line!  
 And now I had to go and find a phone and call the business office.  
 Later, I wondered why in hell he didn't know there was no connection up here when he came?

**Afternoon.** I got the car out and went to see if I could find a phone at a neighbor's. I drove all over the Estates—in every cul. I even went to Easterley's. There wasn't a single, solitary soul home anywhere. I thought furiously; if I had a heart attack or something, I wouldn't be able to get any help—much less phone!

Where in hell could I phone? There was no telephone company in Monroe; and pay phones no good for long "hold" calls. I couldn't even phone Abbie and tell her, for she'd be at work. I was in a fightin' mood!

I had no reason to go to Monroe, but decided better to get out and go down and hassle at least the electric company than sitting wasting such a beautiful day seething and brooding.

So I went, being even more frustrated when I couldn't get any communication from even the car radio—just static. I took my EIS report, thinking maybe it would give me more clout and perhaps impress everyone a little. The phone man had reacted favorably to it.

**Monroe.** I went to OK Electric. Nancy wasn't there; there was just that stupid woman. I unloaded my phone troubles on her. She just shrugged and said they couldn't get one where she lived, either. Finally, she offered to let me use their phone to call the telephone company.

I tried and tried and tried, stalling—hoping Nancy would come back and I could settle my business with her.

But I got nothing but a constant busy signal. Then the phone rang. It was the telephone company; seems there was some trouble with the office phone. I tried a different number. At last a bored sounding woman answered, "Well, call again tomorrow. The guys won't be back with their reports until tonight. Sounds like you can't get a phone," she said.  
 "I can't call tomorrow," I sighed. "No phone."  
 "Well, call from a neighbor's."  
 I just hung up, and stalled around waiting for Nancy, but she never came, and Stupid got on a long personal call that came in for her.  
 I left.

I was seething; this whole beautiful day wasted.  
I did not like Monroe or it's people at this point.

I went to Safeway and bought some meat out of the \$40 left earmarked for Dennis' supply needs. Such a nice day. Ordinarily I liked to go exploring around, but today I had that meat in the car; and somehow I'd lost the mood.

I went cursing back towards home; it seemed these people never seemed to work.

On the way, I had to brake; a sign said "MEN WORKING". There were Snohomish County rigs parked on both sides of the road and a bunch of young guys just lolling on the grass in the sun. At 2 in the afternoon! That was the last straw!

McNabbs didn't seem to be home. At Cases's there seemed to be no one, until I heard a metallic crash behind the house. There was the pick-up that Case had said he didn't have any more " so he couldn't bring me the wood ". It was parked out of sight.

I took my meat home and set out on a search for a phone again. Where the Dooxies, that nice old couple, used to live there was now new people. Maybe? I parked. Two little kids fled into the house and two huge dogs came out and started giving me a bad time. I waited to see if the kids would tell their mother. Nobody showed. I got mad and left.

On my way back up our street—at the middle house of the three newly built ones on that side—that beautiful little Asian airline stewardess was out fussing at her garbage can. "Phone?" I dared ask her.

"Oh yes ...I'm having a party, but do come in." About to have a party she meant. I parked out of the way of Carrolls' driveway next door, and here they came in just as I was going into the other house. (I bet it would be all over that Lorna was going around calling on people, I thought.)

I called Dennis, putting a dollar down to pay for the call. But with the gal listening I couldn't talk very freely :

They were disappointed about the phone; they said they'd gotten themselves a refrigerator so I could have their old one. Now they' have to find some way to bring it up. (At this point we were so jealous of people with pickups; we certainly could have used one all this time.) They didn't know if they'd get up that week or not. We hung up.

I then chatted with the gal—briefly, for her party was about ready. She was very pretty—a "regular little doll"—and very nice. She said she was currently flying out of San Francisco, but hoped to be able to move up soon. She gave me a hasty tour of her charming and tastefully furnished little house. I asked her why they didn't burn those big tree roots they'd dug out like the Carrolls had theirs.

She said her father-in-law (the contractor who had built their house) [ Witherow the name was] had bought the lot across the street and would bring in the bull dozer and do it all at once. "Who are you?" she asked, seeming truly puzzled, as I was, too, at the news that despite of my driving back and forth all the time and nobody sees me? "Oh, I live up there." I waved vaguely, feeling there wasn't time to go into any long story.

I left, upset at the news that there would be more bulldozing of all the pretty trees out and more houses all around. I'd sort of planned to sneak down and get some of those apples, or wash the car, but I was too dressed up to do either then.

I trudged into my happy home. The chill and the dark enveloped me. Tired and looking forward to a nice quiet evening, I was even more upset when, Carrolls started their chain saw going, blasting the woods with noise.

No phone. I was furious. And I couldn't seem to get anyone to understand why I couldn't have one. All those dates I had to set up in Seattle; now I'd have to write—but there wasn't time to set them up by mail. I felt like smashing things.

Instead, to combat the noise out there I dragged out all my music and played as loud as I could on the little organ piano.

September 9, Tuesday. I got up and wrote a wild letter to Mike about the phone and went down and put it in the mailbox. And then I got in the car and went down to McNabbs' to phone the telephone company.

I got another run-a-round and brush-off from them: was told to call back in ten minutes, which I couldn't do for the McNabbs were leaving.

And then they told me shocking news: **They are quitting!**

(which didn't surprise me very much.)

They had bought land in Goldbar and that's where they'd been going all the time—building a storage shed up there. They invited me to come along and see it. I said I had to go park my car, which I'd left in the cul, and get my purse.

I got back to cabin just in time to see the mail man whiz right by my box. He didn't even pick up my hurried, anguished letter! I figured the McNabbs would be gone by the time I got back, but here came Lu and wanting to know if I was coming.

So I followed them in my car to Goldbar, a small community a few miles further up on the Pass. I was unfed and in my housedress. It was a very, very hot Indian summer day. And their lot was unshaded, flat and open—and very dull. I spent what seemed like the whole day just sitting watching them build the shed. But they fed me: they'd brought a picnic lunch. And I left.

I stopped in Goldbar post office and sent my mail. And then I spent my last few dollars getting some beer with which to treat Edith so I could use her phone. But they weren't there.

I went home and cried.

And then I wrote a very angry, very nasty letter to the phone company and posted it in box and then just drove around the Estates, prowling. I ran into McNabbs coming back and they invited me in. I phoned the phone company and got the usual. And then I phoned Dennis and told him and he said they didn't think they'd be up. That was another blow.

I went back and stopped and talked to Marty, who was chain sawing, asking her if I could go in and get the apples. Not that it was on their lot but so close to them it would rouse the dog. She was very nice!

And then I talked briefly to the stewardess next door.

I went home then, thinking maybe I'd better retrieve my letter, but Marv had said, "Don't take it lying down! They'll just kick you further!" I did write a nice note to insert in it, suggesting that maybe if McNabbs left I might get their phone line?

The peace while I wrote was disturbed by the roar of Burlington Northern Railway train going by eight miles away, shaking the house. Would I never get away from them? That year living next their switch yard...!!!

Lu collaborated my EIS report when she said in the six years they'd been here, they'd had only one bad winter. But I couldn't get anyone interested in my EIS report...I thought about how I'd like to give them a farewell party, but I wondered if I could get anyone to come?

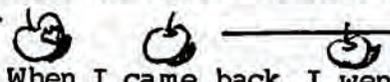
**September 10, Wednesday.** Sun again, though pale. But I faced the day grimly: Dennis and Abbie not able to get up, and losing the McNabbs was a blow. Not only were they my best friends here, but they were good caretakers and I certainly relied on their being here in case of emergencies. Things weren't working out as I had expected: no friends, no phone, no family, and never any mail.

And I had all those letters to write now. First I'd have to go and retrieve my nasty letter to the phone company and/or insert my note. I went to retrieve it. I had no trouble opening it, for everything was soggy with dew. An apple fell in the orchard as I stood and re-read my letter which didn't sound too bad—a bit grim. I put my note in and stood and looked at the apple orchard...

I'd meant to go pick some for Dennis and Abbie, but if they weren't coming...And all those blackberries I'd thought Paula would be so excited about...they'd all be gone by the time anyone came...

**About 11 a.m.** A truck drove up. A bearded guy got out. I panicked—not the phone man! with my letter already gone? But it was a stranger—from the electric company. This was the third guy that had been up. He fixed the heater and said it was the breaker. He also said there'd be a charge for his trip up; that their work was guaranteed for a year. And that the buzz on my radio was caused by the fluorescent light—that they always do that.

Later I went to the store. Cases were still gone; they'd been gone for weeks. I noticed Lu was home alone, so I stopped and chatted a bit with her. I told her all my tales. She was horrified when I told her how Marty was clearing into the adjacent lot.



**The apples.** When I came back, I went down to get some. It turned out to be kind of an adventure. (But what's the use of adventures when there's no one to tell them to?) But adventure was about all it was worth? for it was a long, hard, hot job and I didn't glean that many apples.

To get in there, I decided to cut a trail through all that dense, overgrown jungle from our side, so we'd have access to the apples. And that would avoid disturbing "Jakie", the Carroll's dog, by going in on their side.

I'd no sooner started hacking my way in than there was the sound of a mechanical monster on the street above. Curious, I clambered up to see. It was yet another truckload of topsoil going into Carrolls'. That was the third. I thought of how ridiculous it was since Marty had said they wouldn't have time to get the lawn in and, as Lu and I discussed, it would just be a sea of mud that would wash down that slope into the creek, (spoilng the whole local ecology.)

I went back to work, surprised that the dog only gave out just one woof! at the very first. It was an almost impassable tangle and it got worse the further in I went, the machete not doing the job at all. I felt like an insect crawling around down there under all that brush. I couldn't even tell where the apple trees were and almost gave up.

And then I spotted one apple on the ground. It had a big bite out of it! like a human bite, not bird peckings! Then I saw the ground was carpeted with golden apples half hidden in all that brush. I fought my way through and finally got to the huge, mossy yellow apple tree. Ha! the tree towered a "hundred" feet over me and all the apples were way out of reach.

Then I spotted a huge tree fungus. I picked it to take back as a curiosity. It was all kind of a fairyland down in there and it was strange to think that so long ago someone had planted those trees and whoever they were they were all dead and gone now. Kind of eerie.

I started to gather apples but the fun was spoiled, for Jake started to bark like a fiend and wouldn't stop even when I called out to him. unable to stand that dog noise, I gave up my idea of full baskets, for the apples were heavy, and, settling for half baskets, I started back.

And panicked! I was completely lost! Where was the path I thought I'd made? Futilely scrubbing around, I was beginning to have silly visions of "little girl lost in the magic apple forest". Luckily, I'd left my other green shopping bag by the other apple tree and I spotted it, I was able to find my path and clamber out up that (now obsolete) 1/1 road-fill slope fill overgrown with brambles and mushrooms and ferns.

I had two baskets of free apples! What I was going to do with them I didn't know, but it was kind of fun! I felt very primitive and "farmish" in my "dutch cap" I'd put over my hair and my harvested apples and even more so when I went back in the wooden cabin, now flooded with sunlight, and was assailed by the smell of my roast of meat cooking...

While outside another world-remaking load of dirt rumbled its way into Carrolls'. Marty was cutting the whole woods down! re-making our world! "Why?" I'd asked her, (are you clearing it so?) " Because I don't like bugs in the house, " she said.

I decided I preferred it my way; primitive—if you please?

I made a sandwich all dripping with good meat juices, ate an apple and went out to wash the car, feeling good. "Iss goot!" (From William Saroyan's "I Remember Mama?" )

That evening I climbed to the loft to bed, appreciating my stairway and thanking Dennis for it; it the best designed stairway ever, Dennis! I could climb it blind! So strong! with all those railings to grab onto. I love it!

It was the wee sma' hours when I awoke in the loft still in my clothes. I'd started doing that to save both bed linen laundering and bed making until such time as the kids wouldn't be staying overnight. This was because both chores were so difficult at that time: I had to take the laundry clear to Monroe to wash, my washer not having survived the move. And it was a burdensome task lugging it out and in on the trail, while the beds, necessarily in tight corners and heavy were real stinkers to make— even when clean!

I wondered how long it would be before I initiated those exotic sheets I'd bought almost three years ago "for the cabin". But I was waiting—for Abbie to finish knitting that bedspread she'd been working on for almost a year—and to make the bed up all fancy to impress—guests—that never seemed to come...

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**September 11, Thursday.** I awoke startled about how late it was, until I remembered about Daylight Saving Time and "collected" an hour.

The fixed heater seemed to work all right. I thought about that electrician:  
A nice young man; I'd enjoyed him. He worked leisurely, not in a big rush like that other guy. And I felt pretty smart when I thought about how it wasn't until I mentioned that the breaker was crooked and perhaps that was the problem?

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I got up and finally got my letters written. And when I went to post them, the sky was blue. And the apples plopping, unattended, seemed so odd; it had never occurred to me what happened to wild apples! I wondered if I should pick some of those blackberries and make myself some jam—I'm good at "jams"—well, getting into them?—like...?

I stood and looked at the havoc Marty had wrought. And then, noting that someone had pulled up and thrown the property line stakes all over, I worried if intruders?—if infringing there, next thing they'd be into our property—if I should "survey" our lot lines again?

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Later, I did. But I did just a hasty and crude job of measuring off the width of the two intervening adjacent lots from ours, using the Sultan Estates plat map measurements. I wanted to see if Marty was over the line. She was, but not as much as I thought. I used up all the surveyors' tape I'd swiped from my Highway job and I just left it stretched out on the road shoulder as a pretense warning of "official" surveying.

But while I was doing all this, I got "caught": a car drove into one of the houses down there. I hastily pretended I was picking berries, trying to remember which one of the guys down there had asked me why we didn't have a driveway? And (Covenant rules?) I had lied, saying "Oh, my son—a tree saver nut—" the real reason, of course, that I didn't have that much money!

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Nothing happened, but thinking about people and gossiping made me think of Lu and wonder if she was really happy about their move, for she loves hearing all the gossip and checking on things. "But he (Marvin) wants to go," she'd said. "He is worried about me." After he's gone, she meant? for Marvin had been very sick lately...and worried?

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But I did have a shock and puzzlement. The mail brought me a "Mailgram" from the telephone company. "Sorry if we caused you any inconvenience." I had just mailed my letter; had these crossed? Or did that young man report my anger? I didn't know.

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**That afternoon** I did (another?) risky thing. I went down and called on those renters in that trashy trailer home where that bothersome, idiot kid, Ron, came from. Only his dad was there. He was very, very cordial; asked me in and plied me with beer (and questions.)

It was risky, because, according to the rules of the Covenant, non-owners, were not supposed to be allowed and could not have use of the pool or be included in the meetings. And I blew it: I mentioned the meeting. "They didn't know about it; now they were going to go!" He was the one who'd asked me why we had no driveway and then he said he'd seen me out there "surveying"! I didn't tell him about McNabbs leaving, for I began to sense a lot of talk and conjecture and infighting down there and that he was pumping me.

Mutual? For I found out quite a bit, too:

He said: He was "currently" out of work. I couldn't recall just what kind of work he said he did, but I gathered that all three families down there were connected with the construction and contracting business. (I wondered if they were the ones responsible for all the recent development/ruination that had been going on since we had bought the lot?)

He claimed he'd tried to buy that adjoining lot from Delp (who evidently had "priced him out"?) for he said Delp wanted \$12,000 for it (a lot for a lot only half the size of ours!)

The dog kennel issue. Sultan Estates had slapped a law suit on the Dukes, people on our street who were trying to start a dog kennel there. I'd gotten a notice of the hearing, but ignored it, all the members so uncommunicative with me, (and, pet-less, not interested in getting into dogfights.)

He said he was for the kennel to my disgust.

This news alarmed me, as did his revelation of all the bickering factions I hadn't been aware of. Letting in these commercial enterprises would soon ruin the whole area. And, with the McNabbs going, and so few of the Board left, I began to greatly fear that my new little paradise was going to turn into a slummy hell, too.

Telephone. He told me about the awful foul-up and run-around they'd gotten from the phone company when they'd asked for a phone. They had, at first, even hooked them into McNabb's private line! It alarmed me to learn the McNabbs were the only ones with a private line, which were very expensive—more than I could afford. There went my idea of getting their line when they left!

Apples. He seemed very anxious to get in there and get some of those apples. He also said we had a huge, fat porcupine coming into our place. I thought it was odd I'd never seen it, and wondered how come he had? But that might account for the trodden place and the bite out of the apple?

He also said that they planned to leave in the spring. This encouraged me, for, although he was very cordial and we were having fun gossiping over his beer and cigs, I felt him a bit too unctuous, and they had impressed me as pretty dingy people. He said his wife was at work—a cleaning woman in a nursing home. And the place was a mess. There were great rotted places on the walls and he said the place was full of mice. A real slum.

I was getting a bit woozy on beer and worrying that it didn't look too good, the two of us there, "partying"—when SHE came home!

He wasn't too bad a looking guy, but she was an ugly, dull, drab bitch—Ron's mother. I, of course, suddenly had "to get home" but nothing would do but he insisted they walk me home: he wanted her to see those apples with the idea of getting some. She was sour about it, but she came. And it sure made me mad when other people's dogs raised Cain as we merely went by in the street, nowhere near their property. When we got there nothing to do but invite them in to see the place; we so proud of it.

They just raved! "And what a magnificent job Dennis had done!" they said. He went down to a long inspection on the foundations and she went and pried into the bathroom and raved about it. My idea on going down to call on them had been to marshall people on my side, so I was "charming". But alarmed when he told me Case was back on the Board he professes to hate so. (Going to be trouble! I thought.)

I didn't mention that we hadn't gotten final inspection yet: better not to say too much? I not sure what was going on down there. I was already worried about my relations with the Club if they kicked invaders out of a closed meeting and they found out I was the—catalyst.

They didn't stay long—just a tour. I finished my chores and went to bed in the loft later, wondering, at dawn, why there weren't any birds singing any more? had they gone south?...And that stench on the porch...was there a dead baby bird up in that nest on the porch?...And the pipe banging in the bathroom again. I thought I'd fixed that...?

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**September 12, Friday.** Fridays were coming so fast it scared me—the passage of time!... My limbs were so stiff I nearly fell down the stairs; afraid I'm going to need that railing I said I didn't want. Old age...

Rain. I never got those porches finished while it was nice...There seems to be a new siege of insects...After my sleeping in the loft, downstairs seemed like a cave—wintry. Upstairs there was all that space above and sound of weather on the roof. I would have to remember that when I got the blues...

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**Afternoon.** I went to Monroe on what was becoming an established routine; bank, washing, post office, library, shopping. A small town is so much easier than the city, but it has its drawbacks—like BN's (the railway) gates down across Main Street and lights flashing like mad—but no trains in sight! A guy finally came and held the gate up by hand so that we could all go through. (I added that inefficiency to my hate list of BN.)

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On my way home—new; a mist or fog seemed to be settling in the valley beside the road that goes up to the cabin. It was eerie—reminded me of old legends and fairy tales—like "Brigadoon"—the disappearing ancient village.

By the time I got to the cabin, it was even more eerie: a sort of mist had invaded my little forest grove and my tiny witch's house looked even more fairy tale-like and deserted and yes...lonely. It was kind of spooky, but also kind of "magical".

The cabin was cold and dark. Most people would have fled from such a dismal and eerie scene? But I enjoyed it! For, later, after I'd cooked my little dinner and built a fire, it was warm and cozy despite that mist clinging to the tree tops and the woods all dripping and the whole house invaded by—gnats!? in the sink and all over my bed. I was experiencing what fall was like in my new woods cabin home! It was fun!

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An item in the news made me glad that the cabin was not directly on a street or road but off a dead end and well hidden. Nobody would attempt to lug stolen goods out on that trail!

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**September 13, Saturday.** The weather was better; not raining and possible clearing, they said...The radio mentioeds the first football game at the UW nad I realized all that traffic might interfere with the kids'coming...?

Later, when I went for the mail, I checked my attempt at a garden. And found it very discouraging. The wild salmon berries had taken over; the onions were—gone; the little gift oak tree was dead.

The mail was a little more encouraging ; my first PUD bill for electricity! \$12 for 23 days. They'd hitched up August 1. Not bad, but, of course, we'd had all that nice weather...The first red maple leaves on the ground...

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**Later:** I went to the store. I had a near disaster backing the car out. My hammer had falled down behind the seat. I reached to retrieve it and found the car rolling backwards down toward that steep bank down into Carrolls' yard! The car **wasn't** out of gear as I'd thought! I caught it just in time!

Though the weather was drizzly, cows were grazing and suckling calves and people were all over driving and walking as if it were a nice day. When I got back to Sultan Estates, it looked different; there were cars all over—at every house—the meeting the next day?

I had gone to the store to get whipped cream to put on the fruit jello I had made as my contribution to the potluck meeting. Noting that it had to be refrigerated, I wondered if it would keep in the ice chest or whether I might poison them all with spoiled food? But then I wondered if I'd care if I did!

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**Evening.** I went out and walked in my woods. I had been fretting while inside that it had rained all day and all night, but outside it was lovely! It was more like dripping fog than rain. I roamed around in the woods where I hadn't had time to go before. I found my old property line markers I'd worked so hard on during one of my trips up. The line, with its orange plastic ribbon bows had fallen down into the brush, but, on that side, it didn't matter for the woods stretched on silent and virgin and undisturbed to the north and west.

It looked, I thought, like those expensive big mural posters "natureloving" city people put on their apartment walls to exclaim over during their cocktail parties: The Beautiful Woods! But this was **real**, and it was **mine, mine, mine!** I exulted and gloated. Jay birds set up a commotion. I didn't feel a bit alone.

**Later.** At my desk, checking my finances, I was shocked at the amount of my gas bill! Then noted the chits; oh. Dennis' charges for gas for the moving trip up. I had forgotten I'd given him one of my credit cards to use. Dismay left me: after all, it was only "mileage expenses for my carpenter".

**Later,** preparing for the meeting, I realized that my days of finery dressing were all over? I now had a muddy trail to traverse in and out. I dug out second best clothes. Showering in my new shower was fun! It was really very comfy and cosy.

Those tiny flies! I was still battling them! There was about ten thousand of them in the sink! (Oh.) I wondered if they'd come from those apples I'd collected?

**Evening.** Dogs barking like crazy made me realize that I had lost my former privacy—that I'd have to curtain my windows as if in the city again? It now seemed impossible that I had slept out under the trees and used to strip and take a "spit bath" undisturbed, unseen. And that I used to take a flashlight and go prowling around in the woods in the middle of the night. Not now. Now if I ventured out like that, the dog down there, "Jake" would alert the whole countryside!

**Night.** I did laugh, though. Privacy? I went out naked, except for Julie's old fur collar, which I had put on to keep my neck warm while reading in bed. Why naked? My laundry difficulties; the idea was to save on washing by not wearing a nightgown. My hair was in curlers.

I was a fright sight!



I had gone to the porch to check to see if the ice chest was cold enough to get that Jello to set. It was a black night. The cedar trees dripped, dripped in the fog. I burst into laughter as I leaned over to poke at the Jello; jiggle, jiggle, it went. Jiggle, jiggle went all my old, fat, flabby flesh. Giggle, giggle went I; What a sight I must be! But there was no one to see.

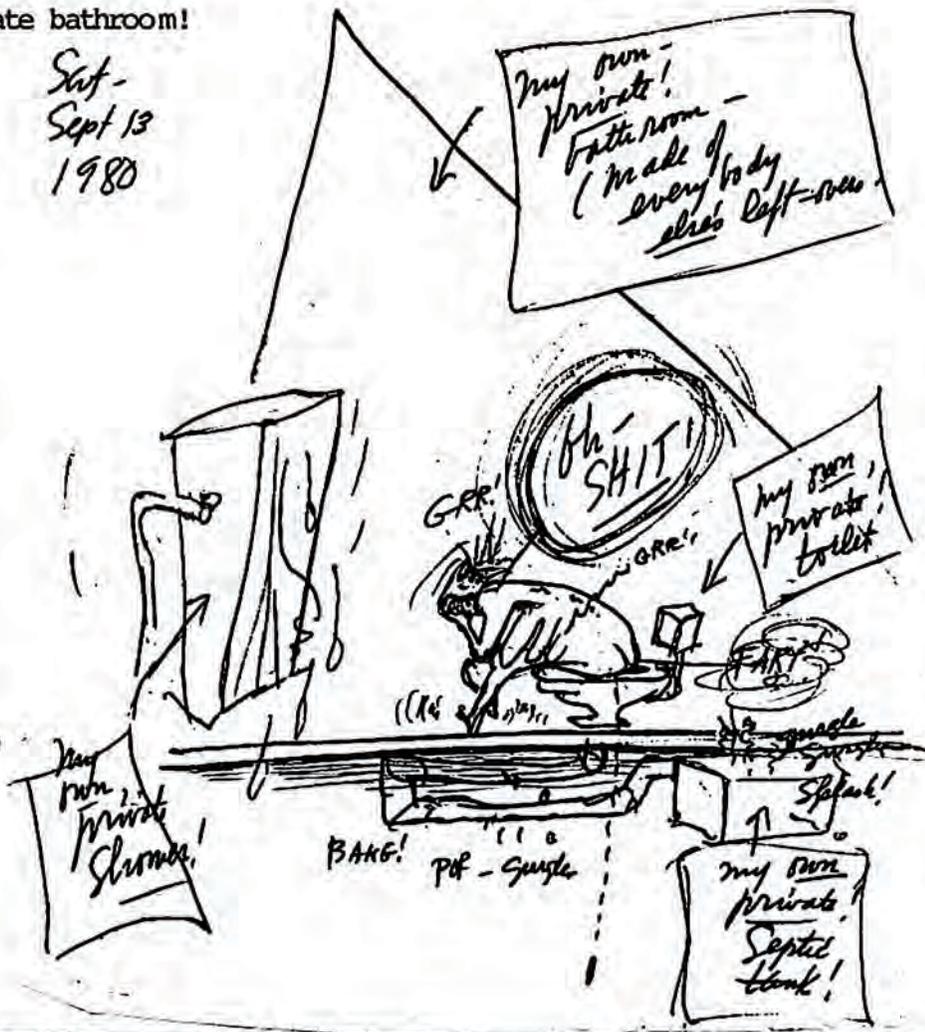
Now that's privacy!

I ran in to make sketches—rather crude ones, but—of that and a bathroom session I had in my very own, private bathroom. Maybe not funny to others, but...it all tickled me!

**Privacy.** Later I was alarmed by a loud **thump** during the usually so quiet night. It sounded like a car door slamming—at 4 a.m. in the morning!? I wondered. Much later I was glad I'd made that notation in my diary, for little did I know, at that time, that my days of private little Eden were numbered.

My own private bathroom!

Sat-  
Sept 13  
1980



September 14, Sunday. The day of the Sultan Estates Meeting.

Tuesday emerged overcast, foggy, and cold. It alarmed me, for I wanted Bud and Paula to see my place at its best, when/if they came; in dreary weather they wouldn't be impressed. Also, would I be able to stand weeks and weeks and months of this kind of dreary weather, alone and without a phone? The temperature was 50° on the porch, and 58° inside the cabin.

As I made preparations to go to the meeting, I cursed, trying to find clothes—everything such a mess and still packed. Lacking closet space, I had ordered fancy storage boxes new on the market from that Coast to Coast store in Monroe. They had said they'd have to "back order" and would let me know when they came. I had heard nothing from them.

By 11 a.m. I was ready to go but it was too early. There was to be "an election of officers"—a club procedure I'd always hated—all that pretense of "democracy" when everyone knew that the same old officers would be in again. I was restless; it was dismal and dark in the cabin, whereas the sun was now shining outside. I decided to go drive around the estates and mark on my plat plan what I saw—where there were houses, where vacant lots, etc. I set out.

And didn't accomplish much—just started a lot of dogs barking at me, as I tried to get names from mail boxes and check the "for sale" signs. They were already gathering when I first drove by, so I rather gave up on my project and went back.

Quite a few people were coming. I busied myself unloading my stuff and went in. Marv greeted me with the message that Lu had a message from the telephone company for me.

"They said they'd had a nasty letter from you," he said. At first I was alarmed and then realized he was just kidding me. Lu said a gal had called, a different one from the one I had talked to, and said she understood I had a problem and that they would get up the next week and put in the wiring. "But it's already in!" I cried, still puzzled. I guess Lu had put in a good word for me. She said she told them I needed a phone badly and that their line would be free. But the gal had told her they couldn't do that. Whatever, I was more than ever completely fed up with the whole thing.

The meeting was late starting, everybody milling around and talking as people do. Lu introduced me to Mrs. Lloyd. They are the people who own the apple tree lot, the one next to Marty's on our side. She was very nice! I sat with her and her daughter. In conversation I got the impression that she didn't like the report that Marty had gone over the line clearing into their lot. Later, Marty came over and sat by us and mentioned the matter. The gals had a polite "fight" about it.

Mrs. Delp was there, but when I tried to engage her in conversation, she acted more as if I were intruding than interested. Yet everybody was sweet-nice to each other, even the men were, in spite of the fact of the rumors I'd heard about how they all really felt about each other.

Case didn't come. He had been outside and waved to me when I went by. Ron's dad, Darrell Parker, was there, I found out, and greeted me amiably. He was alone. One nice guy had come up to me and greeted me pleasantly when I first came in. He was the guy I'd pretended that I was interested in buying a lot, a ploy to get information.

"I lied to you, didn't I?" I said. He laughed. I don't know who he was, but he seemed to be a member of the board.

The meeting was long and wordy and rather tiresome. Jerry Smith, who handled the meeting, was very good at it. He seemed experienced and held things in line—almost too much. For it seemed to me that nothing really got fully aired—like the controversy over the dog kennels:

The Dukes, the older couple being sued for their kennel, were a couple of big old battle-axes, fat and aggressive. They practically took over the meeting, and were very unreasonable and defiant. They obviously intended to do exactly as they pleased; there was no law for them!

Mr. Duke, a very ugly man, both in appearance and manner, got up and pleaded this ridiculous sob story about "Us and our two poor old dogs! You poeple are trying to kill them! We have this old dog named Jake...(I turned to Marty and raised my eyebrows)...Now you dear people wouldn't ask us to kill our poor old dogs, would you?" on and on...

I did raise my hand once, encouraged by a very prosperous and intelligent looking old couple (absentee owners) across from me who were putting out impatient snorts at every one of Duke's phoney pleas. "The Covenant says no commercial enterprises," I said. "What is a kennel?" This started a big brouhaha: "What was a kennel, legally?" etc.

The other culprits, the ones that owned all the dogs that were bothering everyone so much, didn't show until the last minute. I rather gathered that Marty's husband had slipped out and called them and told them to appear. They stayed outside, a very handsome young couple with a new baby, but they, too, were defiant and unreasonable. Their name was Nyes? They joined the Dukes in claiming they never had seen a Covenant. They both were vicious and arrogant.

Jerry pleaded with them, "We tried to put out copies to you! The real estate men won't do it..."

"Who in hell built this place?" I heard one angry man ask Jerry later.

"Well, a guy named Jerry Smith."

"You?"

"No," he laughed. "Just a coincidence..."

There then began a big uproar about how dogs didn't bother anyone. That kind of cheap, bitchy gal named Moore that lives on our street in the mobile home next to Dukes began to defend them, claiming their dogs no problem. Everybody was getting hot and chainsmoking.

Some of the men were drinking beer, but nobody offered me one. I was getting hot, too. I raised my hand, and, my heart pounding, said my only nasty thing.



"Mr. Duke says he checked all the neighbors and none have any complaints. Well, I live up at the end of the cul-de-sac," I said, "and I can hear them, and nobody asked me!"

The controversy wore on. My bottom began to hurt, paralyzed from sitting on that hard bench listening to all this useless yammering. I signaled to Lu, standing and trying to be polite to everyone. I knew her back was probably killing her. Finally she came and sat by me. Then they brought up the issue of the roaming dog pack that had been invading. They skirted that issue for what seemed another hour or so. When I, exasperated, whispered in Lu's ear, "We could always shoot 'em!", she laughed.

Finally! A vote was taken—only owners allowed to vote—and they voted to support the Board in going ahead with trying court action on these people and doing something about the dog kennel problem. I saw Darrell get up and stalk out, his face grim, when they voted to support the Board. The Dukes and the Nyes walked out later, when it was voted to establish a dog leash law. But even Marty voted for that—she with a dog!

Sometime during the meeting I dared to offer my talents to bring that wall map up to date, so that we all, including me, would be able to tell who lived where. At first this seemed to delight them, then, when I pinned them down, Marie Easterley, who seemed to be one of the powers, was vague and put me off onto Lu, who acted the same.

I was disappointed, not only at being rebuffed at offering my time, talents and help, but I'd thought it would be a good way for me to get acquainted. I didn't feel there was any intention to hurt me or put me off, they just acted like it wasn't a very pressing matter. And I was annoyed that I couldn't seem to get them to come to any business-like agreement about it. I just had to assume they just didn't want to bother with providing me with the lists I'd need.

I had also asked how long these people—this community—had been there? "Oh...about 9 years." This was when the owners were getting so hot about "the rip-off we got!" Something about the real estate salesman it seemed. "Well, one thing," I had put in, "that cul-de-sac, for instance, is not depicted correctly. I can show you my corrected plat." This was when I was offering to bring that wall map up to date. Nobody replied. I saw turned backs.

**The food:** It wasn't as good as at the former meeting—not as lavish—a reflection on the inflation in prices since? This time there was no chicken or ham, just cheaper things like spaghetti and meat loaf, and lots and lots of salads. And, instead of all the former show-off gourmet desserts, there was a cake.

By the time I got my food fixed to serve, I was the last to fill my plate. Nobody asked me to sit with them. I felt a fool roaming around and trying to find a place and then had to intrude myself into a group. But they were all nice and polite and I didn't feel lonesome and found it enjoyable enough. Marty and her husband acted as if we were "old tillicums" (Indian for pals), to my surprise.

I judged the meeting useless, for I was sure everyone realized that nothing can really be done to enforce all these things, people and the loopholes in laws being what they are. It was, as Jerry pointed out, that these things caused bad feelings and friction in our little community (village, it is technically, he said) of 23 owners and should be aired and discussed, at least.

I might say it was kind of fun for me, the perennial renter, to be there and vote, as an owner (they didn't know I was voting "for Mike by proxy"). I, for once, on the other side of the fence, with land owners, but I didn't see much hope for problem solving on our street, which was revealing itself as a nest of anti-Board people. And it seemed that I had exchanged Case, whom I had thought of as my backer, for Marty and her husband. That surprised me.

They voted in the same Board members unanimously, again, of course, and then they sent Marv and Lu out and voted a farewell bonus of \$100 for all their good work.

The meeting finally adjourned and people began to mill around, grabbing at each other and talking more truthfully. At the table I'd chosen to sit during the meeting, there was this one couple, not too young. She was a huge battle-axe type of person. Her husband was meek and rather charming and seemed to have some kind of foreign accent. I had tried to make acquaintances noises. When I said I was from Yakima, she shot out,

"We're from Yakima!" as if a threat or something.

"Oh? what part of Yakima?"

"Oh...Gleed...west..." she said evasively.

"Mmm. Long way out," I said. "Do you know my sister...?" But she cut off the conversation and glared at me. I didn't like her and she obviously didn't like me.

There was another woman running around saying, "We bought here to escape from Yakima and Moses Lake!" She was pressing pictures of the volcanic ash on everyone. "Look what we've been through!"

When she came to me, I sighed wearily, "Yes, I know. I was...there." (Spoiled her story?)

I was, of course, on a search for compatible neighbors I might become friendly with. That tiny old couple that had sat across the table from me, he the one who chain smoked and put out impatient grunts during the meeting: I was attracted to them, even at the risk of feeling like a social climber? For she was well-dressed—furs, rings. They were both well dressed and intelligent looking. She was a very gentle little thing, wizened and old, but with a patrician air about her. I felt instant rapport with her and she seemed to with me, too.

We got to talking. They were absentee owners, also from Moses Lake. She said they were trying to sell their house there—that she very much wanted to build and move in on their lot.

"Oh, really!" I cried, pleased.

"...But, I have this...invalid I have to take care of." She said her husband was trying to get one of the members to bulldoze their lot. Her eyes followed me as I moved off to chat and gather more info.

I tried to catch Marty, who had seemed so friendly during the meeting. They had announced that they were trying to make a tape of the meeting. But someone had brought a little girl in who got more and more restless and noisy and her parents made no attempt to silence her. I and others were annoyed; we couldn't hear what was being said.

I whispered to Marty "All they'll be able to hear is that kid!" and shook my fists. She laughed and nodded.

Now I caught her and asked her if she's gotten her dog from Dukes, the name the same.

"Oh no, " she said, "Jake's a stray." And Ralph, when I asked, said they'd brought in 14 loads of dirt. (Jeez!) Incidentally, I think it was at this meeting that I found out her name wasn't "Marty" but "Mardy".

The Moore girl was going around telling that there were **no disturbances** on our street except the bear and again she was telling how she's claimed to have seen a bear on our street "But it didn't disturb her!" I heard a snort. It came from me. Firstly, I'd never seen a bear around there; secondly, "Ain't the way I heard the story," I said to someone, "She came out **shooting** [sic] —middle of the night—woke me up..." (True. The gun shots.)

Item: nobody seemed upset when I fessed up to "spilling the beans" to Darrell about the meeting.

Well, I hung around, hoping someone would want to come up and see our place (I'd gotten some beer with that in mind) but no one mentioned it. And I'd also wanted to offer my place to have a party for Marv and Lu, but all the milling people, acting as if they had things to do, the opportunity never arose.

I stayed until the last person had left, my insides weeping at having to go back to that dark, lonely place so early while everybody else was calling out to each other about how they'd all get together later...! I'd sort of hoped Marv and Lu would ask me to stay awhile, but they didn't. So I went home.

4:30 p.m. Home from meeting. "All dressed up and no place to go" I was. And stuck with the rest of that blasted Jello. It had been well received; I got compliments on it and it fitted in well with the rest of the food—the only dessert beside that cake. But they only ate about two-thirds of it and I couldn't palm off the rest, and I certainly didn't want it, having no way to keep it.

It was a pretty good meeting and I enjoyed. I met and talked to a lot of (absentee) owners, people about my age, and, shall we say—class? I was glad I'd dressed up some, for the other women had. And I had seemed to be accepted—up to a point.

But it was no fun being shunted off alone when there was so much I'd liked to have talked about. Maybe I could use putting that whipped cream in Cases' freezer as an excuse to go call on them? it was risky, if I were seen, because I now knew that Case and the Board were at odds and I would be put in the light of a snitch?

I gathered the Jello and cream and the "Lorna Doone" cookies (my "signature" for parties) and two cans of beer. Then, too much to carry, I decided to take the car, even at the risk of being spotted "in the enemy camp". And I did feel "caught" when I passed Ron "playing" a little too close to my place. But he waved at me when I went by. So? His dad wasn't mad at me? Dwayne was out waxing a used pickup he hadn't had before. As I parked by the side of the road, the strangest looking rig with two handsome bearded young men came roaring into the street and up into (formerly Dooxies') driveway. They were laughing and jeering at me and still were as they roared out again and off. I was alarmed; they sure looked like troublemakers, but Case seemed unconcerned.

He said Edith wasn't there, but cordially invited me in anyway, saying he'd have coffee while I had beer.

"How was the meeting?" he asked me the first thing.

"Why didn't you come?" I countered.

"Because I don't like the illegal things they're doing," he said and began to tell me and bitch.

I wasn't impressed with his claims to illegalities; they seemed to me no worse than what everyone else was doing. It seemed to me he was mostly piqued because they'd had a closed meeting and lied to him—hadn't told him about it—he, a member of the Board! And he railed on about all the dire things the Board had done to him.

"We were goddamned broke once!" (when they'd first come here, he meant? For he'd told me that wreck of a trailer home the Parkers were in had been his, originally)"Now, I'm going to buy those bastards out!"

Not too interested in all these petty intrigues, I changed the subject:

"The McNabbs are going," I said.

"Oh no!" he cried.

"Well, he's sick, and worried about Lu..." (Trying to keep my loyalties straight, I said no more.)

Case looked "preoccupied". And we both just sat and watched TV, which was interesting. I seldom got a chance to watch it and I was enjoying that and the pleasant glow I was getting from the beer.

Before that I'd asked him, "What's Mardy's husband's name?"

He went and searched out a xeroxed list of owners' names. "Uhhh...Ralph."

I coveted that list, for I'd discovered when I'd gotten home that I'd lost mine somewhere. I told him how I'd tried to find out names of owners.

"Say, why don't you just keep this list?"

Other things we talked about: I was going on about how there seemed to be no retired people my age there.

"We!" he said.

"No no," I said, "You are younger..."

"No no" he said. End of that.

I had hinted about the kids bringing up the refrigerator: "They need a pickup," I said. No offer.

I tried on our wood problem. Case had all that cut and stacked wood there.

"Dennis can't," I said, "cut wood; he has no chain saw and he has to work, but...uh...if he **does** get a pickup to bring the refrig up...I really should lay in some wood...uh...could I have **part** of a cord?"  
"You can have a full cord for \$50!" he said,"...or...any amount you want!"  
(I made a note of that later—the price—"for the record" when I went home.)

We talked about PUD bills, and he asked me about the telephone and I told him my sad tale.

I was being very careful in what I said; I did make two slips, though:  
"How much for the lawyer for the lawsuit (against Dukes)?" he asked me.  
"Oh...\$2000," I ventured. "And there may be a \$30 assessment on us to help pay for it." I hadn't taken notes at the meeting, but they'd had a tape recorder going.  
"Hell!" he snotted, "It'll cost them \$20,000!"  
I shut up; I didn't want to get mixed up in it.

My other slip: After Case and his son had worked on my car it still hadn't worked right. I told him about Marv and Jerry offering to fix it that time (and giving me a bad scare about dire troubles) and about how Mike had come and finally fixed it, and his saying somebody had bent the automatic choke wire.  
["How in hell that wire got so bent, I don't know," Mike had said. "Who'd have access to it?"  
I told him about Dwayne and his soon working on the car. Mike's eyes had glinted.  
"Oh, they were very nice!" I'd said. "They were just hurried and confused."  
(And inept? I had suggested to them that maybe it was the choke and they had just fled.)

Now, I just told Case Mike had fixed the car. We didn't discuss it further.

I'd been there quite awhile. He was drinking coffee and seemed "nerfuss".  
"Should I?" I asked, "open this other beer, or..."  
"W.e.l.l." he said.  
I got the hint and began to un-pocket my keys and make going motions.  
He walked me out to my car and began polishing his again and we chatted about car polishes. Then he said something strange that made me wonder.  
"I notice you are covering your car with plastic," he said.  
This puzzled me—how he'd know—for my place can't be seen from his—unless he was prowling around? I murmured something about "ash fallout, and so on..."

\_\_\_\_\_ I went home. \_\_\_\_\_

And I was very annoyed to find Ron and a pretty little blonde girl circling the cul on bikes.  
"Can I help you with the plastic on your car?" he intruded.  
"Oh, no thanks," I snarled. It was dark now. I had left, for the first time, my porch light on and noted that it could be seen from clear out in the cul-de-sac. Something made me suspicious: what had that kid been up to now? His dad was calling him. Silence.

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I went in and began to write up my report on the meeting. Later, I went out on the porch to get another beer. Ron's dad was still calling him! I took my unopened beer and went down to investigate. I stood there and waited. Ron's dad was still calling him and there was no answering call. I noticed the moon up in the trees and was standing there watching it and waiting to see what would happen. Finally I pulled the tab on my beer can. It exploded like a shot! I went in, disgusted; all this hysteria—"Bears!" and "Gunshots!"

I wrote up a very detailed account of that meeting for possible needed reference later. I'd gotten the feeling there, that, although the people were polite enough, I was an "outsider" and that it would take me a long time to become an "insider".  
But, these are my new neighbors; I am stuck with them, I thought cynically.  
Who knows what the future will bring?

And that's the story of my first meeting with my new neighbors.

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**September 15, Monday.** Sunshine again.  
**Aftermaths from meeting:** It seems that the reason those nice (absentee) owners are not moving in and/or why those lots don't sell is that they can't get them to "perc" (so they can put in septic tanks.)

I wondered if that was the basis of the angry aside at the meeting against the original developer "that the whole thing (Sultan Estates) was a big ripoff"? This, though, might work to my advantage, preserving my privacy by slowing down the influx of buyers?

I thought, too, of what the place was going to be like without even the semblance of caretakers; it would go to rack and ruin and be the retreat of all the goof-offs in the area. They said it took them three years to find the McNabbs and they're without anyone lined up as replacement.

Later. I found my list of owners out by the mail box with a big fat slug on it. Fitting? It angered me that a wild chorus of owner-deserted, tied up guard dogs barked at me as I opened my mailbox. Peace and quiet in the woods?

I loitered down there on my first job of the day: putting preservative paint on the mailbox against the rust starting to form on it. Later still I went down and got sawdust to put in the water shut-off box against freezing. The Board provided a pile of it at the park and asked us to please do so, as they'd had trouble with pipes freezing. The McNabbs weren't there or I might have picked up that wall map to bring home and start work on.

Then I found myself stymied on all the jobs I wanted to do:

- Trying to move gravel into that muddy place on the path, I found it too heavy for my still sore wrist and hand;
- I couldn't finish insulating that water pipe until Dennis brought the staple gun;
- Other work under the house waiting on pending decisions;
- The porch painting job needed a full free day to finish—too late in day.
- I wasn't dressed for grubbing out the skunk cabbage from the creek to free the stagnant water that bred all the mosquitoes everyone complained so about;
- Cooking the apples I was putting off until Abbie saw them;
- Working on Sultan Estates data I found myself soured on;
- The cabin wasn't finished enough yet to take pictures of it;
- The window weather-stripping had to wait until Dennis moved the bolts and I had no drill to move them myself;
- It was too early to cook dinner to salvage food from ice gone ice-chest.

I wandered around waiting to catch the mailman to find out when one could count on a pick-up time. No mailman.

Later. Still no mail man. I walked down the street, intending to pick up the food in Case's freezer, and again, furious at all the dogs barking at me, who was here first and was not inflicting a dog on them. Cases weren't home.

I went on down to McNabbs'. Their truck was there. Lu came out for her mail and cursed along with me at the tardiness of the mailman. I felt like visiting, but Lu said she had to hurry, as she had to "go to a land meeting that night."

I started trudging back up the hill and all the dogs began again—even Duke's dogs, which they claimed didn't bark; loud, junky music was blaring away from somewhere; a chainsaw was ripping the air apart—I went home and seethed, glad only that just the bass notes boom reached the cabin from that "music".

I still couldn't find anything to do; that other job I'd wanted done—to glean rocks from Dennis' drain field dig before leaves and growth covered them—but that I was saving as a good job for the kids to do. I'd asked him to save them for me, saying I'd put them around the bases of those ugly foundations.

"Hey, that'd be neat!" he'd said.

I decided to start moving rocks, after all.

But how to do it?... (Edith had said I should go bowling...) Aha! I started to throw the rocks to the place I wanted them. I was clumsy at first but my aim got better. Hey! Fun! I enjoyed the clunk and thunder as they hit the ground—a noise to compete with all the noise the neighbors were making! I wondered what they'd think of that strange noise coming from up on the hill? I felt like Rip Van Winkle—making thunder in the mountains by bowling stones! A tiny bird sat on a twig near me and cheeped conversationally.

Later: I had a rather strange experience: The sun, just before it set, would come in and light up the dining room table there. I was sitting working at the table when I jumped, startled. For it had suddenly grown dark and I heard a rustle as if someone had moved in the room—a sound like clothing rustling—not like the usual sound of leaves on the roof. It scared me; I could have sworn there was someone in the room, but, of course, there was no one. I never found out what it was, but I was reminded of what Case had told me:

"There's a legend here that an old woman lived up in those woods and used to run a still up there where you are and guys would come from miles around to buy her bootleg."

"That's me!" I'd laughed. "I'll make applejack out of those apples!"  
We had laughed.

But now I felt a little unsure—was the place haunted?

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I spent an hour working on that Sultan Estates map data until I felt a little sick of it all. For I'd marked which lots for sale, which wouldn't perc, which had absentee owners, and all the current residents; and I realized the latter were all incompatible, and would never be the friends I'd hope to make in my new home. I a snob? It was not that so much as that they all too young for me, too busy, gone all the time or simply people with whom I shared no mutual interests. And it would get worse, not better; it was just a bust as a desirable development—already deteriorating. I sighed and closed my files.

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I went to the store and was cheered to find that the firewood they had stacked outside was for sale—at 35¢ apiece. I could get some firewood if desperate. Also I felt cheered when I passed a limousine containing those people I'd liked; the little lady and her husband and what must be the invalid sister in the back? I might not have their apparent riches, but I didn't have that problem!

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Later: I was enjoying a very pleasant evening when Mardy and her chain saw began. I cursed. (How can men dream up such noisy machines?) Then suddenly a man's voice, screaming "Mardy! Mardy!" and something else I couldn't understand. Then the crash of a tree falling and the sound of an axe. (Not another tree going? I groaned. I thought we were through with that.)

And then raucous voices screaming and yelling at each other as if there was no one else in the world. Then an unfamiliar man's voice, "Mardy...no...property line.." And she.."I took the string down..." I sneaked down to see what in the world was going on?

There was an unfamiliar red car with an insignia emblazoned on its rear parked by their house. I alarmed—trouble there? Then see word "Fence" On emblem. Oh. They're putting in a fence; maybe we'll be through with this world-changing then?

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I went back to my more primitive ways, piling rocks without mortar. Peace again. Then noise to tear the world apart—a truck? No! A bulldozer! How long was this going on? People standing around down there. I went down and struck up a conversation with them, and listened to all their sad tales with feigned concern. No, they had just begun; this was only more fill dirt they were bringing in. But I was pleased when Ralph said that the contractor, Du Jardin, had gone broke—the one who'd built those two little houses and was evidently the ones making all those clearing noises we'd wondered about. (I wished they'd all go broke—and go away.) They started using the bulldozer again. I left.

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But, then, curious, with excuse of needing to go to the store, I got the car out and went investigating. There was a dumb, but nice young guy on that lot where they were clearing or something. With the excuse of pricing the wood, I struck up a conversation (\$65! for the wood!) and he said there was a new developer coming in. I went on to the store, came back, debated and then went down to talk to Ralph again.

"Don't know if you care," I said, "but..." and I reported what the kid had said. But Ralph's answers were so contentious as to be useless for information. So we switched to talk about political shenanigans and then the next thing he told me was more pertinent. He told me about his lame arm, how he couldn't do any heavy work with it. This rather mitigated all the gossip about Mardy seeming to do all the work down there.

Mardy had said they weren't going to plant that fill dirt until spring. She didn't know about the creek easement and when I mentioned it and that that unseeded dirt could very well wash down into the creek, she just laughingly admitted it. I was furious at her selfish and irresponsible attitude for if it dammed the creek it could very well cause a back up flood and bog on our property. Once I would have gone barreling down to Snohomish County and made waves to authorities, but I found I was tired of futile battles; it was enough to find out even a little bit of what to expect.

I enjoyed the long talk with Ralph, but I had some trouble going back in; I'd never been out that far before in the dark.

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**September 16, Tuesday.** Another clear sunny day. Going for the mail, I came on a snake in the driveway. It looked dead. I threw a rock at it. it did not move until I went and then it slithered off. That was an example of things I was learning about living in the woods, but I was inclined to Mardy's view about bugs in the woods when I found termites in that wood on the porch!

**Evening.** I spent the day cleaning out the creek to get it free-flowing—a rather funny tale to tell. I wanted to get it done before the Carrolls got home. Jake, the dog, went crazy at me anyway, but he did shut up when I called his name. I cleared it to the east first and then to the west towards Carrolls'. I was thankful to find my way blocked on both ends by huge fallen cedars for that gave me stopping places. After all, I couldn't clean the whole creek!

I had on high rubber boots, but it was both funny and scary, when, mired down in the bog, I lost my balance and fell down. I managed to extricate myself and learned something: skunk cabbage leaves and brush trash help provide footing. Farther down the creek I lost my balance again in that quick-sand-like mud and, this time, I went careening down onto an upright stick that caught me just below my eye. Almost put my eye out! Wow! Talk about lucky!...and scared!

Working away something struck me strange and then I realized that I hadn't come across a single man-made object. (Not even the lost machete!) And this was most unusual in the modern throwaway world of littering! And then I did see one thing...

Something red—that looked, perhaps, like a property stake? I fought my way through the tangle of brush and bog. Yep. That's what it was; Highway Department survey ribbon on a stake. Either Bishop or I could have done it, but if I had, why in the world would I have put it way out in that jungle? I had some dim recollection of elating to Bishop about "I found it! A property stake!" wwhen we were negotiating about buying the property. A mystery stake.

Farther down, the old cedar bridge. In three years it had rotted enough so that I could ,finally, dismantle it and take out most of it. I enjoyed its historical significance, but, fallen, it did block the creek and contribute to bog, swamp and mosquitoes. Also, it a bit dangerous to kids romping over it.

Farther down yet, where we'd seen those huge white blossoms, I found one tiny apple fallen on a cedar tree root. So maybe it was an apple tree after all?

I was exhausted and hurrying by the time I got farther than I'd ever gone to the west end. I was now fighting time against the sunset and the Carroll's return. But on the adjacent two lots before Mardy's there was such a lake under that damming fallen cedar that all I could do was clear a hole to let the water go under. Tired, I gave up and went back to the cabin.

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And laughed when I happened to see myself in a mirror! Talk about a dirty, mud-splattered face! I looked like a little kid that had been playing in the mud. Well, I had been playing it the mud and it was fun!...But I ain't no kid!

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I had covered all my food and cooking utensils and sprayed with bug spray before I left. It worked. The cabin was littered with dead insects.

The radio was predicting rain. I decided I'd better get the undone parts of the porch staining done before it did. The staining wasn't such a job; it was the unpleasant chore of washing down with detergent chlorine first to rid of mold.

I began and continued into the bathroom, living room and on, all the time the radio telling about little kids in the hospital from chlorine fumes! So, when I finished, I opened all the doors and windows to air out. This resulted in an invasion of bugs and wasps into my newly debugged house! And that made me, laughing at the futility of the effort, thoroughly brush off all that punky wood stashed on the porch so I wouldn't bring sawdust and termites into the house with it.

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By 7 p.m. I had finished the east porch. I wasn't sure if I was up to it, but I started on the west porch. I was proud of myself when I got it all cleaned. I even did the ice chests! Coming across the weinie-roasting sticks there almost made me cry: all that is over; summer's over.

Then I let out a yelp! There was a bat fighting for its life inside the porch light! How in hell had it gotten in there? I wondered if that was the cause of the strange noises I'd been hearing in the cabin—a bat? The poor thing!—But I didn't really want a pet bat—

I left it there for the time being, though it meant another unpleasant chore later—to dismantle the light and get rid of the body.

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I worked on and wondered; do I really want to live in these woods? It was different when there were so many people around, but, now, I there alone, the wild was taking over again: the brush was reclaiming my paths, and so were the indigenous natives reclaiming—the spiders, the insects, the mice, the shrews, the frogs, the snakes, and now—the bats! Well, at least they didn't bark at one like those blasted dogs!

As I was thinking this, a different dog bark—like the sound of a yapping poodle—began in the (uninhabited) woods to the west. I turned down the radio and went out on the porch to investigate; Some man was whistling! It sounded very close by. What in the world? Then...silence.

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Finished, I was about to close up and go in—let it rain!...oh...no...if it did...I'd have to...I went and re-piled all the stuff I'd moved on the porch to be able to paint there. Then I went in and closed the doors. (Let it rain! though it seemed impossible that it would; it had been so clear and hot all day.)

I went in and fell on my face; those jobs were hard work—but they were fun!

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September 17, Wednesday. I woke to—sun, though there were storm warnings on the radio—and shuddering thoughts of disposal of that dead bat. Also to a few qualms about my situation: what if I had to admit defeat?...sell out? Where in hell would I go? Besides I couldn't sell out; we hadn't even finished final inspection yet. More discouragement gripped me as I thought about all my "career gal" clothes I had no place and no use for. And I was getting awfully fed up with not having a refrigerator.

Clichés started going through my head: "up the creek"; "stuck in the mud"; "bats in my belfry"—I was living them all!

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Later: I noticed cleat marks on the telephone pole out there. They had not been there before, for I had been looking at that pole wondering if it'd be legal to paint it? I wondered if the telephone man had been there?

6:30 p.m. I had a rather different, strange day. I was still searching for a way to phone as I started out on my way to Monroe. I passed Case working outside, but Macs weren't home, so I backed up to Cases' and asked if I could use the phone. Edith was there and insisted I come in and have the usual coffee. I was there an hour, not enjoying it, for Dwayne and Edith bickered all the time and it always drove me up the wall.

I phoned Abbie and got her. But it wasn't a very cheering call. She said everything was fine, but no mention of any plans to come up, only saying Dennis, still working on the house, didn't want to leave it. She didn't know what he had in mind. And she seemed not to have gotten my letter.

She wanted to know if I'd gotten the linoleum and I tried to get through to her that I couldn't go ahead and do anything until I knew what they were going to do. Maybe they'd come up on the week end, but she didn't know—she sounded doubtful. I asked her to write and let me know either way. She said she would.

I went on chatting with the Cases. Case had been telling me how they'd had so much trouble with their phone, calls going only one way, and that they'd had the guy out and how long it took him to pinpoint the trouble. This made me feel more than ever that perhaps they'd been working on getting my line in and had gotten their wires crossed? They were also adamant that I should use their refrig and freezer. I was sorry I'd brought the matter up—the need of a refrig—for it was to cause me trouble later.

I left and started to town. I felt gleeful when, down the road, there was a wire across the road and two men's shirts hanging on it as a warning. The telephone men working? But it was only PUD putting electricity into another mobile home there.

**Monroe.** My shopping day there was a disaster. I had wanted to stock up for the storm they kept threatening was coming despite the still beautiful day. I found the library closed—with sign on it that it was open. When I found my orders hadn't come in at the hardware store, I went to the post office to see if perhaps there was some foul up in my mail delivery.

The woman went to check. It took her forever. No, they had my address right. "Maybe your mail is being stolen," she said. "Oh great!" She seemed unconcerned...Next chore: again it took me forever to fill out envelopes to leave my film and was dismayed to find it'd be about \$15 worth!

Then I went to battle the food shopping which was so hard without a refrig. And I thought angrily of how Abbie had said they love their new one, and how, as we hassled how we'd get a pickup to bring their old one up Case had sat there and made no offer of the use of his, as he had once. I decided I'd go ahead and accept their offer; as Dwayne said, it was silly to chase clear to town for food and ice all th time when they had so much room left in their freezer. So I bought frozen things and a pot roast to store there in case the kids did come.

I nearly went into shock when my groceries totted up to \$40, for I was very low; there was still the rest of the month to go, and Abbie couldn't remember whether I'd given Dennis the money he'd need or not; and they expected me to go ahead and order tthe linoleum and pay for a pickup rental; and I had arranged to buy \$50 worth of wood from Case while we had the pickup; and now I had all those films to pay for...

I set out for home full of woe—and then worried what I'd do if Cases weren't home and I'd be stuck with all that stuff.

But they were, and everything turned out fine. We piled my stuff in their freezer and they insisted on giving me a key so I'd have access to it if they weren't there. Then they insisted I must stay to dinner. (I drooled; it looked so good!)—it would be ready in half an hour. So I went home first and went back.

I enjoyed the dinner, but I did not enjoy the marital bickering. In thanking them, I'd joked that I'd intended to have bat for dinner and told them about the bat in the porch light.

"Dwayne!" Edith ordered, "Go up there and take that bat out for her!"

"No no".

"Yes! That's a man's job!"

"Are you sure it isn't just a big butterfly?" Dwayne asked.

"Oh, I never thought of that," I said, feeling miffed and tried to tell him not to bother. I was anxious to get away from all that dissension. Besides, I was getting rather annoyed at Dwayne: he had rather jeered at my tales of "roughing it" and had made derogatory remarks about our unleared woods and my beat up car. But Edith persisted that he had to do it, so I had to clear out the front seat of my car to let him in..

At the cabin he was very nice, insisting on taking the ice in and helping me with my grocery load, though I protested, especially when he took the bag with the beer in it I hadn't offered to share with Edith.

I was glad I'd cleaned house before I left. I flew around, chattering, as Dwayne went to tackle the bat problem. It was a bat! He wasn't going to let me see it, protesting it was "only a baby one", but I elbowed in. I'd never seen a bat up close; if I was going to live with them, I wanted to know what they looked like. He fended me off, and threw the bat into the woods. "I'll walk back," he said.

I flew around, then, tending to the ice and so on, and then, conscience bothering me, I decided to take some beer down as a thank-you gift. I took my small flashlight, not sure how long I'd be gone, and started to walk down there. I was glad to see Mardy outside on the way, for I wanted to talk to her about the creek.

She was training her dog and I felt sorry for it as she yanked viciously on the collar when it leaped toward me. I blathered away about the creek. She seemed oddly remote and cool, but Ralph waved at me as he drove in. As I went on, a nasty little dog ran out and accosted me. I was so sick of dogs!

Cases were there, so we had another visit. Dwayne said that little dog must have been the one I'd heard the night before. I'd mentioned to them earlier about the dog hassle at the meeting. Dwayne seemed to know all about it, though he hadn't been there. They said the big white dog belonged to the woman who had moved into Doochie's; she drives the school bus—and was the one that honked at me when I didn't know enough to stop for it? The wild, roaming cat they said belonged to Moore, who'd taken it off and dumped it trying to get rid of it, but it had come back.

"Sure a lot of traffic on this street," Edith commented. "How many houses are there up there?" Case and I began counting.

That place where the oriental airline stewardess was—"Oh that place has been sold, since," Case said. "Don't know who lives in there."

That house and the trailer the Parkers were in, Carroll's and ours were the only houses at the upper end of the street. I noted, while I was there, that Case's big "picture window"—they called them then,—faced right on the street and they could see everything and everybody that went by.

Case annoyed me again with some snide comments on my references to my connections with the Highway Department and upon insisting again that they and I were the same age. We were not. Noticing some checks written out and a bill of sale lying on the table, I asked, "Oh, are you going to sell your trailer? That kid's going to buy it?"

"He's coming at seven," he said. I looked at my watch.

"Well, I'd better go," I said. "Listen to the dogs bark when I walk back!"

"We're going to come and call on you!" Edith insisted as I left.

I trudged up the street to home, well aware, now, that "everybody was watching". The dogs didn't bark, for Ralph was out now, training the dog. He didn't speak to me, nor I to him, as I suddenly realized that I was distracting the dog training? The big white dog was roaming around. Someone whistled at it. It went.

I was annoyed at all the activity on the street and the new knowledge that I was probably being watched, for I wanted to check out a few things on my walk back: what was happening to our neighborhood? Edith had sort of intimated the same things that puzzled me—all that "busyness"—

Things like—

- There is a drainage problem: how do those lots drain? Would they perc? i.e. sell?
- Was there timber there men would covet? (Yes, there was some fir and cedar.) If those lots were for sale there'd be more bulldozing—"and there goes the neighborhood!" I sighed, and head down, trudged on up to the cabin. The wild cat, crouched there, glared at me. I sighed and went in.

September 18, Thursday. I woke, late, to a gray and ominous day and weather news that big storms were coming in for the week end—wind, cold, rain. I sighed again at no phone: no way to warn off Dennis and Abbie.

Later: the mailman. I stood and watched the old coot, thinking how odd if he were tampering with the mail? But he stopped, and, this time, put the flag down. (I'd complained.) I ran out in my robe—there'd better be some mail this time! I ran—for the rain had hit. It was dry under the trees, but beyond—leaves falling—September!

The rain really began to come down. I stayed in the house. Then...  
Afternoon, I felt desperate; I'd have to call the phone company again. I ran the gauntlet of windows and barking dogs and walked down to McNabbs'.  
When I got there, they, too, seemed to be on the warpath. The things they told me did not cheer me, only made me feel more hopeless than ever.

Marv warned me, "Don't get mixed up with the Cases! You'll only get hurt!" but he didn't say why; He said there was a new law that you couldn't buy land in the area under 2½ acres; They were afraid they weren't going to be able to move as soon as they'd thought; problems—like I'd run up against—delays, lack of help, etc.

When I told them about my mail troubles, Lu said, "Oh yes! Marie has had trouble with their mailbox being pilfered. We don't know who it is!" And then, Marv had hurt himself again. She said every time they go anyplace he hurts himself. That worried me and I knew it worried Lu, too. She seemed cross and edgy.

I called the phone company four times. Got only the busy signal. Lu said she'd seen the telephone man go up there a couple of days before.

I left and walked back home in what was now a steady rain and holed up for the day.

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**September 19, Friday.** Rain. 1 p.m. There had been no mail, but, because of a discrepancy in the date on the notice I'd gotten before, I went and checked the mailbox again. There was another notice, but mystery! It was not for me. They got names mixed? But there was other mail for me! Letters! and a card from Paula: they're coming up Sunday! (And the kids the next week end? No no, that's the week end I was to go into Seattle—to the Hambly party.)

Paula said she'd bring the main dish and dessert; the rest was up to me. And that Wendy and the kids would come, too. I was excited! Food? Well, I had all that stuff at Cases'...Abbie's letter puzzled me: they had ordered the linoleum, but "have the linoleum picked out" it said, meaning? Did they do it or want me to? I did want to do it myself.

I rushed back in, and ran around, excited! I'd have to get ready for company! Then I saw, in the kitchen area, small black specks all over everything!? Not bugs; mouse shit!?

"Rain, and maybe thunderstorms tonight" the radio said.

It was a strange day: Earlier, while I'd waited for the mail, I'd thought I'd heard a truck outside—the cabin seemed so sensitive to jarring noises it worried me a little. Then, at 4 p.m. Good God! An explosion! The house shook and swayed. But there was no lightning...the rain...but I grabbed a rain poncho and ran down the street. Shirley, Darrell's wife, was out.

"What was that!?" We tried to guess—chatted...I walked on down. Nobody else was home: Cases were not. I went on down to Macs. They were all shook up, too—literally. Lu was on the phone, talking to a neighbor also curious. Marv thought maybe it was Mt. St. Helens blowing up...nobody knew. I went back home, wishing I had a phone.

I am polishing the stove, wondering how it got so rusty, so soon. Radio: "An earthquake! 3...no...3.2" 4:05 p.m. News: "It was an earthquake...a report from Snohomish WA...Lake Stevens area, they think...not sure yet...no damage reported." Well! I guess that proved our cabin earthquake proof! Kids must be really worried. I wish I had a phone!

5:17 p.m. Radio—minimizing earthquake...said it was "merely like a truck going by" (See above!) The hell it was! 6:30 p.m. I read everything there was to read in the place and then gave up and went to sleep. It got too dark to houseclean, even with the lights on. Oh dear, I just found a leak in the roof—by the sink! 8:30 p.m. I'd gotten up and continued my housework, but could have sworn I felt a tremor. Gee! I got away from the volcano and then...but...how lucky! The heaters and chimney seemed to be OK.

Midnight. Was working, doing more cleaning when happened to catch on the radio: "The earthquake was 3.4 and the epicenter was...SULTAN!"

As I staggered, tired, to bed—ouch!... Earlier I'd stubbed my toe on the door—now it was all bloody; a big blood blister—really split open!



**September 20 Saturday.** I woke up to bad weather easing off. On news: "Earthquake. Minor. Unusual for this time of year. (Oh?) Heard as far away as Monroe." Only eight miles away?...and I thought the kids might be worried about me! I tried to fix me some breakfast—bread had a wireworm in it—had to throw it out. I can't keep milk or eggs, either...

**Later:** A rather large limb hanging in a cedar out there made me wonder if it had hit the roof? maybe made a hole? I made an inspection for quake damage. All seemed OK—nothing split open—(except my toe?!)

I then began to work on getting ready for guests—so excited! I checked all my guests things: wine glasses? Lost those and what I have... I set out for the store to buy some more practical ones. On way I stopped at Macs and phoned the kids to tell them about the earthquake.

"Is everything all right?" Dennis asked.

"Oh yes! Bud and Paula are coming up. I'll be down there next Friday," I say. It was a joy to be able to talk to him; it had been so long. He kept me talking for quite a while; so did the Macs, so I was late getting back.

I stopped at Cases' to get my foodstuff. No one was there, So I went on in. Their black cat glared at me. Black cats, frogs, toads, bats, snakes...Boy! I was sure ready for Halloween!

I went home and had more fun getting out all my long-stored hostess things for the first guests in my new house! All the building tools were still hanging on the wall, but...I unpacked some of my gimcracks and fancied the place up. I had fun! I made a salad. Outside Carroll's dog yelped and howled and I had to go out and chose off Moore's cat. I worked on and then fell into bed.

**September 21, Sunday.** I woke up early—in a tizzy! I had guests coming! When I went to the window, I startled ...??? I had chickens in my yard?! There were spotted chickens with top knots, pecking around by the porch steps. One? No, three! Then I see it—the male grouse—all puffed up, strutting on the nursing log out there—guarding his family! Fun!

Radio: (Again I gloated)\*The night before about 11 p.m. Burlington Northern Railway had a bad accident near Snohomish. Several employees injured...one seriously. They can't figure out why...or what happened...TV sets, fur coats, and luxury items scattered all over the countryside! Paper and flowers all over!" (This while I was looking for some flowers to decorate my house: I dug out mother's plastic daisies mobile. Fun!)

\*[My hatred of B&N? My bedroom was adjacent to their switchyard In that slum I had to live in in Vancouver for a year while I struggled to get the cabin started. My experiences and battles with them then and inside dope I'd learned about railroads from an engineer friend in Yakima had completely de-glamorized railroads to me.]

**10:50 a.m.** I am in the loft, searching through long packed art tools for equipment to make a birthday card for my brother before they come today.

There is another earthquake!

And something crashes downstairs. I am afraid to go and look. And then, heart pounding, and feeling a bit sick (am I having a heart attack?) I dare go look...Nothing? Then...how spooky! Of all things that could have fallen, it was that big tree fungus I'd found in the old homestead orchard that I'd brought home, dated and drawn pictures on that had fallen!

I go back upstairs and sweat out a birthday card for my brother, getting out pens and things long stored. I am absorbed when...**BOOM!** I am so scared! I was just about to go down and build a fire in the stove—but maybe—I shouldn't? (I have a sudden attack of diarrhea.) Three hours yet to wait for my guests while earthquakes? It feels like the place is haunted. I am so scared!

I go down and sneak a drink out of the wine I got for guests. Then, a little recovered, going under the house to gather some of the fagots I'd made to build a fire, I start to laugh—cartoon comes to mind—I under house...old witch...dead...cabin falls on me...just my feet sticking out...like the bad witch in the "Wizard of Oz" story...!

12:30 p.m. I had taken a break, gone to the loft and tried to read something cheery—like the Readers' Digest, "the Pollyanna magazine". It was now raining and the radio saying something about "Today's earthquake—Sultan—3.5"—reminded me and scared me again. I thought of that old man, Harry Truman [sic], sticking it out on Mt. St. Helens; me, too! I'll go with the cabin! Then the radio started softly playing "September Song".  
After a moment, I put the apples gleaned from the old orchard on to cook...  
September...applesauce time...

1:35 p.m. and the first sun break. I went out to check on the weather. Coming back on the trail I was struck by the romanticism of the cabin—little A-frame with smoke coming out of the chimney; enhanced even more when going in and smelling "home-grown" apples cooking...

I was all ready for my guests. I started to wait...and wait...and wait...  
(the agony of it!)

6:30 p.m. Bud and Paula had just left. I felt the need of something to "fortify" myself both to tell the tale and to recover from the still lingering trauma of being all alone with no phone during earthquakes, but I was ashamed to race all the way to the store just for that.

But then I discovered an "excuse" to go...Bud had left his french chapeau he'd bought in France (they just back from Europe) Since Bud just loved that cap, I got the car out and went chasing down the road after them. I didn't catch them.

But I got to the store! The gals there said they'd been scared, too! One, an oldtimer, said it had never happened before.

I stopped at Macs' on the way back to phone Dennis again. Macs didn't know about the second quake; they said they'd been up to Index and hadn't seen or heard anything. I wanted to tell Dennis to tell Bud about his cap, and also about how they had liked the cabin and all. Dennis had heard about the quake, and explained to me at great length how I would feel the quakes more there than anyone did anyplace else because glacial till shakes more than solid rock.

**The visit:** Bud and Paula were late. They came about 2:30 after I had paced and paced, and the applesauce was long since done and the fire had gone out. I knew they were coming because I heard the dog bark before I saw the car. I was alarmed when it acted as if going on, but then it backed and parked. The sun had held (for which I was glad) so I walked out to meet them.

But, after all that long try to get together, it was a rather dispassionate reunion.

"Well, hello," I said, as Paula stepped out of the car—empty handed!

"Hi!" she said and reached back into the car and came out with, again, nothing (for "this big housewarming") while Bud just sat in the car.

"He's listening to the ball game," Paula explained. Bud finally got out.

And I waited for Paula to produce a casserole or something. I'd also hoped they'd brought another bottle of wine; they, gourmets, always did serve wine with meals.

As we started in, Paula carried an unwrapped box that obviously wasn't food, and a small paper sack that obviously wasn't wine. "I was going to make an Hungarian goulash," Paula said, "but...(murmur)...party...I didn't have time..." They were obviously alone; no kids.

"Well?—" they waited. "Lead on!"

This wasn't in my script; I'd wanted to follow them in to hear their reactions/impressions. But I trudged ahead, all of us chattering. They'd lost their way; Bud had been listening to the ballgame and they'd gone clear on into Sultan.

"You shouldn't go there!" I said. "Earthquakes!" No reaction.

"Why!" Paula said, "you can't even see your house!"

"Yes," I cried, "...the whole idea!" But that seemed lost.

"Well, you certainly have done a lot since we were here..." Bud said.

"Oh my! you certainly have kept it...natural." Paula said. And then, politely,

"Oh, yes, it's really quite pretty in here..." And then..."Oh! Oh!...it's lovely...and to think Dennis did all this!?"

They were getting sincerely impressed and I felt better.

All my stage effects—the so-sweated birthday card and bottle of wine for Bud's birthday on the table, et al—were ignored as they flew around on their own, upstairs and downstairs. Nothing would do but they must see **all**. As they moved up to my desk in the loft, Paula cried, "Why, Lorna! This is just perfect! You can see the trail—people coming in!"

As we went downstairs, Paula thrust the unwrapped box at me, "A little house gift...oh...I see you have some..." I had put my whistling tea kettle and mother's little aluminum one on the stove—"Oh...well...you can exchange it." I opened the box. An elegant copper tea kettle! I really was...touched...

Bud was striding around, eyeing everything. "Say! Our kids could really use this place!—a base on their backpacking trips! Could rent it from you! and **you...could...go to...Hawaii!**"

"Yes," I said, "some people around here do that do that—rent out. Why...sure...you could bring your blankets...lots of room..."

They were peeking, peering, questioning. I was hard put to keep up.

"Isn't there a creek here? Where's your property line?"

We went outside. "Mmm, nice! nice! Picnic area!" Bud went in and came out with a camera.

"No no!" I cried, "unless you have a light, won't take in here!" (I'd found it too shady for my camera.) He ignored me and began to click away with a strobe light! Paula and I posed. And then, "He wants to hear the game!" Paula hissed. I flew in and set the radio for him.

Later. We three "oldsters" sat around inside after our nice little gourmet dinner; Paula had brought some delicatessen turkey breast. We were plenty warm; Paula had, to my dismay, been extravagantly burning my meager supply of wood, although we really didn't need the warmth. "It's fun!" she'd cried.

I was still so shook [sic?] from my earthquake experience that I couldn't pour the wine, and Paula had to do it. I tried to prod their memory about the struggle we'd had to go through making the cabin meet the (then new) earthquakeproof code. "Don't you remember?" I asked Bud, "all the sweat we had to go through about the house foundations?...those architects and the "seismic zone"? You helped me..."

"Umm," he said. "Umm..."

"Those engineers...?"

"Mmmm. Uh. Mmm"

"And Norm and Wendy (one of their daughters) were involved in building that **exciting** new development?"

"They've split," he said.

Oh those [cute] windows!" Paula cried.

"Don't you remember," I asked, "Those people? That night I went to get them?"

"Umm...oh...why yes!"

"I thought you wanted to be on salt water," Bud said.

"Well, I did...but...this a second choice...we..." (It was too long a story.)

"Well, it's kind of...pretty." was Bud's answer.

We ate and chatted over coffee and wine. And then, they had to go—"some political thing Paula wanted to see on TV". Bud hugged and kissed me, a bit tearfully? Paula left me all that turkey breast.

"It's...It's...It's...charming!" Paula said as they left.

I liked that.(word)

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**September 22, Monday.** Rain again. News: The BN wreck; they say they think it's sabotage./ Electricity rates going up again. Calendar: the first day of fall. Water under the sink: the trap leaking? I gave it a twist. Fixed?

2:45 p.m. I was back from a fast trip out. I'd been curious about what everyone had felt about the earthquake. Cases were outside. No, neither of them had felt a thing. They began to bicker, she claiming he wasn't there at the time, and he insisting he had been but had heard or felt nothing. And he rather jeered at me for my fright and curiosity, making me feel as if I some kind of lunatic and just making it all up.

In town I asked, "What are people saying about the quake?"  
"Very little," one woman said, sort of just shrugging it off. "We had one about 2½ years ago. Besides, this one was only 6 miles deep in the ground."  
That didn't cheer me any. I headed back home, puzzled at the amount of indifference I was meeting so much of in people in the area.

On the way back, I puzzled again, remembering how, all those years in the city, I used to wish so that I could get out of the city and see the fall leaves, and now, here I was, surrounded by trees, but they weren't all that pretty. And my woods weren't the blaze of color I'd expected, come fall. Too soon?

When I got back it was so dark in the cabin I began to think I'd be glad when the leaves did go; maybe it would be brighter in the cabin? I changed my clothes and set to my tasks, wondering why the heater made that whistling noise; I thought it was fixed. I went out and rigged up a clothes line of sorts where it got the sunniest in the woods.

The clothesline triggered an idea and I went out in the now drizzling rain and rigged up a sort of temporary lean-to of plastic to cover the car. I knew it would be no good in later storms but hoped it might help in the interim.

The evening I spent rigging up that complex lamp on my drawing board. It was a hard, unpleasant, ornery job, but I felt joy when it was done (for about the umpteenth time) but—this time a permanent one— my last studio set up—what I'd waited so long for!

Paula was the only one that applauded my plans to pick up some free lance drafting work in the area now that I had, at last, my studio set up. I figured that with my Highway Department and all my cabin planning experience and the new building going on around, people would be glad to have some nearby, expert, cheap drafting.

**September 23, Tuesday.** I woke up to woeful thoughts when the radio said there would be lower than usual temperatures for October; would I be able to heat the place? And would I be able to stick it out through the winter?

Things had changed from what I'd expected. I felt a kind of terror when I realized that I wouldn't have anybody, not **anybody** to talk to or visit with:

The exodus of all the nice people I'd expected to have as neighbors—Cases a disappointment; they ignoring me and never visiting as they promised, and we seeming to lose the rapport we'd had—

Former friends not corresponding as I'd thought they would—

Tradespeople inept and uncooperative—(and—indifferent!?)

I missed my plants and my hopes to start a garden; my friend, Pam, let them all die when I left them in her care.

I currently had no wood—and no phone.

I didn't know things were going to be like this. Besides, my hand was crippled from wielding that heavy hammer and my teeth were starting to bother me and people told me dentists were practically non-existent in the area. I felt sad and depressed.

**Later:** Fall in the woods. The woods just beginning to turn color; the vine maple, mostly yellow—pretty—a foggy mist—slugs, spider webs, blackberries mouldering on the vines, clusters of tiny mushrooms on a stump, one nibbled—smoke coming out of my chimney—I was enjoying...

**About 11 a.m. There is no water!** I run down and check with the airline stewardess down the street; her water is low. I go farther on to check.

Marv, Case and Orv are in the street. They kid me. then they say the water is ok again. Seems the kids, they assume Ron, the goony brat, threw huge rocks on the line and broke it. I am appalled that nobody does anything to track it down or do anything to those kids

Cases insisted I come in and have coffee and meet their two sons, Dennis and Dave. They were all very gracious, though they watched a game on TV while I just sat there. The younger son looked and acted retarded; he wore a hearing aid. Case told me PUD charges \$15 for the first 1000 KWH—about 1½¢ per. I jolted; I am already up to 2000.

I left and stopped and told the stewardess about the kids and the rocks.  
"Wait till my husband finds that kid!" she said.

I went home and worked on my finances: out of my currently \$700 a month income, I'd have about \$330 worth of regular bills, which left me about \$140. I hoped I could squeak by and manage for all the things Dennis would need or want. I wondered if I could afford that linoleum?

I then took a brisk walk in the woods to clear my mind—the kind of thing I used to wish I could do when I was imprisoned in all those apartments. It as not warm, but I enjoyed the look of fall beginning. My mood brightened. I went back in and started measuring for the linoleum.

**6:40 p.m.** It was a long, nasty, irritating job. I hated measuring, and it was harder because I didn't have a good tape. The verdict was—ouch! It would cost \$75 for the very cheapest and only enough of that to do the utility/traffic side of the house. But I'd decided I'd rather have some kind of carpeting in the bedroom area; linoleum is so cold to jump out of bed onto! I'd found that out in my slum sojourn.

Finishing that job had left me tired and rattled, but I began putting the weather stripping on the windows, working in paling, setting sunlight. And that was easy and pleasant! And I had just exactly enough. I felt good when that job was done and hoped it would keep those heaters from kicking on so often? Already I imagined it felt warmer in the house when I went in.

I went for another walk in the woods—to the creek—in the twilight. I found fall in the woods was not frightening, but soothing. it was so quiet away from all the traffic and school-starting hysteria. Birds sang and the creek gurgled.

Rested, I started to work on stuffing fiberglass insulation in holes beneath and around the outside of the cabin—an idea I'd gotten from a magazine. It was evening, but not too chilly. And so nice—the quiet. I just leaned on the railing and enjoyed. And then I saw—a star!



I went in and started to draw a cartoon card for Hambly's retirement party. It had been a long time since I'd tried to draw. It seemed odd to be digging out pens and tools again—felt like a rebirth!



While I had pens out I couldn't resist making a sketch of how I, who used to be so fussy about my public appearance, looked when I'd been caught talking to those seven new neighbors—What a getup! My hair cut off and wild; filthy old work pants; old patched up boots; the St. Andrew's cross around my neck (still my good luck talisman), but the most outlandish of all was mother's old black party sweater with all the silver braid trim... I running around in the woods in silvered elegance! But I wore it because it was warm and had pockets. "I should take the braid off," I had demurred to the women. "Oh, no!" they said.

I went to bed pleased with the day; it had been a good day!

**September 24, Wednesday.** I woke to a difference: This was it...fall. Sun, but cold—only 40° out and both heaters going full blast but it only up to 65°.

I got to working in the loft at my desk on the card. It was so much fun I found it hard to quit! Like old times!

I broke away and went to the store. it was warm down in that area, but **cold** in the cabin when I came back, making me wonder if I'd made a mistake and insulated too much? And I found my path out to the car fast disappearing; I'd have to work on it some more.

There was a letter from Mike. He asked if there was anything he could do about the telephone. This fitted right into what Marv had said: "Sic your sons on 'em!"



I spent the day primping and dragging out all my clothes into a great heap and going through them trying to figure out where to put them. All those years of garmenting me! but things I would not need anymore. What to do with them?

The day turned out very nice, but, in the evening, it started getting cold again. I couldn't figure out whether the cabin was warmer with my attempt at insulation or not.

Evening: I took a long nap and woke up in the night. It was cold, but there was a full moon and the woods were all bathed in bright moonlight, the moon sparkling in the trees to the west. It was utterly silent.

I jumped back into my warm snuggie bag.



September 25, Thursday. Sun again. But it so dark in the cabin. I find I can't figure out when to expect sun inside; something I'll have to learn to do so I can adjust my chores to the shift of the sun.

Sun. But, as I started preparations for my trip into Seattle, the radio kept going on about fog there and then I got concerned as they reminded me of the traffic I'd be running into—hunters here, and things in Monroe everybody would be coming to and a football game at the U...

Later: I went into Monroe. I got my pictures. They turned out fine. It was a great day! Everything turned out fine!

I spent the evening sitting on the porch making applesauce out of those apples to take as a gift to the Hamblys, and witnessing a new phenomenon—the sound of rain, but only dried leaves falling! To cook the apples, I'n gathered "squaw wood" and built a fire. It was the first time I'd been cozy warm in two weeks!

**I TRIP TO SEATTLE I**

[I will skim over, as it does not pertain to the cabin story.]

Leaving the cabin: I was scared to leave it unguarded, the Macs gone... Cases ignored me as I drove by... I found myself terrorized in traffic it had been so long... and fretted that something was wrong with my car?—the stench? until I realized it was just smog pollution; the city. I'd gotten used to fresh air.

At the kids' house I found myself locked out, so I went prowling around Alki until they got back.

That night I had come home from the party late and was hung over that next day. Dennis was still working on getting the house fixed to sell. I worked in the garage cleaning out Ed's old stuff. Abbie had her family there, so Dennis and the kids and I walked down to the beach where we could talk.

I had told him earlier about my panic driving traffic again and all the terrible things when I came back into the city—wrecks, etc. he saved my sanity when he said, "They call it 'future shock'."

Dennis was so mad when I told him about what Marty was doing. "They'll dam the creek and ruin our property!" he said.

I then told him, we trying to sum things up, "I need three things: a phone, a refrig, and wood."

"And an inspector," he said.

Later, back at the house, we three continued our discussions.

"We'll put the linoleum down then?" Abbie asked.

"Yes," Dennis said.

I opened my mouth to protest, "But..."

"We want to see how it looks!" they said.

Dennis seemed reluctant to go back up to the cabin and finish up; and Abbie had lost interest in the bedspread. They were busy with their own lives, they implied.

Their plans were to fix up the house and sell it and get out "in a month or so", though they had no place to go and no job prospects. They'd rent awhile until Dennis could get his house built they said.

I was supposed to stay another night, but I was too upset; it seemed that everything had been dumped on me at once that weekend. The return to Seattle and the Hambly retirement party—catching up with things and what had happened to people from long ago; cleaning out Ed's things and all was like going back in time and was so disturbing I'd even gotten a crying jag in the night.

I told Abbie I'd changed my mind, that I was leaving and had better get going, using the excuse that it got dark in the woods by five.

We sat around the round table in the kitchen and I wrote them a check for \$100 for the linoleum, not sure if I could afford it.

"We won't cash it till next week," Dennis said.

I left in a not too jolly atmosphere. It had been a very trying visit.

## HOME

I got home about 5 p.m. The trip, after all my agonizing, was fairly easy and seemed short. What was my feeling as I drove home after my first trip away since my move? Well, the valley looked pretty and it was a relief to get off the freeway. Did I have a feeling of coming home? Not really; it was just that it all looked familiar now.

Sultan Estates looked a trifle seedy and dreary. And on our street Cases' dreary little place was all shut up, and those three other little houses looked...drab. And then, there was a big FOR SALE sign on the apple orchard lot adjacent to ours. That hurt. (There'd be no more apples?) And the only mail was a notice from a merchant that the storage boxes I'd ordered (to put my clothes in) had come in.

I sighed and grabbed some stuff and started in on the trail. My first reaction was startle!—at seeing the cabin sitting there beyond the carpet of brown, fallen leaves; somehow I didn't expect it to be there. And my feeling was, not one of ownership! and possession! but more like—the word "pet" leaped into my mind—like...it had the look of a faithful dog—though I can't say I was assailed with any feeling of warmth or comfort; yet I felt a little smile on my lips.

I unbolted all those locks and opened the door. "Hi! Everybody!" I cried out wryly. And was both surprised and not surprised when a wall gave out an...answering?  
*oh-thunk!*

All was as I'd left it. This too, was, somehow, a surprise. I turned on the lights and heat and warmth leaped out instantly. I found I wasn't viewing the cabin either "architecturally" or critically; it was just that I had no place else to go now...forever. It was just nicely familiar; it was my "family" now. And I don't know another way to say it.

**September 29, Monday.** After I spent the morning "adjusting back in", I set out for the store for food. It was a rush trip and I didn't really want to encounter anyone. But as I passed Macs' he was there, outside, waving his arms—the gate open—and a yellow pickup in there. I was puzzled; what in hell was going on? But I went on home and then back to Cases' to pick up my food in the freezer hoping no one would be there.

But the pickup was there and there was a light on. I knocked.  
 "Come in!" Dwayne was alone, reading the paper. He didn't even look up as I rummaged in their freezer, knocking everything down. "What's new?" I asked.  
 "Oh, nothing. Nothing." (Read, read, read.)  
 "We'll want that wood," I said, "Week from next Sunday." (Dennis and Abbie were going to rent a pickup and bring the linoleum up.)  
 "Fine! Next Sunday then." I didn't even bother to straighten him out.  
 "Thanks," I said and grabbed my stuff and found my way out, pouring out clichés. He never raised his head from the want ads in the paper.

I drove home, parked. By now it was raining like hell. I went in and stripped and put my robe on, intending to be in for the day. Then there was the sound of truck vibrations, and there was a white truck and rig in the cul. Alarmed that it was the telephone guys I went to the door to check, b unable to tell, I went back, put a rain poncho over my robe and snuck down to see. It was bulldozing equipment—at the second house, where the stewardess lived. Bulldozing!?!—in the pouring rain? I went back in and holed up for the day.

**September 30, Tuesday.** The rain had stopped. I dressed, intending to go to the store to get cigs, but there were some in the car and there was also a big pile of tree roots lying in the road. Angry again at what in hell these people were doing to the woods, I tromped clear down to Macs' through all the barking dogs and For Sale signs for clues, enjoying (what was left?) of the nice smell of the woods and the fresh air, but there was no sign of people—only their detritus—signs, tapes, junked cars, untended, barking dogs...  
 I tromped back, furious.

**About 2 p.m. (Notes.)** Guess where I am? sitting in car on road to store, watching a dog die. I didn't hit it, but I sure as hell almost did.  
 So I'm on my way to the store, furious, frustrated at this phone bit, planning a letter to Mike (help!) when these two goddamned big dogs get right in front of my car and won't move. I stop. I have to. For the dogs keep hidden so close to my car I can't see them. Then I inch the car forward, hoping they're out of the way and go on to the store.

I came back. At the same place there are two girls in a pickup and the white dog was lying in blood in the road. Inert. I did what nobody does any more, though they waved me on. I stopped. "Can I help?" I asked.  
 "Oh would you mind? We'll be gone ten-fifteen minutes—wait here? while we go see—we think we know who the owner is. I hit it," said the one girl.  
 "I almost did!" I said.  
 She said she'd asked another gal who'd stopped, but she had begged out, saying she had to get to work.  
 "I'll stay," I said. "I've got all day."

So they left and I moved the car and put it in barrier position, well realizing that I might be suspect as two bummy old guys advanced from adjacent property.  
 "Godamn stray dogs!" they said. "Chased off all the deer—spooked the cattle—" etc. they raged.  
 "Got a pistol—maybe I could shoot it," the other guy said.  
 I wanted to ask him if he could—legally, but they weren't friendly, so I just stood there while they bitched on.  
 "Got me a gate...and some new cows coming in..wanta see?" one man said to the other. So they roamed off, the one guy calling back to me, "Tell them I'll shoot it if they want!"

So I just sat there in the heat and the sun by that inert, bloody dog body. The black Lab was hanging around, solicitous acting, its mouth frothy with foam, which alarmed me: what had we been told when we were kids? distemper? hydrophobia?—dogs with foam on their mouths?

So I just sat there and waited. The white dog lay there, its ribs heaving ...blood all over...the dogs were whimpering...I got out to look. The Lab was concerned, sniffing at the other one. I didn't dare go near the dying dog. I just watched and waited. Suddenly the dog was sitting up, one eye lying outside the socket on its face.

"Well, hello there!" I said.  
 The dog keeled over.

And cars began to come and stop, everybody waving; the girls had come back. One car was a State Patrolman, who, I gathered was a local son as the girls cried, "Hey! It's Ray!"

"You can go on," one of the girls said to me.

"No, I want to see how it ends," I said, and told her about the guy offering to shoot the dog. So I just stood by and watched. It never occurred to me to get sick or throw up.

But, "Oh yuk!" said one of the girls and she burst into tears.

"Is that your dog?" I asked, indicating the Lab. "It has froth on its mouth."

"No problem". It was the handsome young patrolman that answered.

"What's the legal problem here?" I ventured to him, hoping to get more info on the stray dog problem.

"No problem." he said. "They can let their dogs run loose."

"But we have problems up there...!" I waved toward my place. I was ignored.

"Are you going to get in trouble?" I put my arm around the girl who had admitted to hitting the dog.

"No...no. But I drove five miles up Reiner Road to find the owner..." (Reiner Road!? That was way up on the hill—near us!)

I watched them use a blanket to put the bloody dog in the car trunk, and then I roared on home.

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There was no one around to hear my story. Only that bum, Darrell, and his helper were still chopping up the wood they had stolen, and I wondered if they had heard me when I'd yelled "I'll kill you!" at that look-alike big white stray dog that day? I felt...blamable...somehow.

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**Later:** Aimlessly wandering around I'd run into a telephone man down the trail, but he wouldn't talk to me. Upset, I got in the car and went down to McNabbs' where Marv egged me on: "Get to the top man!" he roared at me.

Phoning, I didn't remember the details of what they told me—only that I couldn't have a phone—something about "a 2-4 24 connection and hot line".

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The next thing I knew I woke up in the car, parked, at home. It was 8 p.m. and dark. I had to feel my way back in to the cabin.

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I woke at dawn and wrote a desperate letter to Mike: "Sorry to bother you...know you're busy, but..." and I told him what they'd said, enclosed the Mailgram from the telephone company and posted it in the mailbox.

And then I fell asleep again—exhausted.  
**End of September.**

## OCTOBER 1980

**October 1, Wednesday,** was a gorgeous day, but there were only distressing things in it for me: it saddened me Abbie saying she'd lost interest in the bedspread...; the mailman never waving or speaking—unfriendly character; and the mail was just a card saying only one of the things I'd ordered had come in; a telephone workman, but he told me not to hope for a phone—said there were hot wires at that pole—he didn't know why. I was overwhelmed again with the difficulties of getting any action locally.

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**To Monroe.** I was surprised to find it cloudy down there when I'd left sun at the cabin.

I came home with the two 4-drawer cardboard chests I'd ordered, puzzled why they'd said only part of my order had come—and some gadgets called heat deflectors to put on the wall heaters.

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**5:15 p.m.** It was already beginning to get dark as I sat making my notes on the day. The sun bathed the woods for awhile, but it didn't last long. It was so damp that my paper was limp and I had to seal an envelope with scotch tape to make it stick. It had been a record breaking day of 76°; they were having heat waves all over the coast, they said. The sunshine had been gorgeous, but there was a nip of fall in the air.

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I spent part of the afternoon under the house patching up holes and rather carelessly insulating that pipe and repiling the wood. New was the thrum of traffic heard clear from the city below; it sounded like thunder even drowning out the birds. It was almost as bad as being in the city again.

**Evening:** I went up to the loft and enjoyed having a good private place to work undisturbed—at last!

There was a lot of thumping going on outside, below. It was Darrell Parker and those two men still working on that wood they'd swiped. I'd watched them earlier that day getting trucks in there; they'd told me it was free wood nobody wanted. I didn't believe them, Darrell having been out of work for so long and their waiting till night to load it.

Fall seemed a fall time in more ways than one in cabin; things kept falling on the roof—in spurts. Once in a while a great **thud!** would scare me, and so did the noise of leaves clattering and skittering down the roof past the skylight. ("A rain of terror?" I chuckled to myself.)

AARP magazine article that evening: "A phenomena and tragedy happening in America today—too many elderly women alone. Since the thirties women have been outliving men for some unknown reason." I felt better, knowing that I was not alone in being an elderly woman alone!

**October 3, Friday** was another beautiful day. With my new boxes for storage, I tackled my clothes problem. Clothes reminded me how people kept heckling me and asking me why I didn't take a trip? Go someplace? Because I don't want to! I'd spent most of my adult years moving from one place and city to another, and I'd spent more than enough time driving. I'd seen everything I'd really wanted to see in our part of the country. Trips:

sometime this month I was supposed to be Bishops' guest in seeing their new Mormon church. (Bishops! They sure as hell weren't keeping their promise to come and see me!)

During the morning, I took the garbage out. It was so nice out there, but signs of fall—wind had broken my tie-down line for the car plastic cover—a chickadee—and the grouse flushed every time I went, scaring the hell out of me.

**10:30 a.m. The lights went off!** I went down the street to check with the neighbors about it, but not a soul at home. I had to tromp clear on down to Cases'.

Again the ritual of the (unwanted) coffee and cigs and Edith leaving and Case mocking and jeering at my "worrying" and the uncomfortable silences. I was glad to get out of there. I'd told Wayne about the sudden buzzing noise that had scared me so the night before. He said it might be my smoke alarm, said they had so much trouble with theirs they couldn't even broil a steak.

I went home angry about being twitted about worrying. What was so bad about wondering and checking when I was there alone and no phone when the power went off? It was off for forty minutes; I never did find out why.

When it was on again, I continued work on the clothes until late afternoon. Then I went out and fixed the car cover, rested there, went to the store, and stopped at Macs' to get sawdust to insulate the water standpipe, as they'd requested. It was so pleasant talking to Lu, easily laughing and talking and joking, and having her sympathetic with me, instead of the "fighting" with me like Case does.

She said she thought they'd move by the 15th; that Case said he and Orville could act as caretakers. I felt a wrench; I'd miss them.

The cabin looked cozy, comfy and pretty when I got back, though, by six it was already getting dark in there. I put up curtain rods for my clothes closet and then I battled rearranging the loft, because those those socombustible cardboard boxes could (code) be only 1½ feet from the chimney.

It had been a very warm day; even in the evening it was 70° in the cabin with no heat on! It was so warm that all the moths and insects had returned to bat and beat on the windows. I wanted very much to go for an evening stroll and see if I could see stars, but refrained because it meant that all the neighborhood dogs would set up a yelp and howl and alert the whole neighborhood. It made me very angry that, for that reason, I couldn't even go for a quiet stroll on my own land!

I woke at dawn, uncomfortably warm—in October! Our heat wave! Dry—would be a good time to gather kindling wood, I having no splittable kind.

**October 4, Saturday.** Morning. Radio says fog in Seattle. Not here! The sun is coming up over the trees. Thump! thump! thump! Those guys loading that wood; it sounds like big footsteps coming. Alarms me. I find it odd how sound carries up here. It seems as if it goes through the **ground**.

But there is a sound outside—closer. I in the bathroom—there is definitely someone outside on the porch working on something. Perhaps the meter reader? But there is no truck out there and no one on the path. It goes on. My heart thuds in fear as I search...then...on the peak of the "A" roof a long bill... **peeks** over...and a big flicker (woodpecker) flaps off. Whew!

The mail brings me a Sears catalog with the offer of a credit card. I do not know if this signifies if the kids have bought the linoleum or not. I pause along the trail and ruefully contemplate my vegetable garden; another failed cabin dream attempt. There is no sign of the onions, or asparagus or the little oak tree I planted. It's all just overgrown and covered with leaves. I rued that large pile of brush I'd hoped to get chain-sawed up; not to be?

**Later:** I took a chair and a little table outside to spray paint. Both the Carrolls were out working their dirt with their radio blasting away. Further down Darrell was chopping wood. But I rather enjoyed some sounds of fall—"getting in the winter wood" and "Woodpeckers peckin' on wood"... But...The spray cans tired my arthritic hand and I ran out of paint. I gave up on that job.

**Afternoon:** I decided I'd better use the good weather to de-mildew the wood inside with that stuff I bought and get ready to stain. I tackled the washdown. Again I noted how one thing leads to another—I ended up washing down the whole house, so to speak. And was pleased that that gunk, although dangerous (chlorine), did take off all those red stains and lumber markings that have bothered me so.

**Later:** I went to the store, trying something new—just locking up the front and leaving the back open and the radio and light going...I would have liked to phone the kids, but there is nobody home there...

I went down to Sultan, grateful to have such a pretty route to the store versus my awful slum days ones. It was also nice to be able to run to the store in just "grubbies" and not have to dress up as one used to have to do in the cities. The highway down there had been just solid with traffic and there were grim looking black motorcycles parked at the tavern so I took a roundabout route back, again enjoying the fall day and the view of the mountains and the rural lack of people and houses. These pleasures of rural living made me glad I was where I was and not in the cities anymore.

But, later, in a **very lovely evening**, was the other side of rural living: the idyll. I wanted of a stroll through the sunlit woods with pretty music softly playing on my radio was not possible to enjoy because of the deafening chain saws and yelling of Darrell and his band of wood pirates and rough neck gangs in strange noisy recreational vehicles (?) using the the roads and cul-de-sacs as private race course—tearing up the countryside.

Other things to spoil the idyll: Lu had told me that they'd gotten the water pipe fixed after that (retarded?) brat of Darrell's had wrecked it with rocks. Then, she said, Case had come to her all shook up and alarmed; his water was off again! it seems Ron and his pals had sneaked up and turned off Cases' water. (In revenge? For his tattling on them?) When I'd asked Case if there was anything new going on, his eys had skittered around the ceiling, "Oh no," he'd said.

I stayed in and finished recovering a chair pad with that piece of "Sea gull" material I'd bought just because I liked it and noting (one) that it was marked "hand crafted special" and (two) that my left eye was beginning to bother me.

By then the noisy neighbors had simmered down and it was peaceful, private, and snug—just me—and the stars—andd the rustling of the wind in the tree tops. I laughed; and the **rustling** of wood down below! Rural living!

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October 5, Sunday. The radio kept saying rain, but it was dry and warm and quiet when I went out by the car. There was a new, open look—the leaves going? The car cover hadn't stayed on; I would have to do something about that. And I'd have to figure out some way to have the car serviced for winter. A new problem: garages all 8 miles away and no way to leave it, for no way back and no place to stay.

The leaves. I sighed. Would be a hopeless task in the woods, but I supposed they really should be raked to keep my paths clear or I would be marooned. It was so nice that I got the serape out of the car and spread it in the "onion patch" and half stripped to lie in the sun. Whoo!...Whoo! a bird whistled. All else was quiet; nobody to disturb me. Clear blue sky sparkled between the silent trees. The sun was warm on my naked back. Far off there were muffled gun shots; it was hunting season. But nearby, only the plop! of apples falling, uneaten, in my "garden of Eden"...

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Later: I moved and covered the car to keep that sticky goop from the trees from falling on it. And I started to rake the long grass in the so-called "onion patch". It was like combing long green hair. I raked the paths back to the cabin, realizing that, when one lives in a clearing, one has to constantly keep clearing! The vine alder trees twining around the utility wires I'd have liked to clear off, but I didn't know how I would. And I'd like to cut through that brush barrier so I'd have a view of the street below so I could see who's causing those noises that—like now!—

suddenly begin interrupting my nice quiet. Shouting and yelling and noise and loud music; my neighbors were back.

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Later: I continued my brush clearing. I raked under the cabin around the foundations so there would be drainage and brush wouldn't pile up under there. I could see that this was going to be an onerous chore—raking leaves in the woods!—Crazy!

I rested a bit at the picnic table and then worked until my rusted lounge chair in the cleared salmon berry patch looking so inviting I lay down for a nap. Oh no; the chain saw begins. I gave up and got up and cleared my way down to the creek, only to discover that the creek I had once so laboriously cleared was jammed and dammed with leaves— and—

There was a fresh-fallen tree across it, the wood splintered and still white and fresh. I wondered if that was the thud I'd heard?

Investigating, alarmed, I discovered that two alders had caught their falling mate "in their arms" so to speak. And I laughed, thinking of what Dennis had said: "Don't worry. Trees will take care of each other." I felt reassured. All around here have insisted that we should take out **all** the **dangerous!** alders—as they do—bulldoze and clear. But Dennis and I wanted to keep the woods intact; and it was a challenge for him to use our half-acre of woods as a chance to apply and experiment with what he had learned in his "Silviculture" courses at the U.

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I had just been fooling around down there, teetering over log "bridges" in my unsuitable silly sandals and contemplating all this when I heard the sound of a car parking up above on the next cul-de-sac across the creek. I was definitely in grubbies—not even a bra; I looked and felt like an old witch-o'-the-woods. I was standing leaning on my rake when a man's voice shouted,

"Come! I'll show you! A trail!"

And a young man dressed in what I guess you'd call "running clothes?" burst out of the woods across the creek and down the hill toward the creek—and me!—followed by a motley crew of young people.

I just stood, silent.

"Oh...hello!" he says, jolting at seeing me there.

"You...uh...looking for a property line?" I asked.

"Uh...well...no...uh...there's a stake here..."

(I know, I thought; I put it there!) It was my first experience of invaders into my property. I wasn't too sure, at that time, if the creek was on our property. I was afraid of a challenge, but before I could start negotiations, their ribs-showing white dog was over the creek and sniffing around me. I was scared!

"Get out!" I roared at the dog.

No. They called the dog; the dog ignored them.

I was frozen—spooked! For the dog seemed to "know" me—hung around me—wouldn't obey. Ghosts! Was I seeing ghosts?

For the dog looked very much like the hurt one I'd just stood guard over; it also looked like the pup that Sarah and Noah had loved so when it hung around camp while we were building, except that this dog was thin (but an older version?) I shook all this out of my head as nonsense, though still puzzled why the dog seemed to have "adopted" me and "rejected" its owners.

The young man yelled at me, "We bought Berliners' property!"

"Oh?" I said. In case they'd made a mistake (I hoped!) I pointed to the next lot beyond the opposite cul-de-sac one, "But there's another lot up there..."

"Oh yes," he said. The dog had jumped the creek and run off, wet and muddy.

"That your house?" the guy called out from where he'd rather retreated on his advance my way.

"Hunh? Oh yes!" I felt a certain thrill of pride I'd never felt before. (I'd never owned property before!)

He had been pointing out to his motley crew..."The property line...it goes straight through here...past the creek..."

Darrell, or someone. was calling to them as if inviting them across to our side of the creek. I was puzzled.

The gal he had been talking to said something to him in a thick foreign accent. They went off.

He's crazy! I thought. Then, all of a sudden, I was tangled in an old property line I'd laid once. I cursed and tried to pull it out from under the timber that had fallen on it since. My feet were so entangled I almost fell into the creek trying to extricate myself. And then I found—a strange thing!

"Hey! Guys!" I yelled. But they were all off prowling around in the underbrush. What I'd found was an old camp site there under the cedars on our side of the creek, but only adjacent, not on, where I'd figured our property line was. There were signs of a tent—and beer cans and a dog collar hooked into the yellow twine line. It had a dog tag on it. The line was so snaked and broken it looked as if some dog had been so desperate to escape it had finally broken out of its collar.

"Hey!" I yelled at those young people, hoping for some clues to all these new mysteries, "Hey!" but they just looked at me as if they thought I was nuts.

I gave up and went back to the cabin. There I laid the tag on the table and puzzled over it. "Rabies shot. Iowa. 1977" it said. Weird.

Next thing I knew I woke up. It was 11 p.m. All was silent. It was as balmy as the tropics; 72° in the house. I was out of cigs, but I'd left a few in the car. I ventured out, in my robe, to get them and to see if stars. They were there.

I stood in my newly cleaned path. No dogs barked. I looked at the stars and at my cabin. I'd never really seen it before from outside—at night. The cabin looked strange: with the lights on, the "ribs" (rafters) showed. The loft window showed light from the downstairs and the kitchen. The kitchen skylight stood out from the roof like an internally lighted "breast". I got my cigs, looked at the stars some more and went back in.

Inside I did my housekeeping chores I'd neglected by falling asleep for so long. I was annoyed to see that I had dropped some of that bleach on my divan—a white spot. Dogs started to bark.

I went up to close the loft windows. A horrible stench! Worried about the septic tank, I went down to check from the front porch. No? Odd. I gave up and went to bed.

**October 6, Monday** was another clear day. It was almost 9 but the sun wasn't in the cabin yet. It was starting to look fall-ish outside.

Going out, I sighed at the view down our street. What a far cry it was from what Sultan Estates had intended! Instead of lovingly built and cared for summer cabins designed to blend into the woodsy setting, there were those developers' look-alike, jerrybuilt little city-type houses tightly crowded in on top of each other. And the trashers had moved in.

That huge pile of tree stumps mid-street had been there for weeks; and beyond it was all the abandoned junk cars and trash of the Parkers' squatting. I shrugged.

By contrast, as I came back in my little cabin looked neat and pretty. I regretted that all my friend—now lost to me?—couldn't see it. I sighed at all the expectations I'd had that had not worked out: there will be no more use of the swimming pool with no caretakers to tend: and Marv and Lu, friends I could count on, gone: the washing machine I had lugged clear up here not work and not fixable, the man said: all the visitors I thought I'd have—none. And so on..

As if on cue, I happened upon a review of a book about another person's try for a return to nature: "The house goes up, finally, but the money runs out before the house can even be insulated...A dream of counter culture seems about to come true until cabin fever strikes..." the book is a graceful meditation on survival, both external and in the scarier terrain of self." I could have written that myself!

I left my woodsy retreat, now resounding with the shrills of backwhistles (is there any more maddening sound?) and the deafening rumblings of bulldozers and went to Monroe.

**Afternoon in a small town**

5:30p.m. I got home. But I enjoyed my outing. Such a beautiful day! My Monroe routine was becoming established. One has no choice, really: a tiny town—you go here and there—and that's it.

The Parkers were loading up yet another load of purloined wood...  
...The bulldozing was Witherows clearing their lot—the mid-house...I passed a telephone truck headed our way and quelled rising hopes. ( And there was no sign he's been here when I came back.)

The day was so nice that, on impulse, I went racing out Chain Lake road, never having been there and curious after all my years spent working on that report with only aerials and maps of it. I had an idea it would have been all developed in the interim. It was not. After driving through miles and miles of rural middle class farm land I gave up and went back.

There was a rug store in Monroe going to have a sale of carpeting salvaged from the redecorating of a big Boeing plant at only a dollar a yard! I was so excited: I could get carpeting for the bedroom?

The library was closed—not open until two. To kill time I dropped into Dumbars' Lumber store and bought two razor knives on sale, one for Dennis, who was always borrowing mine...  
I bought an ice cream cone in that new, fun little old-fashioned "ice cream parlor" and sauntered about eating it...I wandered into C to C (a discount hardware store) and didn't buy tree loppers for they were too expensive, but some brown spray paint and weatherstripping on sale.

Then I idly strolled and roamed Main street, still waiting for 2 p.m.

I wandered into The Monitor (little local newspaper) to pay my bill. "Well, hello!" the gal said. "Oh no! You're all paid up for a year!" That was nice since I was trying to build up my cabin fund again.

I left then and sat idly in the sun in the car by the library, waiting. It was the only pretty place in downtown Monroe—a charming low building with lawn and trees and flowers by the shaded little parking space. When I went in a very nice pleasant gal helped me.

Then I went to their dingy little "Mall" where the friendly gal in the liquor store told me that the Tupperware party I'd been included on had been postponed. That pleased me: again I was richer!...I went to the BF "dime store" looking for cloth for the closet curtains. There again the sales gals were pleasant and fun. We did a lot of kidding and I was delighted to find a bargain—the color a darker brown than I'd wanted—but I got yards and yards for under \$3!

And I couldn't resist a spray of "silk" artificial fall leaves, just like the ones I'd found in the woods, but had also found would not keep—only 49¢! (Trivia listing? But the tale behind cabin furnishings!)

It seemed that everyone was so nice and fun and they all seemed to know me!

It seemed that everyone was so nice and fun and they all seemed to know me! Next was food shop in Safeway. I spent "hours" pacing the meat counter, the prices so ridiculously high, and I chatted with people doing likewise, the poor gal waiting on all of our decisions. Then I found a fresh salmon steak for only \$1.21—cheap!—for salmon. "I've decided, this," I said.

"I'll be here hours after you've decided!" she wailed. And I left her "battling the high steaks" so to speak. I passed up the bread counter for, 95¢! a loaf bread was now—"without preservative"—it said, and I had no ice.

I paid and left for home, enjoying every minute of the pretty drive back.

Back at Sultan Estates, I debated, and then took my bucket for sawdust and, having my phone calls to pay for as "excuses", went to McNabbs'

"I hear you, Lu!" I called through the open window, to where I could see Lu doing dishes, and realized this a neighborly act I hadn't been able to do in a long time.

They seemed delighted to see me, and so, caught, I stayed quite a long time. I told them the dog collar story and "reported" on Parker and then I got to see the news on TV.

And then that good looking "ladies man" type, Orville Easterley, came in, making me feel shy at the way his eyes skittered up and down my body (because I knew his wife was gone?) Nevertheless I was pleased when he said, "I'll bring you some ducks! Some game!"

It seemed my lucky day; I was getting so many "gifts".

I told Orville about the shooting up there. That was he and his cronies, he confessed, testing their guns "up beyond."

"You got any grouse in there?" he asked suddenly—jibing? "You like grouse?"

"Oh, don't kill our...what's the plural for grouse?...grease?" I asked.

They all laughed.

I told Marvin about the flicker. "Shoot 'em!" he cried. "they'll put holes in your house!" And he told me of a house he'd seen ruined—in his contracting days—by flickers.

I enjoyed talking to them. They seemed intensely interested and involved in the fate of the estates and well-informed on what was going on around there. And it seemed everyone else had as much trouble getting service as I did.

They told me tales and seemed quite frank in their aversion to the Cases; in fact they instigated a remark that Cases were unreliable. And tales they told painted them as evasive, deceitful, self-serving and sneering.

When I told them about Parker they were as outraged as I had been: a commercial enterprise on estates is taboo. It is zoned for residential/recreational.

When I told about the young people invading, Lu seemed surprised, "Berliner's lot sold?!" She didn't seem to know who the kids were and was very interested in the dog collar story, though she had no clues to that, either. She said they were still puzzling over what was going on or what had happened to those "kids" who'd left all that trunkfull of trash and that beat-up old camper abandoned on that lot opposite ours. She said this was against all the rules of "the Covenant"; that they had said they were going to build, but nobody knew what had happened to them.

(I had a great interest in what happened to the lot opposite us, for, if anyone moved in over there, all our privacy would be gone. And I was laughing, inwardly, as I listened to these people, thinking of how scared I'd been of the Club and the Board when we'd first bought in there; now I realized they don't—or couldn't—enforce any of these rules.)

Lu also said that she wished there were more like that nice old couple, the Robisons, that I'd met at the meeting, and gave me a lot of confusing scuttlebutt I couldn't figure out...[only that it left me with a feeling of "there goes the neighborhood" (ours)]...Things about real estate deals and contractors. All I'd picked up was that some greedy contractor was bulldozing a lot on our street to build on to sell and he somehow seemed to be connected with that young man, the airline stewardess' husband. "Oh that's her father-in-law," Lu said (Witherow), "don't know if he bought the lot on your street, too."

(23.4)

I was more dismayed when Lu said they'd be leaving "within the week"; I would not only miss them, but I would be losing my best source of information.

I did not, when I left, stop at Cases' as I'd intended (to to pay for my telephone calls) for, the screening leaves now gone off the trees Orville and the McNabbs still standing outside could have seen me stop there. It was bad enough to be "an informer" without being "two-faced".

During the evening guns banged and dogs barked all around me.

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**October 7, Tuesday** was another sunny day, but they were getting colder and it rather depressed me a I resorted to turning on the heat. The radio reported fog in Seattle versus our sunshine. Outside it smelled so good; what was it? Oh! the rotting apples!

The mail brought a letter from Dennis, saying to rent a truck would be \$75 or more., and that he would get it for Saturday and then go back Sunday. All fine with them and starting to get the house painted. "See you this weekend." I sighed; he wouldn't have time, then, to get the wood from Cases' or lay the linoleum? I'd have to do that myself?

**Later:** I went to Cases'. They were home and very cordial.

I phoned the telephone company again, full of helpless indignation (there having been no letter from Mike about my letter to him about help with the phone). The call did not alleviate my helpless indignation; I got the same old runaround. About the fifth girl I talked to told me the bosses were all gone. I told her to just have a supervisor write me and report to me what was going on. She said she would—but I doubted it.

I then phoned the bank and transferred \$100 to Dennis' bank account. then I phoned Abbie. she said she was glad I'd called for she had news: they can't get the linoleum until November 4th! We discussed what to do but couldn't figure anything out. She said they were all coming and that they would bring the refrigerator and that the reason for the rush was that they had to get the truck back in 24 hours.

I mentioned something about it being their last trip up.  
"Why, not that I know of!" she said.

I settled with Case about the wood. When I left I had two things solved out of four: the refrig and the wood, but no phone and no linoleum.

I spent the afternoon and evening finishing up the chair. It was so warm I could work on the porch.

But, fretting, I interrupted that job to go down to McNabbs' and phone Dennis to tell him to skip the linoleum and concentrate on getting the wood instead. I'd decided I wasn't yet ready for all that linoleum mess. But he insisted he was going to try to get it elsewhere and he hoped he could manage to get the truck for the whole weekend.

I was a little annoyed that the McNabbs sat there and heard me talk about \$100 for renting a pick up and they never offered the use or rental of theirs.

I went home trying to figure out how we could squeeze three major, messy jobs into one weekend. And I'd planned a fun birthday dinner for Abbie. How would we even manage to cook and eat with the whole place dismantled as it would have to be for the linoleum laying?

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**October 8, Wednesday.** The rain came, catching me unprepared; I had used the good weather for enjoying doing my chair instead of the things I should have done. Nor did I get my curtains done. And I wasn't sure about whether to dismantle for the linoleum, especially when I wouldn't know until they came if they'd even gotten it. I really didn't want the linoleum mess at that time in the midst of other big projects. And then there was my date to go to Seattle and see Bishop's new Mormon church; I fretted about that. I rather hoped something would happen to get me out of it.

All these frets—and then—a disaster!

One of the kitchen spotlights went out! it turned out to be a really bad problem, for it had melted! The glass had shattered leaving the socket imbedded. It was a long, hard, scary, nerveracking job to fix it, but I did.

It left me very distressed; would all the lights do that?

Then I started to work on the curtain—a boring job—doing it by hand.

After lunch I went up and found it quite a task to "kid proof" the loft- put valuables out of way of kids...

Late afternoon, the sun came out. I took a break and went down to the car. I loved it down there—my escape place. It wasn't too warm, but I enjoyed just wandering around and nibbling on plump blackberries, and noting the old apple tree, the closest one, was just laden with perfect green apples. Next year, I thought, when I'm all settled (ha!) I'll have to make apple and berry pies— (even though there will be no one to eat them.)

Ha! again; the lot would probably be sold and bulldozed and there wouldn't be any apples?

But, for the present, I climbed under my plastic car "tent"and just sat and enjoyed all the silence and the "Fallishness"—the berries, the apples, the fallen leaves—the crisp, brisk west wind. Fall. Lovely.

Evening: I worked on the curtains, vowing to finish them. I was so tired by the time they ready to hang that I was most inept trying to put up the rods.The light was so bad I couldn't see; I kept hitting my fingers with the hammer, dropping nails, cursing and weeping with rage and weariness.

Then—I was up on the stool, my eye on a level with the top shelf of the closet. A long pink tail slithered by attached to a scampering rather largish mouse which disappeared into a hole in the wall. I was stunned! it was that close to my bed all the time!?

Well, there was nothing to do but interrupt my work and settle that problem. I took the flashlight and went under the house and got some insulation wool and stuffed up that closet corner hole. And then I crawled under the sink and got mouse bait and scattered it, and then I continued on my foundered curtain job. It was 10 p.m. before I finished, but I did it! I finished them!

October 9, Thursday. I was late waking up, so exhausted from my sewing stint. The sun was streaming in, but it was chilly.

The new curtain—my cabin was beginning to look civilized—like—an apartment—or something...And would be more so, for I decided to go to town and do a wash and buy that carpteing...Scream!

Something small and black waas flying around in the dining area. Another bat? No, it was a tiny black, crippled acting bird. I managed to shoo it outside but it puzzled me how it had gotten in; I thought I had all holes plugged?

I went to Monroe. While I was shopping for Abbie gift, I happened upon Marsh, one of the electricians who'd worked on the cabin. He was gayly kidding with one of the men in the shop when I approached and said, "Hi!" He quit his kidding and acted nervous and selfconscious and went into a frantic explanation of how he was buying some plumbing material. Wondering what was bothering him, I just turned and left.

The stores: I was horrified to see all the Holiday merchandise already out, even the Christmas stuff. It was barely October!

The Laundromat was very busy. After I put the stuff in I sat and sketched ideas of things I wanted to do for the cabin. There were two women attendants there. The younger, rather pretty one,came over and asked me what I was doing and started to chat. She was nice; I liked her.

I went and checked on that carpeting. A very dumb gal told me it wouldn't be delivered until the next week...I went to the bakery in the little"mall" and ordered a cake for Abbie, and then I went home, pulling off and letting all those annoying tailgaters pass me...

The gals in the laundry had said there was frost the night before!

**October 10, Friday.** A great wind storm started in the night. I lay cringing and scared as things crashed and banged and skittered on the roof. It was my first experience of this. Near morning a particularly loud crash got me out of bed to investigate. I was shocked at how warm the wind was. But there seemed to be no damage to my place. There were leaves and twigs all over the place and the plastic had blown off the picnic table and off my car, big anchor rock and all, and the building permit had blown off. And the alders around the cabin swaying dizzily. But I could find nothing but a rather large "twig" to account for that crash.

Inside, when I made coffee, it was full of gnats!

The radio reported that Mt. St. Helens was acting up again—a prediction that it might blow again on the 12th or 13th. Odd. About the same date it blew before? And we'd been talking about that at the laundromat, the gals saying "Why, that's the full moon! Wasn't it before, too?"

I went to get the mail in the wild, wild wind. There was a letter from Mike saying there was nothing he could do about the phone and admonishing me to get home owners' insurance.

**Afternoon** I went to Cases' and phoned Abbie twice, but there was no answer. Then I went to Monroe and found myself crying all the way in I was so frustrated about the phone. And I mentally composed an angry letter to Mike. Dammit! I needed help and there wasn't any! and I needed someone to talk to and discuss these things...

As if on cue, a panel truck with Senior Citizens printed on it blocked my way at the little mall. Without thinking, I just ran over and began to talk to the middle-aged, well-dressed intelligent looking woman driver. I sort of told about my phone troubles and said I needed someone to talk to. I prattled on hastily. "Where are your headquarters?" I asked her. It seemed an answer to a prayer if I could get help from a Senior Center?

"Why, just up the road. Why don't you go up there now?"

"No, no, no..." I explained about the kids coming. She wrote down the name of someone for me to talk to. And I said, "Maybe next week...Monday...but I never get down to town until noon."

"Well, we serve lunch then."

"Oh?"

"And Bingo on Thursdays." I made a face. "What's your name?" she asked.

"Oh you won't remember it..." but I told her.

"Why, there's somebody up at the prison by that name!" she cried.

"Oh great!"

"No, no—an attendant...worker..and my husband related to...oh what's her name...his name..that Indian scout?..."

"You mean Sacajawea's husband?" I asked excitedly.

"Yes, yes, but not...directly..."

I began prattling on about Charbonneau and and Montreal and Quebec and my son, stumbling over my words I was so excited. This was all very hasty as I was blocking traffic standing talking to her as she sat in the panel truck. I broke it up, but that really cheered me up; I felt maybe there was a loophole in my dilemma at last?

I rushed home, past Carrolls putting up a chain link fence to find dead moths all over my cabin.

**Later, that evening** there was a full moon and I took it as a kind of good omen.

**October 11, Saturday.** Dennis had said they'd "come early" whatever that meant. It's hard on a hostess not to have phone to check, not to know when to build a fire or plan for dinner.

The kids were gone by 9:35 p.m.

9:50 p.m.

Why didn't they stay overnight? here I had put clean sheets on the bed and all. Well, it seems the price of the rented truck had shot up to \$6 an hour after 24 hours. I agreed we couldn't afford that, but I was devastated when they drove in about 10:30 a.m. and announced they couldn't stay—all my spending spree and party plans!

But it ended alright. We had a swell party and there were hugs all around when they left.



When they arrived: Denis was very cross and dictatorial and Abbie had a bad cold, and I didn't feel good.

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They did bring the refrigerator and they had a hell of a time getting it in and up the steps. It was absolutely filthy and all moldy. When they got it up on the porch, Abbie began scrubbing it down while I flew around in a tizzy helping and making room for a place to move it into.

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They didn't bring the linoleum—said the prices were too high. It was just as well we didn't have that to struggle with, too, for Dennis was cross, cross, cross and kept bugging us about going down to Cases' and getting the wood. Abbie and I walked down, Dennis bitching at us and coming later with the kids in the truck.

Cases had a lot of company and were busy, and I, trying to help load, stepped on and ran a rusty nail clear into my foot and so Dennis told me to quit helping. It was all chaos and frantic and pretty awful. Dennis kept insisting I should get 2 cords while we had the truck, all the time bitching about what hard work it was.

And it was. It was one hell of a job getting that wood and getting it in.

Despite, there was a fun side to it—Case and his family and mine all working together and laughing and joking (and learning) and "trading" going on: Case getting his back yard cleaned out and giving Abbie some kid junk he had there (which didn't please Dennis) and Case trusting me to pay him. It was fun; kind of like old pioneering days, but we were glad when that part of it was over. Dennis groaned and worried about his back; said he'd had lots of trouble with it lately (but it did seem better after the wood was in!)

Abbie was loading and unloading and Dennis used the wheelbarrow, Noah the wagon, and Sarah the grocery cart. the kids were gleefully crying that they were lumberjacks! I got them to work by saying I'd pay them and they did a fantastic job! I couldn't believe their energy, strength and endurance! They even said I didn't have to pay them because it was fun! But I did—\$2.50 apiece. They played out before the job was done but they did a good job.

I wasn't much help, but I cleared a new path and got the wheelbarrow out and moved wood lying around out of the way. While they brought in wood and Dennis kept doggedly piling it under the house, I went in and started making sandwiches as they were all hungry and screaming for a break. This was about 1 p.m.

And it was fun, the kids and I sneaking down to Cases' to return Cases' house key to them and settle about paying for the wood. ("Oh, anytime," they said.) and get the surprises for Abbie's—the cake and wine and stuff I'd stored there and we went back and things began to get better. Abie had brought a cake, too....

Kids. That brat, Ron Parker, had moved in on us during all this excitement. I'd given him the Big Cool, but Dennis and Abbie and the kids were patient with him. But I was glad we lost him when we went to get the surprises. And I was so proud of my grandkids: they were sopolite and helpful and patient as I negotiated with Edith, who was gushing all over them!

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Back home the kids moved all the stuff from the cooler on the porch to the refrigerator, while I kept marveling at having a refrig!  
"And come and look!" Dennis said. One fourth of the under part of the house was stacked high with good, split wood! Dennis said he had to stack it in order to see how much we had in order to pay Case. It was a little less than 2 cords, but Dennis said he owed Case for some pipe.

The weather had, at first, been unpredictably nice, then clouded over as if to rain, but it held off until just at the last. As they came in it began to rain—gently—and didn't last.

"Since you didn't use the \$100 I gave you for the linoleum, keep \$20 for the wood work!" I told Dennis.  
They laughed and told me I'd have a hard time finding anyone to lug all that wood in on that trail for any price! Later, we made a better settlement for their work.

While Dennis and Abbie finished the wood, the kids and I went in and I "baby sat" them. They went up to the loft, with my permission, and began to deplete my paper supply up there writing letters to me—all lavishly stamped with myriad impressions of my new rubber address stamp—and rain them down on me. "Just what I always wanted! Lots of letters!" I cried at the "snowfall".

Abbie's birthday party was fun...and...sentimental, for—I'd gotten her a ring box I saw on sale. It was so pretty and she'd said something once about having no place to put her (non-wedding) ring.

She was delighted with it!

"But I have no ring!" she cried, eyeing Dennis. "I get so embarrassed-wish I had a wedding ring—just a plain gold band—" (I'd never noticed she didn't wear one.)

Well, later, the mood all warm and sentimental, we'd gotten to talking about my will and my stock, and I decided it was maybe a propitious moment to fill them in on these things, so I went upstairs and got out my "when I die" box. In it were my three wedding rings, comily tied with pink ribbon. One was the cheapy ring because we'd been too broke to buy anything else; another the one with the row of diamonds Ed's mother (I suspected) had made him buy me later (she was a great one for showy things); and the plain gold one I had bought myself after I'd gotten tired of losing diamonds doing housework. (I'd never owned any jewels and didn't know you were supposed to keep them checked.) and I not liking the "ruby"(garnet?) replacements Ed had had a jeweler friend put in for the missing diamonds



Whatever, I took them down and offered them to Abbie. She looked eager. Dennis eyes were questioning, "You sure?"

"Sure! Take them! I don't know if they're of any value or not, but...maybe... you can have something remade..."

The gold band did not fit Abbie when they tried it on. Dennis took it off and came out with "It's 14K" he said.

"And there are two diamonds left!" Abbie cried.

Dennis' eyes were gleaming—not with greed...

I'd watched Abbie untie the pink ribbon; I watched the eyeplay between them and...felt wonderful!

"You sure?" Dennis asked again.

"Sure." I said. "what good are they doing me sitting up there in that box waiting for me to die? And then everybody saying 'What's this junk?' Take them!"

They did.

*The rings*

[Post hoc: I have never seen or heard of them since.]

The wood session had ended about 3? or 4? I'd been getting a little anxious about my pot roast dinner as they'd said they'd have to leave early. (This also erased the "Halloween party" and breakfast I'd planned) but the meat I'd put in my electric "wok" pan and it had simmered all day—neglected.

It was excellent! Everybody ate and ate! We had a little respite and then we had the birthday party, Dennis playing "Happy Birthday" by ear as I hadn't been able to find the music.

Noah was so excited about popping the cork on the wine—it even hit a rafter! And Sarah was all excited hoarding my few silly little gifts for Abbie and eyeing me (Now?)...(Now?) The kids had put 34 candles on the cake and everybody cheered and hurrahed when Abbie blew them all out in one puff.

It was fun!

I had built a fire and Dennis and Abbie came in with armloads of the new wood and the fire crackled and popped; we were too warm! Dennis had stepped out and came in to announce that it was raining, but we didn't care.

We moved into the living room and the kids played the "piano" and we chatted: Dennis said he'd run into the same thing up here about the Chambreau name. And I'd brought out my will and the ring and so on and told about the stock and all.

There was more warm glow than from the stove when they left...hugs and happiness... "I love this place!" Dennis said.

They said they were planning more finishing-up trips "before they leave in January" and that maybe they'd get up the next weekend. Dennis packed the ladder and implied he wouldn't be bringing it back, to my dismay, for that meant I'd never get my skylights cleaned?

Their leaving: I loaded them down with leftover food and walked them out, Sarah dancing on before us with the flashlight, and Dennis cussing at Jake, the dog, barking at us.

"It used to be quiet here!" he said.

That triggered my telling them about the Moore gal down the street barreling out in the night and shooting, insisting she'd seen a bear, but I hastened to try to retract the story when I saw the kids, wide-eyed with fear, listening.

It was a great day! There was more warm glow than from the stove when they left—all from hugs and happiness!

After they left, I was too tired to do the dishes; I just sat enjoying, noticing sounds seemed muffled more than usual and wondered if it was all that wood under the house made the difference.

I felt so rich!—even if the wood would cost me \$100. And a refrigerator! Wow!

**October 12, Sunday.** I did not wake until after noon! A gentle rain was falling. I built a fire—just because I had the wood. And then, the rain never stopping, I just snuggled in and took it easy all day.

**October 13, Monday.** The sun was shining when I woke. It smelled so good and looked so pretty outside, but it was too cold to have the doors open.

Later, I ventured out into the neighborhood. Cases and Macs were not at home. I stopped at Easterleys' to ask if they were going to have a party for the Macs. They were there. Orv was harvesting in the garden. Their little poodle came out and jumped all over me. It was nice to see a friendly dog, for a change!

Marie was busy, but asked me to come in and we gabbed.

Yes, maybe they'd have a party Sunday; she's get hold of people. And then she asked if I'd make a decoration design for a cake she'd make. She was furious about my phone troubles and said I'd have to go in to Everett and go to the top man.

Easterleys had a beautiful place. It was quite big and luxuriously furnished, and it had a big, long porch balcony off the living room with a beautiful view across the valley to Mt. Rainier. I was quite impressed, for the house didn't look like much from the rear.

And I was touched to come out and find Orv had piled two huge bunches of beets and carrots fresh out of the garden on my car. After all I'd been through it was so nice to encounter friendly, old-fashioned people.

I left, thinking about how Marie had asked me if I really liked living up in those woods? I can't seem to get anyone to understand that I do.

Next I went to the store and picked up a card for the Macs, giving up on my plan to make them one; somehow they weren't the type for my kind of wit.

Case was home when I went back and asked me in—coffee and all. And I gave him a check for the wood. He was in a very good mood, more like he used to be. I had to catch myself not to mention Easterleys or the party, for Marie and I had decided the "baddies" shouldn't be asked.

Later I went out and put weatherstripping on my car and was furious to find yet another stray dog invading and setting all the dogs around to barking.

It was getting cold and dark. I built a fire, pleased at how well the stove worked and how fast it cooked the veggies Orv had given me.

And then I cleaned and worked on the refrig, and was not pleased with it. I'd had many a refrig in all my apartments, but this was the worst. It was so small, and had no containers, and the freezer compartment didn't work? it froze things even in the lower part.

During all this a loud shot! in the woods scared the hell out of me.

I went to bed early to conserve heat when it got chilly and was annoyed to wake up about 3a.m. and, slept out, begin to lie and fret about my problems:

- ...decide to send my "angry" letter to Mike...
- ...dread going Everett and hassling about phone...
- ...problem of how to get my car serviced in this area; Case had discouraged me about that (only) Union station (where I could use my credit card) saying their seeming lack of business not a good sign...
- He also said he'd found no need for snow tires in his six years in the area...

I lay in bed, freezing, and wishing I would get my PUD bill so I'd know if I could afford to use the electric heat...

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**October 14, Tuesday.** I did go back to sleep and then I couldn't rouse. It was awfully hard to wake to cold and dark. And, though not raining, only 50° in cabin. I began to wonder...

if winter in my cabin wasn't going to be grimmer than I'd thought? I'd had visions of snug, fire-crackling coziness and projects and work to do, and the club to escape to, and neighbors, etc. I hadn't known it was going to be so cold and dark—and deserted.

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**Later.** I posted the letter to Mike. It was only 40° out there and clammy with a high fog. I came in and dug out winter clothes and built a fire and cooked a big breakfast on it and took a shower to warm me up. And things were much better!

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**By evening** I'd enjoyed a pleasant fall day, after all. In wool shirt and fire crackling I worked on budget and papers, alternating with putter work outside like raking the path. It stayed sort of overcast all day, but it was fallish and birds twittered and chirped in the woods around me.

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**Later** the sun came out and flooded the cabin for awhile. It didn't last long, but it was cheering. I got out the machete and hacked my way down into that orchard, hoping to get some of those apples hanging there so invitingly. But they were all out of reach. I picked up some windfalls and took them to the back porch and fixed them to make applesauce while still some fire. They were excellent apples, hug, firm and sweet.

And it was nice to smell them cooking and the fire warming my leftover stew and the little teakettle burbling with hot water ready for tea anytime.

I enjoyed. This was more like I'd expected it to be. And, later, I felt like an old witch as I went out to gather twigs in the gloaming, for, why, here I had all this free wood! and besides, it needed cleaning up out there. And, sure enough, the twigs were just right to cook my dinner without touching the good wood.

A view from the loft on the woods surprised me; I'd expected the woods to be a blaze of color in the fall. Not so. Just a couple of little vine maples showed any color. Dennis had explained why; just not that kind of trees in this kind of woods.

I ate my dinner and spent the evening working on my can- and dish- cupboards and went to bed early, tired, but content.

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**October 15, Wednesday.** Temperature: at bedtime 60°in/50° out. Morning 50°in/40° out. no rain but BBRrrr!

Budget papers had revealed PUD bill would not come until the next month. I panicked:

- The wood I had would have to last! And what would I do in winter when the kids would be gone? Where was I going to find a crew that would bring in and stack two cords for free like they did? I could see that my biggest problem for the next four months was going to be keeping warm: I couldn't sleep from 8 to 8—I'd end up a cripple—and FAT! I couldn't read for hours like I had during the night (my eyes were killing me, come morning)—I'd end up blind! What was needed was to insulate the floor? That's where the cold seemed to be?

I built a fire and jogged around the room. Exercise. Why hadn't I thought of that before?... First time I'd had living conditions with the privacy to do such a thing!

Later. I took the hatchet and went out by the car and started chopping up more windfall. It was foggy and chill—and quiet; just me and the woods and birds. I enjoyed. I also learned that I must be careful of flying chips when I chop—my eyes.

Radio: news. Yipes! Said there was a sniper loose in the area they unable to find!—and all those shots I'd been hearing!

Later. A noise! something—inside?—or out? I stand, heart beating—a rat? I stamp my foot. A big bird takes flight from off the woodside porch. Whew! It seemed like every time I went out to catch the sun, it went.

Later. I went to the store. It was sure nice not to have to buy ice!

Home, I sat in the car and surveyed the cabin and all, trying to view it as a stranger would: it looked like—well—as I imagined it would: a dwelling quiet—remote—something one "just happened to stumble on"...

I sat and thought about the driveway everybody bugged us so that we should put in, and then I realized, rather happily, that we couldn't put one in; there wasn't room left between the property line and where we had to put the septic tank field which the inspector warned us we were not to drive on. I sighed, relieved; I liked it the way it was.

That huge pile of brush from the clearing we never got around to doing anything about—and board members of club scolding us all about not leaving trash piles. They do longer did, I noted. But it seemed to be settling? As Dennis said, "Why risk burning it under those trees? In two-three years, it'd rot; settle.." Maybe I could hasten it? I gave it a few whacks with the hatchet. No.

Roaming around, I chanced upon the old #1 perc test hole, now all hidden in growing brush—a perfect leg-breaking trap. I'd told Dennis he was to fill them in. I pushed brush into it and put up a warning stick.

I came across the ruins of my first carpentry attempt—that "toilet" I'd built for the kids—and me.) I decided to leave it as a bit of cabin "history"...

...The alder wood logs Dennis had piled. In the two-three years since they'd gotten rotten enough so that even lil ole grandma with a dull hatchet could manage to glean some to keep her warm? I'd gathered about six basketfuls of "squaw wood" by the time I went in, where the fire I'd built was still smouldering. I decided that those little "sustenance" fires were good enough for me; I didn't need the big, roaring ones Dennis built, so I went out to glean some more...

And discovered a holly bush to the north of the house! What fun! For Christmas! Little joys like that—and I loved coming back into my woods to the house waiting. And, later, the half moon in a clear sky still lit from sunset...

I spent the day just puttering around the perimeter of the cabin, enjoying.

And delighted at seeing, on my way back from the store, a real estate sign at Dukes' house—those horrid people causing all that trouble by trying to start a dog kennel on our street.

October 16, Thursday was a "business day" in Monroe.

I stopped at Easterleys'. The little dog greeted my car eagerly out in the road, so I assumed they were home. They were. The driveway was blocked by those two old people chopping, hauling, peaveying, splitting huge log butts of a wood so beautiful I gasped.

"Fir?" I asked.

"No. Maple." I didn't know there was maple that big in our woods. I wished Dennis could have seen it. I was a bit horrified when they said they were cutting it up for firewood.

"I love trees," Marie said, "but it was shading our vegetable garden." This seemed strange to me, for they already had a large garden not shaded by the tree. I stood there and watched them, marveling. That old man (he must have been 70?) was splitting those huge butts as if they were nothing, scolding his wife to hurry and pile, which she did, meekly. It was all so "frontier" even to the peavey he was using. He didn't seem to respond to my admiring comments.

"He's a little hard of hearing," his wife whispered to me.

I asked Marie how the party plans were going?

"Oh, she'd talked to Jerry Smith (President of the Board), but he'd said he was busy, busy, busy—that it was no time to attend a party, he campaign manager for the governor-hopeful." She seemed a little evasive about giving me party plan news; I had to pry at her; she kept changing the subject.

"How are your neighbors up there?"

"Well, uh...Marty..." I had the feeling I was being pumped as I told her about their land-filling and what Mrs. Lloyd had said about Marty going over the line into their lot.. "which is just an old apple orchard," I said.

"Oh, yes, there is..."

During all this I had a feeling that old "deaf" Orv was listening.

"Have you...will you talk to Carrolls?" Marie asked.

"Never see them; never home," I said.

"Well, I'll talk to Marty."

I began to comment about why there was so little spontaneity about just throwing a party. "Oh, I think you'll find that everybody will be just too busy if you talk to them," she went on, "...and we can't have just a few..."

Orville said he couldn't come to a party for he was going elk hunting.

This struck me as strange as they'd told me that they already had more game than they knew what to do with (and didn't care for it)—and Orv had come back from at least three hunting/fishing trips she'd told me about empty-handed!

"I think I'll come up into your woods and hunt some grouse!" he leered. I began to wonder about that good-lookin' old coot. And yet, though Marie was not pretty at all—jut-jawed and big and domineering—she was...nice. And they seemed to be very domestic and prosperous and had five kids, so I'd heard.

Suddenly Marie snapped at me, "That looks like a lumberjack jacket!" referring to my plaid wool shirt I'd bought for my life in the woods and I thought I looked so cute in.

Puzzled, I sensed it was time to go. I left.

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I went on into Monroe. I'd been trying to find out about fire department service at Sultan Estates—all that forest and wood stoves and brush burning and Mike pressuring me about insurance. Nobody seemed to know much, so I stopped in the Monroe Fire Department and talked briefly to one of the men there. He seemed to be as vague as everyone else was about it.

But he did give me a few facts about miles from the station and feet to a hydrant. Realizing that was a chore I'd have to spend more time and research on, I left it at that and went to see about...

**Buying the carpeting for the bedroom.** That turned out to be a wild bit of shopping. I went into this small carpet shop. There seemed to be no one around, not even that dumb gal I'd talked to before. But there was a lot of frantic scurrying going on in the back of the store. Finally, this moronic looking gal wandered out.

"Where's that...uh...rugs...you were getting from Boeing's?" I asked.

Suddenly there was such a flurry of descent by two young men all slicked up in salesman's suits that rolls of carpeting and linoleum went toppling down like dominoes all over the place. I just stood there and laughed; it was like a Mack Sennett comedy.

These men seemed so strangely frantic, and they began rolling out pieces of carpeting and measuring.

"This!" He showed me a sample of what the Boeing's would be like...If they could get it, he said. It was cheap and dingy.

"Umm," I said.

"Oh you can have anything in the place!" I tried to stop them; they were certainly going to a lot of trouble. I picked out something else and when they finally found a couple of pieces I thought I could use and the uproar was all over, I asked, "How much?"

"Oh, \$8—and no tax! Just pay Bonnie! and I'll load it in your car!"

"My car's over there," I said, pointing across the street.

"No problem! No problem!"

I stood jingling my car trunk keys as this one fellow got the roll over to my car. "I don't know if it will go in..."

"Oh sure!" he cried and began to stuff it in so frantically I feared for the electrical wiring. I was so mad at his carelessness that, as he leaned over exposing his best-salesman-suited rear I felt like kicking him right in the balls! But I didn't. "Well, thanks," I said. He fled.

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I went on and spent a great deal of time "downtown", doing my washing and some sundries shopping and went home.

When I got home, I lugged that heavy roll of carpeting in and just sat and looked at it; it wasn't what I'd wanted. And what a strange transaction! I felt there was something fishy about it, and it was odd about their not charging me sales tax on it. I ended up deciding I could use it, after all; if only for "a rug to chew on" if I had any more "business" in Monroe like that!

October 17, Friday. I woke to temperatures of 36°/52° and sun bursting through fog and radio news—

⚡ Mt. St. Helens blew again! "crippling mess of ash and fog in Portland vicinity!" ⚡

I felt so lucky being where I was with birds singing and sunshine...  
More news: "Ferry system (controlled by the Highway Department and my erstwhile boss enemies) evidence of widespread corruption...investigation pending."  
I felt so smug! (I toldja so! I toldja so!)  
I very much wanted to see that news on TV, but only one I had access to would be Case's, and no; I could just hear him pooh poohing, (Lorna, you get so upset about things!)

I went out for the mail. The weather was nippy, but nice. My secret wish to try to keep lots around cabin from being sold made me very tempted to sneak down and turn around that real estate sign on the lot next to Marty's, but there were men working on their new fence; I dared not.

By 1 p.m. I was a nervous wreck, having worked—scared to death— on putting the weather stripping I'd bought around the big, unguarded loft window, then cussing and fuming over the delicate job of putting on a new watch band.

Later I got very lonely; I was dying to talk to someone about the volcano...and no phone. Then an interview on the radio with some doctor who said something about "Loneliness can kill"...didn't help...

By 3:15 p.m. I was very tired. I had been working outside cleaning storm debris from around the foundations and building a bonfire and burning that big box, getting rid of possible fire hazards. It had been very nice outside with the sun through the trees, and the bonfire with smoke snaking through the trees from it and from the chimney from the fire I'd left going in the house, and fallen leaves all over—very October! And it was nice to be able to go in, tired, and just take something out of the refrig and stick it on the stove versus my former pre-frig meal prep struggles.

Some of that radio doctor's words haunted me: "Lonely people augment it by their life style." Ok, I'd go visiting; I'd go down to Case's and call Dennis.

I went. I didn't talk to Carrolls because they weren't outside (and I had never been invited into their house.) I was delighted going past Parker's to see the end of that woodpile meaning maybe he was through with his thumping and bumping noise and illicit business down there? Nope. There was a whole new pile of wood beyond. I visited Case's and Mac's both but they were hurried visits because it was late and each had their dinners ready.

At Cases'. Their dinner ready looked and smelled so good and they insisted that I stay and eat with them, but seeing only two baked potatoes, I demurred, claiming I'd already eaten. But they insisted on giving me coffee and then began their usual bickering as I called Dennis.

Dennis was glad I'd called; had hoped I would. No, they were not coming up on the weekend nor were they going to Spokane—car troubles, and wanted to finish the house. I raved about my comforts, being warm with enough wood and having the refrig, and told him about the rug. He was delighted and said he'd go ahead and order the linoleum and have it sent up—easier on his car.

It was a nice, happy chat.

"Why don't you call every Friday?" I asked.

"Good idea!" he said. but—later—I forgot to inform Cases...

With whom I sat down for coffee and a chat, glad of chance to see the news on TV. Case minimized the volcano—as I knew he would; and excused Darrell and his lumber business—as I knew he would; and chided me that I'd just have to learn to live with it (Darrell's noise) all winter.

The radio, discussing the volcano, said they had pumice the size of walnuts in Cougar City. "Oh, I didn't hear **that!**" Case starts to quibble. I changed the subject, and told what I'd found out about the fire districts.

"Oh, we are in the most **expensive** zone," Case said. "\$120 a year."

I sighed, and tried another topic. "I got some carpeting," I said. "Uhh...**this thick!**" I lied.

"Oh, where are you going to put it?" Edith asked.

I explained and how I was going to leave a heavy traffic strip uncarpeted.

Quibble.

"Well, why don't you come and see what I mean?" But they were fighting about **where** one should put carpeting.

"Oh, by the way," I tried again, "Did you hear those two big explosions about eight the other night?" and I ducked as the fur began to fly again.

"Just the quarry!" Case insisted.

"At eight at night?" I asked.

"Shots! Hunters! Poaching!" Edith cried. "I told you should call the cops!" Edith glared at Dwayne.

"At eight at night?" I asked again. "Why, hunting hours are..."

"Sunrise to sunset" Case chimed in with me.

I laughed and told them about hearing in the news about the sniper in the area. I was ignored. They went on bickering.

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in!" said Case. And then Ron, the Parker brat, entered. (As I had driven up and parked in front of Cases', Ron's dad, Darrell, had driven by with yet another load of (illicit?) lumber. I had hastened into the house so as not to have to wave to him.) Now, Ron looks at me, but Edith intervened, chattering distracting my attention.

"My dad says, you got a wedge?"

"Oh!" Case cries. "Sure! Sure! Sure! He'll need that!" And he ran. Ron kept looking at me and acting very confused, though I didn't know why.

Case came back in and began to get out cookies, apples and..."Oh! Stay to dinner!"

"I think I'll go," I said. "Got a card to give the McNabbs."

The McNabbs were just home from the doctor's. The timer went off for their dinner, but...oven...we got a bit of chat in. I gave them the card. (which they didn't open) Then they began to bitch and rant; they were furious because GTE had turned their phone off without consulting them, they still waiting on the deal about their trailer, hadn't wanted it off until later.

Chatting, I spilled the beans about the party, not meaning to. I told them about Carrolls' fence and Dukes' sign. They seemed real surprised at the latter. I started making adieus.

Lu followed me to the porch and closed the door. "Doc?" I asked. "Marv's leg?"

"Oh, he should have surgery, but that trouble in his head...(??)...they didn't think he could stand it..." She looked very worried.

"Well...your dinner..." I said. "I'll get to you...later...Uh... Say! Isn't that Orv a worker?"

"Yeah! He won't stop! Can't keep up with him..."

"Well, bye!"

I went back home, parked and listened to ominous sounds in the car engine, and found I felt rather relieved about the kids not coming, for, the rug and all, I'd have the whole weekend to fuss with my cabin.

In the evening, though I'd enjoyed gathering and sawing "squaw wood", it alarmed me to see that I'd used most of it up in one day. The short days and long nights beginning, I'd just have to jump into bed early to keep warm. Which I did, after a stint of playing the "piano".

**October 18, Saturday.** I woke to 40°/50° and sun. I'd experimented leaving the heaters on at the very lowest, but had gotten up and turned them off at midnight and had set the radio timer for an hour's news in morning. I found I enjoyed staying snuggly in bed, listening, until the house warmed.

**Later.** I gathered more wood and worked on minimizing that trash pile. The sky had become overcast. Dogs were going ape all over. Hunting?

**That sign:** I did sneak down and turn it around, and, noticing a path crashed into one of the other apple trees—(Ron?)—gleefully realized I might blame the sign prank on him?

**I went to the store.** On the way, Ralph was out raking his front yard. I stopped and asked him if Marie had called?

"No."

I told him about the McNabb party.

"Oh. Yeah." he says unenthusiastically. "If we're around."

"That property line—where the fence is?"

"Yes."

Then, thinking I might control the dog's barking at me if it knew me, I asked if I could go and talk to the dog.

"Sure."

On way back from the store, Marty waved to me from the porch.

It was nice to come home and see smoke coming out of the chimney and I noted how having the refrig cut down on my food expense and number of shopping trips. I went in and began to work on the

**Carpeting:** It pleased me to note it was marked "Armstrong"(a good brand). It was a hard job; very hard to cut that jute backing. And the pieces having been cut crooked it wa a chore to square them up. And it was a very hard job alone with no help to get one piece under that very heavy big bed . But, by using a stick as a lever, I managed. It took me all afternoon, and I was very tired, but very pleased at having it done and evennot cutting myself. And I swore the bedroom seemed warmer with it in. The cleanup job wasn't much fun, but had to be done, of course.

**October 19, Sunday.** 42°/54° overcast. Had I heard rain in the night? It was nice to jump out of bed onto carpeting, though I had sore knees from all that crawling around.

**Wood.** All the squaw wood was gone; I would have to start on the "real" wood and see if I could make two cords last four months? In driving around I had been astounded at the stock piles of wood around the area. Cutting and stacking wood just part of life to these people—like Orville:

"Eleven cords is nothing!"

The refrig all frosted up again and my eggs frozen. Discouraging. Later, I moved it out and cleaned the back, which was filthy, in hopes it might help. I dismantled the shelf Dennis hadthrown together for our camping kitchen and used some of the boards to create a temporary broom closet beside the refrig. The rest I put on the porch pending further decisions.

I worked on the bedroom until I was tired. It was beginning to look nice.

Then I got a little lonesome, unhappy at not having any visitors, and I wished there was a nice, retired older couple like Marv and Lu on our street I could go and "kaffeeklatsch" with. I found myself puzzled and with a little bit of sick feeling about the indifference about a party for the Macs. It seemed to me the people hadn't even tried.

The day turned out to be beautiful and so was the big vine maple, which had turned scarlet. But the pleasantness of a nice Sunday was spoiled by the never-ceasing sound of chain saws going. I wondered if those vents I thought code said had to be put in the "A" peaks was responsible for the noise carrying so.

I happened on an article that explained about fall leaf color: leaves first yellow and not turn red until the sun hits them, which explains the dearth of red leaves in our plot?

In the evening I got very annoyed at the constant shooting that went on around the place. It sounded as if someone target practicing? And I couldn't figure out why it went on at night...

Darrell had had a whole bunch of dingy looking people down there all day and it looked like a drunken brawl and during the night there had been voices and laughter during the shooting....

In the evening it began to rain.

October 20, Monday. I slept in, attempting to outwait the rain and grey weather. As I lay thinking about the telephone problem—my futility utility—I got alarmed at how "gunky" the skylight was; had the mountain blown up again? more ashfall?

About mail time I gave up and got up. I was out sneakily moving property stakes, checking and shocked at how Marty did go over the line as it was shown on the plat I had, when the mailman came and I scurried to ditch my handful of stakes. The mailman certainly was an unfriendly old coot: always ignored all my greetings. And this time he just handed me one (unimportant) envelope and went. I went back in and tried to while away the grey and foggy day writing letters.

About noon, stir crazy, and finding it hard to get used to all the greyness after all the sun, I dreamed up an excuse to go to the store and see what was going on in the world outside. I come back, not cheered, but resigned: It didn't look like anyone was having any more fun than I was. There was a heavy, dripping fog. People were at home, lights on, or sitting glumly in the local restaurant; animals were standing or lying around in the fields immobile as statues. In our neighborhood, it looked like Darrell was home alone, Cases gone, Macs home, Easterleys dark—and an empty beer carton tossed aside trashing the pretty woods...

I spent more lonely hours puttering in the house. Then, I was startled to see a white van with red lights, pausing, then stopping, by my mail box. Thinking, perhaps, the telephone company, I went out. No. It was a small foreign car. Nobody got out nor could I see who was in the car. When it saw me, it moved slowly on and then parked by those two adjacent lots for sale. Puzzled, disappointed, depressed, I went back in.

Later, I was out with the hatchet chopping up sticks. That car again. this time it parked—closer. I wandered down, hatchet in hand. A young man in grubbies got out.

"You looking for someone?" I asked. Then a young woman got out and they both advanced toward me, saying something I couldn't quite distinguish. I moved closer. She was from the Red Carpet Realty Company," she said, showing the man the lot. "You live here?" she asked. "There," I said, pointing with the hatchet. We talked a bit, I careful not to say too much. They were just about to leave when Marty came out. I felt like a fool, being caught by all those people so dirty and unkempt. The car went.

"You still want the wood?" Marty asked me, referring to the slashings from their clearing I'd mentioned an interest in. I tell her "No," and explained. Then we chatted. I found out a lot.

She hates the place; is scared to death in the woods; wants to move back into town. She wanted to know if I'd go in with them on the expense of putting up a security light in the cul-de-sac; PUD would put up one of those tall blue lights that light up the whole woods for a monthly fee.

I tried to explain: No, I didn't want a revealing Big-city-ish light—that I felt that it attracted vandals to the fact that there were houses to loot—that I thought the spooky, dark woods was more a deterrent to prowlers, etc. But, I found, again, that nobody seemed to understand my viewpoint.

[Note: Later, as more and more people moved in, we started having robberies we were never plagued with at first, when it was woodsy and dark.]

She said Ralph was looking for a job and had some offers that might make him have to go and stay in town "and no way was she going to stay out here alone!" Then when she said she was thinking of getting another dog as a playmate for Jake, I groaned inwardly.

She spoke about the ruckus the night before. "Yeah," I said, "What was that?" feeling vindicated. "Something going on down Pipe Line Road," she said. She said it had scared the wits out of her and she'd called the police. And then she mentioned that those other shots Edith and I had heard and Case claimed he hadn't—-the explosions—and claimed they were poachers. She also claimed that Moore was right: that she had seen a bear—"something big and black" Moore had said—down in the apple orchard.

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I laughed, and, again, went into my story about camping up there by myself and how I'd found out there was nothing to be afraid of. But I couldn't convince her.

"I'd sell the house at a loss!" she cried, "if need be. I couldn't stand to be alone here like you are!"

I gave up trying to convince her that there was nothing to be afraid of and why Dennis and I liked it there just the way it was. Nobody seemed to understand.

We got to talking about Sultan Estates—why the lots didn't sell because they wouldn't "perc".

"Oh, they can make them perc if they want to!" she said. "If they want to go to the expense."

"But they're supposed to stand for a year (after bulldozing)," I said.

She admitted that, and then began to rail at the Board. "So mad at them!" she said. She'd talked to Cecil Delp and had bugged them about not getting that generator in. "They never get anything done!" she cried. What'd she think it was going to be like when the McNabbs leave? I thought.

We were interrupted by Ralph coming out; he'd just gotten a phone call for a job interview in Seattle. "For City Light," he told Marty. I murmured something about that being a long commute.

"Oh, we can go together," Marty said—whatever that meant. Ralph wandered back in and I went home.

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It didn't sound as if they were going to be permanent, I thought, and all those lots down there for sale. I sighed. It didn't do me much good to move that sign, did it? But my lonely day had been broken by some social contact.

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**That evening.** I hadn't been able to get much interest or sympathy in my phone story. I set things up to go through my notes and figure out just exactly what had happened—to prepare for battle. But, for the first time since I'd been there I found I couldn't concentrate.

Those damned people had gotten me scared! First time I'd been scared; I was jumping at every noise. And first time I was conscious of my bare, exposed windows. We were going to have drunken poachers all over? I had felt so safe there before.

But I worked until ten p.m. on the phone fiasco review. It was worse than I'd thought; just fantastically impossible all the promises they'd made me and hadn't kept. Why, this had been going on for two and a half months! I'd never run up against such a thing in my life!

A car screeched and skidded around the cul-de-sac. Now I was scared! I turned out the lights and jumped into bed and "kivered up my head."

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**October 21, Thursday.** Rain in the night and an electrical storm woke me and I couldn't sleep. I had intended to go to Everett and do the phone battle, but—the storm—I decided there was nothing I could do until I saw if there was a letter from Mike and what the weather did. I paced, very upset and thinking about how I could sure use a miracle!

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At mail time there was only a bunch of junk; nothing from Mike or from Bishop. (What about that invitation to see their church? they were going to "seal" it Nov. 8). Then the sun breaking out and I finding a pack of cigarettes when I thought I was out cheered me and I decided to brave my trip. I flew around but only in further rage, for I couldn't find my measuring tape and I wanted to, now, buy some curtain material. And I went into further tizzy when, superstitiously deciding to wear my "good luck" jewelry the chains got all entangled.

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So I left in a seething rage. I got to the car only to see the more for the left turn signal was out, and I could not find my car manual to check the circuits. I gave up on that. And then I scrambled through maps, having no idea of where I was going. I decided maybe I could stop at the Senior Center, where I hadn't been yet, and try for some help; the gals said they ate lunch there. That meant I'd have to be there by noon, which meant **hurry!**

Going past Cases—they seemed to be there, but I was in a hurry. But, whoops! McNabbs were there! On a mad impulse I parked and went in.

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I remained standing to show I didn't mean to stay.

"Just checking," I said. "How's it going?"

"Well, sit down, Lorna!"

So I did and listened to their tales, though I was feeling very uptight, it nigh noon. They seemed delighted to see me, and hear my gossip and reports. We had a lot of laughs!

But..."Err...I have an appointment, I said, "Gotta go and fight GTE," and I left.

---

I went barreling down the road, late, but feeling fine now.. On the way there was a GTE truck. I just braked and got out and looked around. Surely the guy was someplace? A "voice from on high", "Can I help you?"

Puzzled. Oh. That bearded kid was high on a pole talking into a phone instrument. I waited.

"Help you?" he gestured, cradling the phone against his neck.

"Why, yes," I said. "Remember me?"

"Uh...no."

"Well, I'm on my way to Everett to..." I had a crick in my neck from looking up...

"Oh yes!" he called down from his perch. "You're the house in the woods!"

"Yeah! So where do I go?" I shouted up the pole.

"Business office! 34th and Broadway...know it?"

"Oh yeah," I lied. "Thanks!"

---

I gunned the car and went roaring down to Monroe, almost going off the road a couple of times I was so busy thinking and punks in cars and logging trucks kept passing me impatiently, for, despite my rush, I was keeping to the speed limit.

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In Monroe, at the traffic light, I had to brake to avoid some smart ass workman in the way and then took a choice and went up SR2. Where in hell Lewis Street (the Senior Center) was I had no idea. I broke a few traffic rules and finally got myself there by 12:15, only to find the door locked though a lot of cars parked around. There were some old guys mumbling and shuffling around.

"How do I get in there?" I asked.

"Oh just press the latch, " and I got in, muttering under my breath about the old days when men used to hold doors for women.

It was a nicer, more modern place than what I'd expected. I stood, not clear just why I was there.

"Help you?" a nice gal at the desk asked.

"Well, I have two names here...wait!" I dug out my notes. Next thing I knew I was welcomed like a long lost friend.

" Well, you'll have to talk to our legal advisor and she's gone to lunch. Can you wait?"

"Oh sure...uh...I understand...lunch?" I really didn't want any, but...

"Oh yes!" she said and flew off.

"Oh...err..I don't have any money...I meant to go to the bank first! I have..." I counted, laughing, "80 cents!" (The lunch was posted at \$1.40.)

"Oh, pay what you can (did she say?) Welcome!" she said and led me into a huge, airy room. "There's your lunch!" pointing to a cafeteria tray copiously loaded with cold, rather dull looking food.

"Uh, let me see..." I began—shyness gripping me, as I looked at the crowded room.

She led me to one of the many long, wooden tables, where she sat me down with an elderish couple and introduced them, but I didn't catch the name.

The man had sideburns and was so foppishly dressed, and with, I could I have sworn, make-up on, that I directed my attention to the woman.

We sat talking about GTE as I wolfed down that cold, poorly cooked, but **healthy** food.

"Join the club!" she said, meaning troubles with GTE. "You going to play bingo?"

"Oh, no!" I said.

They started milling around, getting ready for their game. So I sat and drank coffee and smoked and burped up burned fish, and then wandered around making notes from their bulletin board about flu shots, etc. and trying to quell the snobby feelings that arose in me about those plebian bingo-playing characters

"Whom am I waiting for?" I finally asked that gal.

Just then a really sharp looking, well-dressed younger woman came in and I heard them say to her that I was second in line for an interview.

Well, by this time I really felt rushed and couldn't have cared less, but I found myself closeted with this gal, whom I liked, in an office, so I told my tale. "Battle!" she said

When I went out to leave, the women (not the men!) all gathered round and kissed and hugged me! These were women I gathered were staff? for the oldies were all busy chanting bingo numbers.

"You come back, now. We have dances on Fridays!"

Ugh, I grimaced. "I haven't danced for ages!"

"But, fun to watch," they said. "Now you be sure and come back, Lorna!" they all cried.

I left. Gosh! that was like "old home week"!

Everett. I found my way into Everett and the GTE office without trouble. There, began a long, frustrating fiasco.

I was put through a series of women; "Sorry, the engineers are not available."

It was getting to be like another Mack Sennett comedy, including the names.

I about cracked up and was beginning to compose hysterical stories about the names I was running into that day:

At the Center, "This is Mr. and Mrs. Rude," they'd said. And This is Ms. Humann, our Federal legal advisor." And "This is Mrs. French."

"And my name is Chambreau!" I'd whooped. "Bet you've heard of..."

"Oh, yes!—at the prison!" And now, at GTE, "Why don't you talk to Mrs. Friday?"

So. Mrs. Friday couldn't understand my giggles, nor did she go along with my attempt to kid and joke through their murky explanations of why they couldn't hook me up with a telephone.

"But isn't there an engineer here?" I begged.

A cool look. "Sorry, they are...out. You see..." and she tried to convey technical information she obviously didn't understand herself to me..."We need a couple of wires to hook you up to..." on and on.

I sighed; I was just getting more and more confused though I was getting a glimmer of an idea that the trouble was that all the lines near us were full.

"Well," I suggested, "the McNabbs are leaving."

"Oh?" she says. maybe..."

"Why don't you call? (Lu)" I said.

"Oh? Yeah!" She did.

I left there, again "with hugs and kisses" and a possible two week solution to my phone problem.

It was 3 p.m. by then. I debated; since I was here in Everett—why don't I—?

While waiting at the Center I'd gotten all fired up and encouraged about finding myself a social niche in this new place and I'd taken notes on a notice on the bulletin board:

"URGE YOUR PROFESSIONAL OR ARTIST FRIENDS TO ENTER..EXHIBIT.  
\$100IN PRIZES.  
PAINE FIELD"

It was an ego trip type of thing, but why not? I'd enter one of my Highway drawings. I asked the gal at the desk how to get to Paine Field.

"Oh, easy! Yes! Yes! You do that!"

So, though I was late and anxious to avoid the work-out-hour traffic, I perused maps and set out. I'd just drop in and get some pointers on how to enter. I drove through miles and miles and miles of urban blight and construction, utterly confused, and utterly lost and ended up at the very peak of the rush hour traffic on Highway 99—of all places I didn't want to be!— and no way to turn around.

I stopped some young people and asked them where I was. Shrug.

I made an illegal turn into a dingy hamburger stand, and bought a lousy hamburger and asked them. Shrug. "Dunno".

I sat on my brake and figured and seethed. Ego trip? Hell with it! All I wanted to do now was get out of that city rat-maze and back home to beauty and peace.

I set off in traffic insane enough to boil one's brain and hurried even more desparately when I came upon a terrible wreck with an ambulance whining up to it.

I headed back for Monroe, threading my way through all those reckless drivers on that long, narrow slough bridge and along that beat up old highway. I stopped in Snohomish at a discount market—might as well do my shopping there—but it was so shoddy I just left and went on into Monroe...and Safeway. Was I ever glad to get back "in God's country" where there was beauty (and no cussed insane traffic.) I was late, later than I'd been out before, but it was worth it, for

The drive home through the valley was so beautiful it made me gasp. The day had turned out perfectly gorgeous, weatherwise. It was dusk when I'd come out of Safeway and the sky was pink-edged in the setting sun and full of billowing clouds and all was newly washed sparkling after the storm. And, as I came across that long straightaway through the valley, over where my cabin was, there'd been a rainbow (always a good luck symbol to me.)

As I wended my way up the hill toward home, enjoying being on a country road where I could let my attention wander from driving, there was a phenomena I'd never seen before, never having been out that late on that road. White wisps like veils moved eerily and quietly in front of my car and soon a white mist seemed to be rising out of the ground and shrouding all the ugly things until I felt as if I were in one of those magical, lost places like...Brigadoon? As I turned east an immense full moon hung just over the trees above the swirling mist—beautiful!

Then I hit the logging clearing, my car lights on dim now as were those of the few cars I met coming out of the mist in a strange hush. I braked in utter awe! The first snow on the jagged mountain peaks, the tips of them only highlighted by the sinking sun and that huge moon hanging over the peaks and the whole valley shrouded in that wispy mist. To the northeast, Mt. Baker, a snow white cone, rose. The snows had come!

I hated to leave that view and plunge into my forest grove, but it was rather like "garaging" the car to go under those trees. Not used to coming home that late, I left the car lights on to light me in on the trail and walked through the acrid fallen leaf smell to my little cabin. And, as I unlocked the door, I heard the heater busily humming warming my homecoming. (I'd forgotten to turn it off.)

I got a flashlight and went out and covered the car and brought in my bit of shopping and then went out to get a few logs off the porch. It was a night for a cozy fire; "they" saying it would be 30° that night. I thought I'd "lost the moon" but there it was sparkling and twinkling through the trees to the east. I had never been so appreciative of what my new home had to offer. Tired, I lay down and fell asleep—clothes and all.

Later—much later, I awoke errand to the car, the stars were fantastic! And it was dry under my trees while that mist hung around and obliterated those ugly little houses below. Oddly, it seemed to hang around where the people were! I went in and composed a "once and for all" letter to Mike about the telephone situation.

**October 22, Wednesday.** I woke late, exhausted, but scrambled around until I found the draft of my letter to Mike.

"Hi! thanks for your letter...and help. I had the weirdest day battling GTE in Everett...I will work on the insurance thing... gotta go to Sultan and ferret out the fire chief..have talked to the Monroe Fire Dept., who...nice...said we're in Sultan area...talked to neighbors...we are in a "high risk" zone...fire insurance \$120 a year for \$30,000 house some neighbor said...did some legwork "on cabin evaluation" with forms from an insurance Co. came out with \$20,000 minimum. Would sure hate to see Dennis' hard work go up in flames...neighbors so careless with trash burning fires, etc....About the phone thing: my legal gal said if no action "to make it public"—write newspapers, report to FIC...shame them? I certainly shall! Got my battle axe sharpened again...kinda fun... Marlyn? I was really impressed with the Senior Center here...lotsd of nice, smart, really dedicated gals on staff really working... with smiles! taking care of a lot of old "mumble gums". They have sort of a pickup service...lunch...bingo (Lord forbid)...dance..."  
blah...blah...blah...

Well, I'd have to polish the letter later...

I went out in the sunshine to get the mail. A letter! From Mike!

"Let's keep after that phone company...I called them...put on hold...see what you mean...exasperating..."

Mike's letters were always very brief, but, relieved, I went in and threw myself on the bed and just zonked out. I was so tired!

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5 p.m. I decided to go on a little neighborhood stroll. Case was home, alone, cooking a big pot of beans. Nothing would do but I must have some. So I sat and listened while he told me more of his incredible tales, supposedly about his childhood.

The phone rang. It was Marv saying that Shirley Parker (Darell's wife) reported that her water was off. Case told him that ours was all right. Marv's car went by toward my house, worrying me, but I stayed. Marv's car went back. After awhile I told Case I was going down to McNabbs' and would report. I went.

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McNabbs were furious! It seemed that Parker's son, Ron, had turned the water off under their trailer. We talked about that and the phone, but their dinner was ready, so I left.

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I went back to Cases". He came out. I reported. He told me more mind-blowing tales about GTE.

As I walked back up the hill toward home, Mr. Duke drove up and parked in front of his house, right beside me. He ignored me.

But I asked, "You? The real estate sign?"

"Yes!" he snapped. I went on.

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10:00 p.m. I spent all evening re-writing my letter to Mike, trying to make it a little more business-like. Though so late, it seemed like daylight out in the woods. Curious, I stepped out on the porch. The woods were bathed in moonlight as if in a stage spotlight; the full moon glittered in the trees, and a fresh wind was blowing. There were leaves all over and it was very warm.

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About midnight. I was reading; the lights went out...on...dim...out...on... There was quite a wind outside. Thirsty, I find there is no water—the lights went off again. That meant...clocks...refrigerator...radio...oh dear!...heaters. I cuddled up and went to sleep thinking about Case's habitual "solution"—his laconic unconcern: "Don't panic; they'll come again." How odd that I'd just read something about "the inefficiency of total indifference."

In about an hour? I sensed they had...the bedside clock dial was lighted. The wind was still blowing and things hitting the roof kept waking me.

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October 23, Thursday. I woke to the sun flooding the cabin and woods, but had no idea what time it was. Then the radio came on: the power was off for two hours! Outside it was warm and the wind had blown the plastic off the car. There were still leaves on the trees, but there was a new open look that hadn't been there before. I was beginning to experience how fall was at my cabin?

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I spent the day primping, excited about going to that dance at the Center the next day; at least I would try it. I also set clocks, covered the car again, did some storm repairs, finished my letter to Mike and posted it and got in some wood! The night before—the power off—I had learned a lesson!

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Odds and ends: Paper—we oldies to get a PUD discount...my car blinker light burned out!...a snow alert from Snohomish versus radio talking about record breaking temperature of a warm 62°...The vine maples in back had turned a brilliant yellow...Bang! the shooting was starting early...

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I wondered if the wind had brought down a lot of those apples and if I dared to go down in there and see—all those swaying branches—but I did. It was easier this time, for all the salmonberry bushes were dried up; I could just break through them. There were not very many apples and some were too well nibbled. There were some russet pears, too, but they were hard as rocks. Jake wasn't barking at me...So pretty!...all the gold leaves. The little apple tree—unbelievable—just a shell, but bearing fine little apples. I got a few and went back and put them in to bake. Smelled so good!

About 5 p.m. I wanted to call Dennis, but, though Case was outside when I went to the store, it was too early; Dennis not home from work. When I came back, Case inside, and asked me in, but not overly cordial, so I just called Dennis and left.

Dennis said: If there was sunshine Saturday, he'd want to paint and they'd be up Sunday; if it rained, they'd be up Saturday and he'd work on the railings and around the back porch—whatever that meant. He wanted to do the linoleum after the first. I briefed him about the GTE situation.

Evening. The warm wind suddenly turned chill and the lights seemed so dim.

At 7:40 p.m. It had been dark in the cabin for some time. Shooting began outside. I counted 18 shots before they stopped. At 8:20, I busy working on curtains, the shooting began again. I wondered if Marty had called the police? I wasn't scared, though—just annoyed. What in hell could they be doing out in the pitch dark and that hell of a wind? I realized I could be a vulnerable shot with all the lights on and the windows uncurtained. So? If they want to shoot me, let them! I shrugged and worked on.

The radio yakked about rain and clouds coming in, though a brilliant moon was rising through the trees in the east. More yak about old people dying of cold and my fire's out. Hmmm.

October 24, Friday. No sun, the wind still blowing. "50 % rain predicted." That meant I had a 50% chance of guests coming? I'd planned that big day in Monroe; would I have to battle a storm? For, taking the garbage out, there was a gale messing things up and it was clouding up and chill.

I went ahead, though, and primped for the dance—got all perfumed and dressed up. Qui sa? Perhaps I might meet a man at the Senior Center dance!

When I left I was surprised at how nice the day was, after all—some clouds, but sun. I fooled around Monroe, killin time until three, when I thought they'd said the dance began. Time went slowly (but my money didn't!) for I'd decided I might as well do my shopping for the kids' visit then so...well..I'd be free for whatever happened after the dance.

When I came out of shopping at 2:30, the first raindrops were falling, which left me in a dilemma: should I go home in case the kids had come? or stay and "have fun" at the dance? I decided to go to the Center anyway, as I had other things to attend to there beside the dance—PUD discount forms, flu shots, and the art show to find out about.

### The Senior Center Dance

When I went in, nobody paid any attention to me, nor did I see anyone I knew. The place was very active, everyone having fun. In fact, the dance broke up just as I went in and they all took a break and were milling around.

Finally tapped this oldish gal on the shoulder.

"Oh, yes, may I help you?"

I asked about the PUD forms. She got some for me. Then I asked about the art show.

"Oh, are you an artist? (Yes.) Oh, they pick the work up here."

"What I wanted to know," I said.

"You have four days to enter. I'm an artist, too," she began. (I groaned inwardly; here we go.) Those are my paintings over on the wall. Would you mind criticizing them for me? Just tell me what you think?"

I tried to get out of it, for the old-timey fun band had just started some toe tickling music again...a slow piece...I kind of—showed myself (available!)

But nothing happened; I was ignored. I glanced at the dancers; humph! not a single man'd give two cents for—a bunch of old stuffies! So, reluctantly, I followed the gal on her ego trip.

"Why, they're very good!" I said. (And they weren't as horrible as the other amateur things I'd seen exhibited around town)

"Come," she kept saying. "Come, I want you to meet someone..."

Thinking she was going to introduce me to someone to dance with, I followed her.

She led me to a frumpy, frizzled-haired old crone.

"This is our most famous local artist!" she bubbled.

The woman started sighing and lamenting. "What a chore! and bore! They want me to be artist-in-action at the show. I'd love to, but...time, you know..." implying that she was just rushed to death with orders, et cetera. "Do you paint in oil?" she shot at me.

I quelled annoyance at this usual question of amateurs; they revere **only** oils, and once again, tried to explain...commercial work. "But I haven't done anything lately...my hands, ya know," and showed my swollen, gnarled, arthritic ones.

"Oh my! But you must! There's a nice gal comes in on Mondays. You could take lessons! She can teach **anyone!**"

"Uh...no, no..."

"Are you going to exhibit?"

"Well...four days...my stuff has gotten so shabby..and you said they had to be framed...mine aren't..."

"Oh, you can get beautiful frames at the second hand stores!"

Thinking of those hideous things and their overuse, and taking one last look at the old gal as wrinkled and ancient as my 85 year old aunt, but coiffed and bejeweled as a 1920 whore aflirt to dance, I left the diligent artist ladies of Monroe oh-ing and ah-ing over the "bee-yooti-ful" frames one could get in the secondhand stores and got the hell out of there.

Nobody had asked me to dance; nobody had even give me the eye.

The fish lady had her van set up beside the highway. Thinking of a salmon bake for the kids, I got out in the pouring rain.

"How much for salmon? Oh..only whole ones?...m m m..."

"Dearie...got fresh-cooked crab."

"How much?"

"\$3."

"Will take," I said. And she put the smelly monster in my car.

I stopped at the hardware store for something. "Odd," I said, making conversation with the youth who waited on me,"...hunters...that people should shoot at night!"

"Oh,that's the best way!" he said. "Flashlights...animals can't see.

Shoot 'em."

Struck me as a bit unfair to the animals. "Uh...poachers...maybe where our grouse family has gone..." I muttered and left.

I stopped at McNabbs' on my way home. Yes, indeed! they were interested in that PUD discount for under \$10,000 income. And, yes, they'd heard one shot.

"There were eighteen!" I said. "I counted them! I wrote them down!"

We had a good indignation talk about that, and laughs:

"Manna from heaven," I said about my "squaw wood". they laughed.

I told them about the fish lady and crab.

"I don't like seafood," Marv laughed. "A bunch of insects!" We laughed.

"I'm not scared of the poachers' bullets," I started, as Lu laughed. "Just make it a sure shot, eh?"

"Yeah," we laughed.

Old age we started to talk about. If I'd known," said Marv, "when I was 30 what my body was going to be like at 70..." We laughed.

But then we didn't laugh. Lu, going to get the paper to show me something, had hit her hand somehow. "Look!" she said.

I gulped. Inthat short time a **huge** lump had risen on her hand.

I got ready to leave.

"It's the waiting' it's the not **knowing**," Lu said, ushering me out, (about GTE.) I nodded.

And raced home. It was raining like hell—except under our trees.

When I went in something caught my eye: the most bedraggled little bird (like the one the cat had caught) sat hovering on the floor.

"Oh, for heavens sakes!" I raged at it, opening the door and letting all my PUD heat out. How do you talk to birds?—chirp chirp? Somewhere I'd read that you make a "kissing noise" with lips and fingers..."Smursh, smursh".

Nope. It just flew back and forth. I tried to direct it with a broom. No.

Finally, I just shut the door: well, I guess I've got myself a pet?

But it still wanted out. "Chirp chirp, smush, smursh," Quite a one-sided conversation we had. Finally I opened the door and left it open. At last it flew out.

I woke up in the night. The silence after two or three days of wind assault was...spooky. I lay and thought about the day before:

- I'd told Lu and Marv about Case's sad tale of his childhood.
- "Well, gosh!" Lu said, "my parents came out here on horseback! in a wagon!" (I wished I'd put down Case's story.)...
- The artist gals: I'd intended to exhibit my bridge drawing, but after I found out the things shown would be for sale, I realized I couldn't part with "my child". The gals didn't understand this; they are eager to sell their crap.
- "Why, by the time I've finished a drawing, it's like my child! You can't sell your child!" I'd said.
- The dance: I was ignored because I kept aloof, perhaps? For, after I saw what was there to dance with, I didn't even take off my coat!
- Dennis putting railings on the stairway—code demands. I really didn't want them; like them as they are, but after my talk with Lu and Marv about old age...maybe? better?...cribs for old people?

About dawn I got curious about the weather..."depends upon if it rains" Dennis had said. Go out in the neighborhood in my night clothes!? Well, why not? it was my own home, my own trail; guess I could if I pleased. I went, No dogs barked at me! It was sort of drippy mist, the moon misted—a frog croaked—it smelled good—the acrid rotting leaves smell. I liked! I went back in.

**October 25, Saturday.** I woke late. Radio: "Cloudy and rain expected in Seattle." So I still didn't know about the kids. Oh, it would have been nice to have a phone! If they didn't come...it would be along day for me. Well, I'd clean the cabin, change the bed anyway...(did I hear a car out there!?)No...  
Echo: "It's the waiting! the not knowing! "

I went for the mail...Would you believe!!? A card from GTE:

"Will be out Oct. 28. Installer. Access will be required."

10:30 p.m. The kids just left a bit ago.

I'd thought they were planning to stay all night( and wished they'd tell me ahead of time.)

They came about noon. It started to just pour after they got here, as if it had finally made up its mind. It was awfully noisy while they were here, Dennis hammering and sanding, but it was fun!

My dinner turned out good: a chicken, and rice goop I'd invented and crab salad. They liked it. My kitchen worked like a charm; was really convenient. The kids were happy, taking over and fixing their own chocolate milk for the first time. They had brought the kitten, and, this time, I rather enjoyed it—at least the fitness of its lapping milk beside the stove.

Dennis put in a part of balustrade on the stairway and finished off and sanded the handrail; put framing around the streetside door and window; he finished the splash board on the sink and found and caulked the leaks near the daveno. He cut himself twice, scaring the hell out of me, and reminding me I should get in more first aid stuff.

Abbie worked on the bedspread, and when crabbing about how long it was taking, it occurred to me I could help her sew those pieces together. So I did. I tended the fire. We sure burned a hell of a lot of wood, but had it cozy and warm, until we had to open the doors while Dennis used that highly combustible goop on the sink.

Sarah and I, and then Abbie and I, walked a bit in the woods. The ground was pretty with all the fallen leaves.

Abbie went upstairs and lay down for awhile—first time she'd been up there. She said it was really nice. And they loved the carpeting. I felt as if the house were really being used and appreciated.

About 7:45p.m. there was one of those shots—a single shot only, but Dennis was furious! He went outside and looked around in the woods, but—nothing. And the shots quit.

At one point, Dennis had looked around and said again, "I really love this place!"

At which Abbie had blurted out, "Oh, I don't like the house...I mean...well...it's too small for us! But I like the woods...and the..(she indicated the surrounding prettiness).

When it started to look as if the sun were coming out again, Dennis said he wanted to get back and see if he could get some painting done on the house. Leaving, they said they'd be up the week after the next one with the linoleum and lay it. Abbie said Dennis would be through at Sears "in a few weeks"but that she'd been earning some money working at the school and she invited me down for Thanksgiving and said they'd be up for Christmas.

As they left, she said, "Why don't you come down and stay in our house a week and let us have the cabin to ourselves?"—a remark that puzzled me into the next day—

but it was a nice visit; all in all a very nice day.

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**October 26, Sunday.** Weather quiet with a pale sun; the radio saying "this the driest October on record"... I woke feeling glad that my Thanksgiving and Christmas were assured and glad about the phone.

Anent entering the art contest, I checked and saw I had no mat board for mounting the drawing, and realized that, by the time I got some and fixed it, it would be too late to enter; i.e. give up; it was just too short notice.

I went to the store, marveling at the beauty of the snow-tipped mountains and the fall colors. I came back via the other route, Reiner road—through an undeveloped area. There was "macho spoor" all over—signs of guys hunting: crazy skid marks in the road, a beer bottle or two, signs all shot full of holes, even a couple of guys prowling around in the brush.

Back at Sultan Estates I explored the upper cul-de-sac before I went home. There were people moved in all over and I counted six FOR SALE signs on lots.

At home I went out in the woods and roamed and gathered and chopped wood. It was pleasant—pretty out there. I came in and built a little fire, cussing as I reset all the clocks for DSTime; I had just gotten so I could tell the time "by the sun", and now all changed.

Outside it was beginning to feel a bit nippy and I was finding it harder to warm the cabin. In the evening, I noted the thermometer had fallen to 36°! I spent the evening doing silly Halloween cards for the kids.

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**October 27, Monday.** Early afternoon, I decided to walk down and visit only two neighbors I could visit! Edith was on the phone, so I went on to Macs, and they not there, so back and rapped at Edith's door, and wished I hadn't—later. For, after two hours of listening to her woes, I ran the gauntlet of barking, growling, chasing dogs and went home.

There I practiced scales on the "piano" a bit, sat in the woods a bit, sawed wood a bit, and made a sketch of the cabin. At 6 p.m. it was cold and dark; it had been for over an hour—the start of the long, dark evenings—with DST. I wrapped up in my "snuggie" blanket and sat in big chair and read till my eyes gave out on me. I began to wonder what I was going to do with 12 hours a day of dark; I couldn't go to bed at 6 every night!

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**October 28, Tuesday.** The temperature dropped, but I had had it up to 70° the night before. The weather was clear; wind in the night. Skitter noises had me wondering if a critter in the house? the plastic had blown off the car again; I'd have to do something about that.

I wondered if this would be phone day? If not, everyone had better get out of my way! Oddly, I found ambivalence popped up about the phone: I wouldn't have any excuse to go visiting!

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**Morning.** I dressed up and began to wait for the phone men.  
**About 10 a.m.** I hear a car door slam. I look out. There's a truck out there. GTE? I wait...wait...wait. Nothing. Then I see the mail truck, so I go out. My bearded guy is up on the pole and there's a cute Italian-looking little guy there. They are both nice. We joke. "Beard" says he'll be back between 2 and 4. I ask, "How's it going?"  
 "Don't get your hopes up," he says.  
 I tell him about McNabbs' phone going to be free.  
 "Maybe," he says. "They're on a 50 pair hookup and you are only 24..." whatever that means.

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So I went to Sultan to see the fire chief. It was a perfect October day. Sultan was such a sleepy, deserted little one-horse town. One could do any business there in a matter of a few minutes. Main Street was only a few blocks long. There was a dingy little post office, an equally dingy laundromat, a rug store, a bakery. Only one nice building—the bank (of course.) One could park anywhere there were so few people. The City Hall was small and informal. I went in. There were a couple of girls there. I asked.  
 "You wanta see Ken?" she said, "He's the Fire Chief and City Commissioner. Well, he's out, but I'll call the Fire Department."  
 In comes a tall, grubby-dressed, dirty, pock-marked cowboy. He was so friendly and seemed so delighted to be sought out and made such a big thing out of checking what I wanted to know that I got the impression he was glad just to have something to do.  
 "Yes, that is a stand pipe. It's ok to call it a hydrant to get fire insurance." And so on. It only took about five minutes, during which a noon whistle blast from somewhere nearby blew me out of my skin!

Next, I defied the traffic sign and went across the street into a tiny, deserted beauty parlor. But a girl appeared and seemed very nice. I asked her prices and was amazed! Only \$7 for a haircut and only \$25 for a permanent—fantastic! And something I'd never heard of: they charged for a haircut by the inch!

Next I investigated the laundromat, where there was only one customer. It was all quiet and lazy. And prices were cheaper than in Monroe, making me wonder why I'd been chasing clear in there all the time when this place was nearby and easy.

Next I went into the tiny little Health Office and asked about flu shots. "Anytime!" they said.

From there back up the highway to the only market in the area in what they called "the mall", a big parking lot flanked by two buildings. On one a sign said "Dentist soon". This was "the store" I've referred going to. They didn't stock many of the things I usually bought. I went back home, having checked and found the things I'd need to settle in this new town. I felt calm and lazy, marveling at how simple it was there compared to the rushing rat race and prices of the city. It was a nice, easy little trip—and hardly worth all the dressing up I did for it!

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**3:15 pm.** when I got back. I waited. They said they'd be back by 4 at the very latest. They were not. I felt like weeping. I knew they wouldn't come back, for I was sure they quit about 4:30. Besides days were now getting dark by 5. Did the delay mean trouble? I cussed. I'd thought I was going to have so much fun calling people in the evening!

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But it was too nice to stay in and mope. I decided I'd try to trim some of those little limbs away from the wires. I needed a "sky hook" though. I managed to rig something up and did a few, but unable to do the others. Besides I was afraid of being caught doing a dumb job like that...

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A white truck went by...??? No. I roamed and then gave up and went back in, with the blues and mad again...when—Hey! There they were! (Brace yourself! I said to myself.)

**5:23 p.m. The phone's sitting here on my desk** (I wrote.)  
 But I couldn't use it. It seems two wires had to be spliced. They went and called to see if someone would come out that night, but no...manana...

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"That was the supervisor I just talked to!" bearded one cried.  
I just grimmed my mouth and didn't say anything.  
I tried to laugh and quip again, but somehow it all went flat; I felt close to tears and they began to look at me warily.

They had gone out to their connection to phone. I could hear them laughing and talking out there. I just roamed restlessly and also realized they hadn't said one word about our nice cabin as people usually did.  
They were two nice, handsome, pleasant young men. We'd had a lot of joshing rapport earlier, but somehow, when they came back, I didn't feel like kidding with them anymore. And, oddly, they, too, seemed to quit the kidding. Italiano stood surveying the rafters, "They're...big!" he said.  
I started prattling about how the cabin was bigger than it looked from the outside.

Beard was looking at the big hole that wire-installer gal had made in Dennis' paneling when she and I had snaked that wire in. [ Where are my notes on that?] "Oh, that's awful!" he cried. I explained about how much trouble we'd had and how I'd told her to go ahead and make the hole.  
"Do you want us to put the desk back?" he asked.  
"Oh...no..."  
But they did. "There's two of us," he cried. "The splicer will be here at 8:30; the supervisor says so!" ( So? I thought. Hadn't I heard that before?)  
I put in something about my son bugging that supervisor from California about my phone troubles and groaned about having to get up early if someone was coming.  
Beard was very nice, very sweet. "Well, you won't have to get up; it should be working tomorrow. I'll call you; I'll check," he said.  
I didn't say anything. I just shrugged.  
"No connection tonight, we're afraid."  
"Oh, it's ok," I said.  
"Heh heh heh" everybody went.

And so did they.

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I'd told the kids if I didn't call that night it meant no phone.

After they left, I felt so like crying, I resorted to the wine I'd bought at the little liquor store in Sultan for just this possible contingency.

(The woman in charge there had been a large, handsome, highly-painted, middle-aged woman, a type one could imagine as being a madam in a better class whore house.  
"Whadda ya want!?" she'd snapped at me, as I perused the shelves.  
"Oh...oh..." I said, "Uh...it looks like everybody around here drinks...uh..." I indicated the over display of cheap red ("Dago") wine.  
"There are several bottles of white wine!" she snapped imperiously, indicating jugs of it.  
Not liking her, I just grabbed one of them and got out of there.  
It was called "Cribari", a kind I'd never heard of.

But, somehow the name rang a bell when I resorted to it, later.  
(Oh! cry baby!)

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I did. It was 3 a.m. when I woke from my Cribari "crying" stint. I still felt like crying—the kids waiting for me to call—this was the third time I'd been told "no connection." Three months GTE had fouled me up on that phone deal!

I lay and thought: I think when I get this phone fiasco over with I shall just sleep for three days; I am so weary of it. Also, I should write this up, I thought, and laughed, thinking of something I'd just read:

“ Since everybody learned to write, everybody is writing their story and thinks it should be published!" an old editor said.  
and  
"I went to sleep for three days?" a young girl in time of trouble said to her father. "But how could I just sleep for so many days?"  
"You weren't sleeping," said the father, "You just stopped for awhile." ”  
I liked that.

I lay and thought about my **day in Sultan:**

- Me trotting around with our big Highway EIS report about the area we'd worked so hard on that I couldn't seem to get anybody interested in versus all those crude, crude, faded, hand-done signs all over. Why I could make a fortune just doing signs for them; I wouldn't even want money—just trade?
- My talk with the cowboy Fire Chief. "We have a water pressure problem up there," I'd said.  
"Yeah, I know," he'd laughed. "Swimming pool... have to use for reserve water!" We both said together. We laughed.  
"Where's that map you made?" the corn-fed gal had asked cowboy. He pulled out this crude scribble and ignored my presentation and speech about my EIS report, "Yes, I have all this information..six years we spent on this,"I'd said. He ignored it all. We had to use his crude scribble. I was infuriated! I had gifts I could use to help these people; they didn't want them!

October 29, Wednesday. Sun. I woke excited—telephone day? I wanted to get dressed early and just "happen" to be down at that telephone pole at 8:30 "posting letters". My eyes lit on the silent phone, now spotlighted by a ray of sun coming through the window; behind it hung my "perpetual calendar", —which somehow seemed apropos.

If possible I wanted to go to Monroe and get paint for the windows even though predicted rain might makme unable to use it.

I slammed on some clothes and built a fire and was down at the telephone pole at 8:30. No sign of life or telephone man. I prowled around, stalling and noting and memorizing the poles and wires to be able to spot any changes later. There was nobody. I gave up and went back in.

By 10:45 a.m. I had packed up my washing to take to Monroe and was all set to go . Still there was no sign of any telephone man. Alarmed and angry I decided I'd better go to Case's and call them. I got the car out and was halfway there when I saw a truck go by. I turned and went back.

It was a telephone man, a very nice, older, bearded little guy. When I escorted him into the cabin, he began to just rave and rave about it. I leaned on the porch railing Mike and Dennis had built and told him about the cabin as he worked.

"I started out with only \$5000," I said.

"My gosh!" he said.

It didn't take him long.

As soon as he left, I couldn't resist: **the first call on my phone!**

I called Abbie—I got her. She sounded so excited!

"Hey, wow!" she said. And then, "Dennis got the linoleum!"

I told her I had to hurry, would talk to them later.

So, at 11:45 I **set out for Monroe** in a frantic rush and a sudden impulse to have lunch at the Senior Center: I just had to share my excitement with someone!

**Senior Center.** And I ran into plenty of excitement there: a terrible accident on I-5 had gotten them all shook up about the dangers of that unsignaled crossing on the highway just below the Center. I certainly agreed with them; it was a very dangerous crossing. And I had been in on the planning of that job and knew the reason: a shunting of funds to "more important" jobs. I wondered, if, living there now and witness to the need I would be able to pull any influence in helping to get a light in there.

Too, there was a gal from Everett there picking up the entries for that contest. There was also to be a demonstration on the use of fire exstinguishers to go on later I thought it would be expedient for me to see. It was all very frantic. They all insisted that I should stay for lunch, and when I begged errands, insisted I should come back after.

I had a half hour before they served lunch.

I got a sudden crazy impulse and raced all the way back home (about a 15 minute drive) and ripped my Kiona bridge drawing off the wall (the one I'd meant to enter), grabbed my EIS report and raced back, exceeding the speed limit and gunning my car around pokeys in my way like some damned teenager.

I was doing so by the cemetery, this pokey van in my way. I gunned the car and shot around it. And nearly had a heart attack when an official looking car with "police lights" on it also passed the pokey and began tailgating me. I thought it was the cops.

My body was already sending out distress signals; my back hurt like mad. I was in shatters by the time he passed me and I saw it was only some dumb kid in a fancy van with the name "Easy Lady" emblazoned on the side. ( Easy! lady! was right!) At the moment all I wanted to do was jump out of the car and into one of those nice, quiet graves before I passed out. And I was supposed to go back to the Center and eat?

I arrived back at the Center a shaking, blithering idiot and just in time to catch that sophisticated, un-Monroe-like slick chick art gal about to leave. I flew in with my work samples. The gal saw my drawings.

"Let me see those!" she cried. I was so embarrassed at the condition they were in; the bridge drawing all full of nail holes where I'd tacked it up carelessly in so many offices, and the EIS report was coming unglued with age. (Me,too!?) We got to talking. I was astounded to find out she, too, was from hick Yakima; she looked terribly big city and sophisticated.

When I had demurred about my work being so shabby, she had puzzlingly gone into a long discourse about some old lady, dead now, whose work had turned out to be valuable!

"Did you have any training?" she asked. I said Cornish. Then she mentioned Mark Tobey, the first Cornish name I recognized. "Oh yes!" I cried. "But he's dying!" she said. "80 years old." "Really!?" I cried. I was having a hard time listening to her and concentrating, my old body in stress distress from my race. "My maiden name was Berg...my father played the organ in the Liberty theater in Yakima.."

I tried to think, but some scandal I vaguely recalled didn't fit that name. Besides my heart was pounding an earthquake and food the last thing I wanted, but...

Cries of "Lorna! Lorna! Your lunch is getting cold!" "Ok,ok," I said and had to break off my talk with that gal, and seek out my lunch and then wandered confused, at a loss for eating partners and still so shook up I had to wait until no eyes on me before I dared risk a bite, knowing my hand would shake. And it didn't help when one of the eyes of a formidable big walleyed woman was on me and she sang out, "My gosh! she's nervous!"

It helped, though—and appropriate? that the meal was stew (I'd been in one all day!)—and easy to eat. And it was good; it had been a long time since I'd had a "square meal" served to me!

The old gal who'd said she was an artist nabbed me before I left. Her name was Lois French, she said. She grabbed my EIS report—not to admire my work, but—that photo of an old barn on the cover—"I want to paint that!" she said. "Do you think it would xerox?" "No," I said, knowing their machine there was but primitive. She began to sketch it, clumsily. I had gotten my drawing in too late, but I noticed she had entered one of her paintings, the one I'd selected as liking the best.

I stayed for the fire extinguisher demonstration, since Mike had been bugging me about fire insurance. This smart alecky young man lined up all of us old ladies and built different sized fires in the parking lot and then had each of us try to work the extinguishers as he'd showed us. The old gals were whoopin' it up crying "Oh what fun!" Wow! Etc. Then he picked out me. "Now, you." I demurred—I was too tired—but he made me try. I couldn't even lift the darned thing much less figure which button to press. "I can't," I said, and set it down. He was kind of sore at me.

The other old ladies were whooping and hollering and having fun; I just wasn't up to it at the moment.

"Well," I said, "how much do they cost?"

"\$50."

"And have to be refilled?"

"Oh, yes, but we service them."

I was tired, tizzied, and...suspicious and I had more pressing problems to attend to. I went back in and collected my stuff.

When I came out to leave, there was this slick, mustached, very dressed up salesman type guy. He nabbed the kid who'd done the demonstrations.

"How'd ya do?" he hissed.

"Oh...had one...(doubter)...an old woman..."

I couldn't resist; I horned in. "Quite a show! I'm going to report you for pyromaniacs," I joked, and headed for my car, disgusted, as the boss? whispered to the kid,

"Ya sell her? the big one?"

Much later when I got home, I filled water jugs with water; what in hell use would fire extinguishers I couldn't even lift going to do me in an emergency?

I went on to Monroe and did my washing and errands and then to Dunbar's to get the paint, where, at this time, there was a very nice, pretty young gal in the paint department—an artist, she'd said—with whom I had rapport.

I told her my problem and showed her the color I wanted for the windows; a turquoise, one of the hardest colors of all to mix. She mixed and put three different batches into the mixer, while I protested.

"Oh, I want to get it right!" she said.

"But what do you do with all those wrong ones?" I cried, distressed at the waste. "Oh, we give it to the schools," she said.

5:35 p.m. I got home utterly exhausted, but what a wonderful, happy, all's-well-that-ends-well day! I was sitting by the phone waiting for the time when Dennis would be home when the phone rang.

It was Mike! "Happy phone!" he cried.

"How'd you know?" I asked.

"Because I bugged 'em and told them to get out there!" "Are you on a party line?" Marylyn asked on their extension phone.

"Why...yes...I guess..." I said, wondering if I was. I told Mike about the fire extinguishers.

"We'll get you one for Christmas!" he joked? "Well, we have a problem—a cozy robe you want for Christmas—how to do it? Sears?"

"Oh, don't worry about it now," I said.

"Well, we have other gifts for you..." (Wow! Fun! I thought.)

And then I called Dennis and Abbie. I was a little annoyed when Dennis said, "Oh? Yeah? Abbie forgot to tell me about the phone until it rang."

He said the linoleum would come Tuesday.

I told him I'd gotten the paint.

He asked if Case had his pickup there (if we could borrow it for the linoleum pickup, et cetera.)

"I dunno," I said. "He's gone. Dunno where." (Edith had told me "he just went—'east—said 'rock hunting'") but I didn't tell Dennis that. "Hey!" I said, and broached the subject of the roast beef dinner at the Center the next Sunday, "Wanta go? I'll treat ya!"

He said it sounded like a good idea.

"Ok!" I said, and hung up happy.

I tried to call McNabbs, but I was unable to get.

And then I just collapsed. It had been a wonderful! exciting! day! I crawled into bed, listening to my heart thumping like an earthquake.

**October 30, Thursday.** I woke very late. I began to play with my new toy, the phone. Called Macs again. No answer. Called the gal at the telephone company to report and we had a real fun talk. Called Marie Esterley. Boy! was she ever chatty!

She said Macs had gotten their new trailer; that they'd been up there to see it; that she and Orville had been sick—a strange cough—had the doctor, et al. I hung up with an awful urge to go see Macs' new place.

**Visit McNabbs; Gold Bar.** I did go. I came back early afternoon—and flushed a grouse as I came in!

The visit was fun. I had a hard time finding the place, but finally did. Lu seemed genuinely pleased to see me, but Marv was an old grouch. He kept yelling at Lu and keeping her busy. In fact they fought and screamed and yelled at each other so, it made me thankful again that I was not married.

Their new mobile home? Well, at first I was jealous—it was so very fancy, and I was envious of their view of the mountains, but, later, as I noticed its corny décor and they pointed out new neighbors building and encroaching so close, I lost my envy. I hadn't eaten and I was starved, but they offered nothing. All in all, I didn't stay long, for Marv claimed they had to go someplace and the water guy came and they seemed so busy, I just left. There'd been no chance to show them my drawings I had in the car.

I stopped in a grocery store in Gold Bar to pick up something to eat, but the prices were so outrageous I just walked out. All prices on that highway were—it all a tourist trap to catch people on the way to recreation and the summit ski area. But the places were all deserted at this season—all the "antique" and handicraft shops—everything looked closed. The only people were just the ones looking out the windows. But I enjoyed roaring up the highway through that strangely named town of Startup and all.

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Home, my little place looked dully civilized after my trip into "the wilds" of the forested highway. Macs were already home when I went by. Hungry, I went on. I spent the rest of the day just puttering around, writing my report and so on.

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I'd laughed as I came in the trail and passed the vine maple, remembering Dennis saying, "I want that painted red when I come back."

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**October 31, Friday.** Rain. So endeth October—in the rain.

Phone: I lay and thought about what difference it seemed to be making in my life. And I was very surprised. I'd thought it would bring me closer to people—everybody calling up and chatting. It seemed not so; rather the reverse. It seemed as if now that people knew I had access to the outside, they assumed I was ok and went about their business.

Also, I did find myself regretting that I no longer had excuses to go visiting (May I use your phone?) Also, I was surprised to find myself loathe to use the phone; I hadn't known that every call would be "long distance" and a charge on, or that I'd have to go through operator each time and give my number; it was bothersome and somehow—intrusive.

Somehow I felt more alone and isolated, not closer, as I'd expected.

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**4:40 p.m.** I had finished painting the inside of the bedroom windows. It was rather odd, painting with "pumpkin" color on Halloween night, while the radio blathered on about a rapist loose and "watch out for 'trick or treat' robbers!" the one night I couldn't close or lock the doors (I had to let the paint fumes out.)

But I didn't mind too much. I had the radio to keep me company and it was rather a comforting, snug job, painting in the rain, though long and boring, for I was following Dennis' injunctions to caulk and sand first.

I finished the painting, but it was still too early to go to bed. It was the first time a long, dark evening dragged—and my first Halloween in the cabin. I began to worry about my car out there; would the rain discourage vandals? And should I turn my lights out? I didn't want that brat, Ron, "trick or treating" me. A tooth began to ache, worrying me, I so far from my nice dentists.

I "went to bed with the chickens" and hoped to God—a new worry—the phone wouldn't ring. I left a window ajar below (the fumes) and set up a clatter trap by it—stuff piled to make a noise—if...I went to the loft and felt very safe and content up there. Gentle rain on the roof and silence, except for the radio blating on about "A real mess downtown Seattle! Traffic a mess! Stores inundated with costume shoppers!" And dire warnings about crime and kids on Halloween. Gee, this was the first Halloween ever when I hadn't participated in some way?

But this witch was happy. I read until about ten thirty and then rolled over and went to sleep.

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**November 1, Saturday.** The rain had stopped. As I stood looking out the loft window down the entrance path, marveling at the sea of gold the sun was making on the leaves out there, it suddenly got black as night, possibly thwarting plans to paint again I was making.

I stood and thought how ironic it was: the first time I'd had the perfect setup to be the witch everyone so often twitted me of being—Halloween, in lil hut in spooky woods, I didn't get into mischief at all!. Guess the way to cure a witch is to give her a home?

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**About 10:30.** The sun had come out again, breaking through the sun washed woods with a blue sky to the south—pretty!

I started to walk down to investigate all the banging and building-wrecking noises, wondering if it meant the Macs were moving out? Unable to see I had to walk all the way down—past Cases, who seemed to be home. I passed a carton of beer bottles thrown to the side of the through road down there, more evidence of new vandalism not seen before. All was usual at Macs', their truck gone. I decided there must be some new building going on, which meant more people moving in, and that made me unhappy.

I walked back. Cases didn't come out and invite me in, but I didn't mind; I was in grubbies and not in the mood.

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I spent the day painting windows, with only time out to go to the store. And I was pleased to flush the grouse again on my way back on. I was so tired I went up to the loft to bed at seven thirty and lay and listened to the gunfire of hunters all around, although the radio had said there were no deer and not to waste one's time hunting them.

And I thought about how pleasant it was as I painted. I'd expected November in cabin to be drear and desolate. It wasn't. It was very pretty, the leaves not having begun to fall all that much. I had to remind myself it was only the beginning of November, though.

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**About 9:30 p.m.** the phone rang. I raced and stumbled down the stairs only to get a dial tone. I'd been afraid it was going to be like that with a phone; a new sort of tyranny I hadn't had before. I lay and debated a long time and then went down and- - - - -

called Dennis and Abbie to see if it was they who had called. No. But they'd had troubles: car troubles and Dennis had a cold. But, yes, they'd like to go to the Senior Center dinner. The kids had gotten my Halloween cards and so on. I went back to bed.

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**November 2, Sunday.** I woke with a sore throat and snuffles and a cough and stiff from all that painting. I creaked downstairs to judge my painting and decided I liked it: it gave the room a more spacious look and the windows looked as I had meant them to look in my designing.

I spent the (sunless) day cleaning up paint mess and house, primping, and, just to get out for awhile, I went out and raked the path and did a few little chores around the car. It wasn't very pleasant for, the moment I appeared, that brat, Ron, jumped on his bike and rode up and sat and pestered me, wanting to know if I needed and help.

I assured him I most certainly did not. I also broke my new little brush rake. And Jake, the dog, started up an alarm barking at me like crazy, especially when I went down to dump those apples, which had begun to get rotten. This I regretted later, when I cooked a yummy fall dinner of pork chops on the stove; the apples would have been good with the pork.

All those bothers, I gave up on the outside tasks and went in and puttered and really felt a great love for my cabin in the woods as I nodded off to sleep in my big chair after eating. It was all very cozy.

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**November 3, Monday.** And rain, which the radio said would go on all day. I'd had a miserable night, wakeful with an earache and sore throat, but, realizing that Dennis and Abbie had misunderstood me about the Center dinner, it Sunday night and not Saturday, I went to town to get food for Saturday.

It was not a fun trip. I got my first taste of winter in the rain forest. The car and I both got soaked. And I felt like a walking case of pneumonia. I had taken pains primping and "wanted to be seen"; i.e. not have it a wasted effort, and I wanted to check on that dinner so I went to the Center for lunch. Why not? it was cheap and it would fortify me for all the shopping I had to do.

I was welcomed by Lois who turned me over to the other old gal at the desk. We talked about the "beef feed" (I'll call it) and then I paid for my lunch. Rather at loose ends, then, I intruded upon a table where there was the sharpest looking, best dressed older couple I'd seen around there yet. When Lois joined me, the woman asked to be introduced. The man was the first best looking, most "possible" I'd seen and was attentive. The woman's name was Peggy and she worked there.

We got to talking; she felt me out about where I was from, my family and my family situation and so on.

"Gee, I'm glad I'm alone," she said as we discussed marital status and all.

"Me, too," I said.

We got to talking so long and so much that I was rather chided by the other women hovering for interfering in their work and for not clearing my lunch tray, which I didn't know I was supposed to do. I rather got the hint that maybe I was a "free loader", so I broke away, utterly stuffed with that big lunch and left soon after.

Lois had asked me if I wanted to go on their Mormon Temple tour. I hemmed and hawed and said I was already committed and explained about Bish and Judy's invitation. "Friends," I said, "though I'm not Mormon."

"I hate them," she said, "All that money! A lot of them around here."

"I do, too," I said, glad to be able to say it freely.

I left the Center and went out into the storm and continued my gr<sup>u</sup>some errands and shopping with the \$100 I'd taken out of the bank. I didn't enjoy: the library was closed; I couldn't find plastic tarps to cover the car, and driving around in that storm was hellish. Everybody's windows were steamed up; nobody could see. I had some very near misses, trafficwise. I was glad to get out of there and home when I got through.

There were, though, a couple of amusing things in my—shall we call it—getting acquainted with Monroe.

Hardware store: I was waiting for service in that store in their so-called mall, it a combination hardware and hunting supply place. I stood and waited as these two machos traded stories; two men, one the dark bearded store owner?, the other an old guy with a purple, bulbous (whiskey?) nose.

Beard says, "Give me the skin...from your elk..." This went on and on. I had to wait.

"Well," says Whiskeynose, "they say (federal agents) counted 85 male elk taken out of the Goat Rock area."

I couldn't resist, annoyed at being made to wait and all that braggadocio I'd had to listen to. "That's a lot of bull!" I said.

"Oh!" Purplnose cried and flew away as I pushed my tiny purchase over to Beard, whose eyes were twinkling.

"He didn't hear me," I said.

Purplnose yelled back, "Oh, I heard it! but then I saw a lady said it...!" He fled. Just a bit of local color.

The other incident was a bit of getting acquainted with Monroe, too, I guess. I found there were no public toilets in Monroe. By the time I got to Safeway, my bladder was just about bursting; I'd forgotten to use the facilities at the Center. Problem, for I still had shopping to do.

I was parked in the parking lot, windows all steamed up. Did I dare? I did. It took many frantic contortions under the steering wheel to pull down the three or four layers of tight pants I was wearing and try to look as if just sitting at the wheel, looking nonchalant. I managed to pee in a little snack can I had in the car. Whew!

**Home.**

As I came in on the path, a gun shot!

It sounded so close I yelled, "Knock it off, willya?!" That morning there'd been a huge explosion near my place, scaring me...an earthquake?

Monroe was turning out to be different from what I'd expected.

About 5 p.m. I tried to call Dennis and Abbie about the Center dinner. No answer.

About an hour later, the phone rang and it was Dennis. Part of our talk was about the presidential election the next day.

"If Reagan gets in," Dennis said, "it will be really tough on us old people. (Us?!) What he did to them in California!..."

I spent the evening working on my curtains. The election—sigh. I hadn't much interest in, but now—Tiny and Jake, too, hated Reagan after his long governorship in California. What did he do to old people? I sighed. Maybe I should have an interest in the outcome of the election?

**November 4, Tuesday, Election Day.** I woke to sunshine and everything looked different; on my path one now walked into a golden clearing instead of a green cave—pretty!...I found I did have a cold, but I felt so lucky, retired, I could just goof off and play invalid...

Bishop and the Mormon temple; they would be "sealed forever" on Saturday and I hadn't heard a word from him...I pattered through my phone list and found I would be dropping a lot of people—not because of the expense of phoning, but just because, like Bishops, they just weren't responding—or corresponding—any more.

**Later:** I felt the thrum of a motor and looked out; a van was parked out there and a UPS man was coming in with a package. (And I not dressed! why I hadn't wanted my bedroom to be my front door!) but I felt lucky the ground seemed to thrum like it did and warned me of approaches. I met him at the door and croaked something about "being sick". As if on cue, it was my medicine order!

I sat down and undid it, angry enough to fight ( but my arthritic hands were getting so bad I could no longer make fists to fight anybody!) for I simply could not get that "child proof" medicine cap off. Oh! forgotten I'd ordered a thermometer! I took my temperature; I was sick!

**Later:** It was such a nice day! the radio said the temperature was 68° (the weather had a fever, too?) After the storm the day before—fantastic!It lured me to take a little wood-gathering stroll in the woods, even though I still had that "unreal" feeling a fever gives. The creek was giggling and gurgling just like a storybook brook. It had cleared its own leaves and was running so fast and clear it was draining the no-longer-boggy banks. I just leaned against a tree and enjoyed the music of it (compared to all the macho machines I'd been having to listen to below.)

After a session of bill paying and a letter to Mike and Marylyn, I felt a little better, and went down to cover the car and was enjoying all the fine fall day beauty down there, when two macho motorcycles roared into the culde-sac, using it as if it a race course. Angry, I just wanted to yell at them to get out! but didn't want to alert them to a house being back in there and/or trigger retaliation. I just fled back into the cabin, which was now dark ,and closed the door.

**Later:** I was afraid to turn on the radio and hear the elections returns. And then cussed: Reagan winning! A landslide! and everyone mad for they had spilled the news back east before we westerners even had a chance to vote! Carter conceded and weeping. Sad.

I worked on the curtains, wondering how it would feel to be cooped up cozy in the cabin in January blizzards? the curtains were to help "insulate" the cold glass, though I hated to block the view of the woods. The uncurtained windows didn't bother me, but they did everyone else; (robbers!) I enjoyed working on them, the "engineering" problems and it was so warm and cozy, even with the heat not on—in November!

I called Dennis and Abbie before ten, the lower rates still on. We discussed details about the week end, I telling them to be sure and bring a good linoleum cutting knife; that I'd pay for it. It would be an expensive weekend but what the hell..

And later I talked to Tiny and Jake about the election, we all in a rage.

Some more curtain work and then curtains!—for that day!



**November 5, Wednesday.** I woke, late and lazy, and still nursing a cold. I lay and listen to the news with despair: "A clean sweep of Democrats out after 25 years." When I looked outside, it looked like a clean sweep outthere, too. Overnight the trees had been denuded. The threatened rain had not materialized; there was pale sun and it was warm looking. When I turned around, I found a change inside, too—my new curtains. I didn't recognize the place when I got up. It looked like a fancy motel room. All was strange and new.

The day wore on. I had a check for Case, but wasn't in the mood to listen to them, and found, when I went for the mail I still didn't feel good. I called Edith instead of going—my voice a croak—but no answer. The weather started to cloud up, and, needing some things for the kids' visit, I dashed to the store. Case waved as I went by.

The sun out again by time I got to the store, where the specials I'd come to buy were all gone. I bought some work gloves and an election edition of the Seattle Times. When I got back it was so nice out I didn't even go in. I just sat in the car and read the paper for two hours. I noted the trees Dennis had ordered to be red when he got back were still only yellow and the leaves about gone. I went in.

Evening, I worked on the kitchen, as I enjoyed the PBS radio report on the election "analysis". A violent rain started, but ceased later.

**November 6, Thursday.** I woke late after coughing fits in the night. The weather was very unsettled, but I got dolled up and went to Monroe, and I had a real fun, adventurous, expensive, wet, and exciting day.

First I called Edith and warned her and then stopped by and coffeed and paid them for the wood and the telephone calls.

**Monroe:** I went to Sears to see about picking up and paying for the linoleum wanted delivered there. Nice people in there. Fun. I paid \$82 for the linoleum and got out just in time to move my car, parked "illegally" before the cop marked it.

Then to the hardware store where I bought a new brush rake. there were brochures on hunting rules lying on the counter.

"May I?" I asked the gal. "A lot of shooting going on all around us."

She looked startled. "Where?"

"Sultan Estates," I said. I left armed, at least with more knowledge about what the hunting rules were.

**Lunch.** It was too late to go to the Center. I went to that quaint little ice cream parlor called "Mom's" and had a hot dog. Then I bought a local paper and went to the landromat to do my wash. Everyone seemed so cheerful and friendly; the people and I were getting to know each other.

There were two things in the paper that alarmed me: "A terrible accident on SR2 on Halloween. Young trucker killed and five people hurt". They certainly did need more stop lights on those intersections. And "20 acres of government property for sale. Good for development. Send in closed bids." Surely not those woods adjacent to the cabin? I wished I knew who owned them.

Then I went to the Center to get the tickets, I nearly getting killed at that unsignaled intersection where they were having all the wrecks.

the Center was just jumping with people! Lois nabbed me, all excited,

"We served 197 people today! Carpools going to the art show! Wanta come?"

"Uh...no," at the risk of making her mad at me.

I held the doors as they loaded ancient cripples, hideously deformed people, and wheelchair cases on to small busses. I felt very healthy and strong as I went out into the rain.

After I finished in Monroe, I went home all wound up; I had a jillion things on my mind and to do. I lugged everything in and then got on the phone to do the daylight calls.

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First, Lu. She was the easiest (and cheapest) to call. Long talk. I told her about my worry about the north woods—about my fear of a development going in right beside the cabin. She didn't have any actual facts about the ownership there, and, though she had "dear friends" who owned the piece of that woods nearest Woods Lake Road, she seemed very reluctant to give me their name and number. I finally eked it out of her.

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**The Johnsons.** So I called them—and was sorry I had. I got two elderly old dim wits; the first a woman who was very nasty when I asked her if they owned part of that timberland up there and how much of it and so on.

"Don't know what you're talking about!" she nearly blasted my head off. "My husband's out here—will call him!"

"Please do!" I said.

A pause and then she said the **strangest** thing; "I'll trust you!" she said.

And then this dull, confused old man came on.

I tried my damndest to get through to him what I wanted: "You own forty acres there?" (Lu had said she thought they had about 40 acres.)

"Hunh? Forty acres? Hunh?"

"There's a government land sale—that stretch of woods next to you—do you know..."

"Hunh?"

"Are you the red house?"

"Yeah."

"On the left or right of the road?"

"Hunh?"

I gave up.

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I tried **Snohomish County** next. Land plats. I got the usual bureaucracy runaround, but finally got through to someone. The property for sale was not near us. I made a note of the owner north of us, hassling the usual gibberish of legal description of a piece of property.

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After 5 I called the kids and got Abbie. I brought her up to date about the dinner and the linoleum.

"Oh, Den!" she cried "Lorna forgot to get your Sears discount on the linoleum!"

"Oh, well," I said, "We'll work it out later..." We discussed more details about their visit...

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I made a call to **Bishop** at work.

"Oh!" He'd forgotten all about our date to show me the Temple!

"But it's going to be sealed Saturday" I reminded him.

"Can't you—won't you—come to town? I forgot!"

"No!" I said, and hung up the phone rather hard.

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I spent the evening agonizing over another big NO!: a letter to a former friend who wanted 30 new fresh drawings, free! pronto! for a vanity printing of hers. Her discovering me had been one of the disadvantages of having a phone!

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**November 7, Friday** was a very wild day. I woke up late and a wreck from that No! letter battle—so upset I'd forgotten to put the garbage out-of all times when I was to have guests! It was afternoon before I pulled myself together and got to work on the company food. I was so tizzied I couldn't find my recipes, and then the eggs wouldn't hard-boil, and I couldn't find the woods ownership note...and outside there was a terrible storm. Oh, it was a "fun" day.

It was 9 p.m. before my storm and the one outside had abated and I got around to dismantling and moving furniture to get ready for the linoleum... (a word I was beginning to hate!) and 10 before I got the floors cleaned and the beds changed.

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**November 8, Saturday.** I woke about 7:30...and groaned...I had to get up and get ready for the kids and I felt a wreck! The news on the radio said there had been an earthquake in northern California.

I didn't know I was that shook up!

November 8 and 9, Saturday and Sunday  
The linoleum-laying weekend

They came about 11. I'd spent the time until then alternately getting ready for them and lying on the bed, for I felt very ill—feverish. They arrived loaded with personal things, but not the linoleum, which Dennis went and got. And I was pleased that it'd turned out to be the pattern I'd wanted. And Dennis did get his discount—about \$7—which he handed to me and I put into the feeding-them fund. Dennis shooed us all out, preferring to work alone.

So Abbie and I took the kids to Monroe where we spent a couple of hours and quite a bit of money "entertaining" them, though I don't know if they were. We went to the ice cream parlor, where the current price of an ice cream sundae astounded me. Then we stopped and got the chicken, which took time as the store had discontinued prepared chicken and they had to special order it from the restaurant next door.

When we got back we found Dennis in a rage, for he'd found that clumsy linoleum hard to handle alone and he'd gotten some bad tears and cuts in it, it being a cheap kind, and brittle. But it looked all right to us and I assured him it looked great. I cringed when I saw he's moved everything out—even the stove. It would be about the fifth time that I'd have to reassemble the kitchen.

To let him work we went out into the woods and looked for Christmas trees and the big, big maple leaves for the kids to make prints of, like they'd done in school. I sent them to the loft and set them up with paper and things. Abbie worked on the bedspread.

But, of course, like all jobs, it took Dennis much longer than he'd figured and things got pretty hectic and cranky. We had to postpone eating for we couldn't get into the kitchen, and Dennis, wildly trying to finish, made haste mistakes, of course.

Noah got fractious and restless wanting to eat and began to heckle by throwing things from the loft onto the stove, which had a roaring fire in it. But when he threw something that landed by mistake right into where Dennis was doing a delicate cutting job, even Dennis got mad and went after him.

But at last he got finished and the things put back. I reheated the now cold chicken and we ate wherever we could find to perch. Dennis ended up in the big chair with chicken and beer and suddenly everything was fine. We sat and gloated and admired the new flooring. And, at some point, Abbie got out the ironing board and pressed the new bedspread; we were very house proud!

"I love this place and this land!" Dennis said, and, again, as he began to pressure me about whether we couldn't get the title back from Marylyn and Mike, Abbie made some comment about the cabin not being big enough.

"Well, what's next to be done?" she asked.  
"Oh, it's fine the way it is; good enough for me, at least, " I said. I was just anxious to get all the building and upheaval over with.

Everyone was tired. We all got bedded down and through the night all right.

» Sunday morning ◀

Only to have Dennis get up in the morning and move the stove out again; there were some bubbles and rips he wanted to fix. I took Sarah and went to the store and when we came back all the lights were on upstairs and down and Dennis and Abbie were waving from the windows! I'd never gotten to see it like that before; it made it seem...like...home!

Dismantling and putting back the kitchen yet again that day was very trying but it was all worth it and very wonderful when we got through. We were all very proud of our handiwork. Abbie had the bedspread about finished and I loved it. They loved my window painting. We'd gotten it all done and through and had time to sit and gloat and pat ourselves on the back in time to get ready to make it to that dinner.

I was so mad that my camera wasn't working and I got no pictures of all that.

The "Roast beef dinner" was at five. Since they had to be back they said they'd go right on from there afterwards. So we took both cars, Abbie and Sarah and I in mine and Dennis and Noah following. I was glad to let Abbie drive. "I think next Dennis would like to get the eaves finished and then call the inspector," Abbie said.

This was a job that really irked me; that last new-to-the-job inspector had insisted we had to put plywood finish on the **inside** of the eaves. I could certainly think of more demanding places I'd prefer to put my money!

[Post hoc: They never did get done. The original inspector came back and said nothing about that requirement: we got out of that one.]

"When do you want me to come for Thanksgiving?" I asked Abbie. "Want me to come Wednesday and help?"

"Uhh...no...I can do it myself..." She went on to say she'd like to take Sarah and go with me Saturday to Doolittles' and see the situation, as she'd never been there. And she thought Friday we could take the kids to the Aquarium.

It was pouring rain when we got to the Center, which was too bad, for Sarah was all dressed up in a long dress and new boots.

"Mother says I have to be **awfully polite**," she said. And, later, when she sat so demurely, I was sorry again my camera didn't work.

The Center was jam packed when we went in and things were already so much under way that I never did find any of my new-found friends, which was a disappointment for I wanted the kids to meet them and to show off my family. Actually, I don't think any of them were there; the room seemed to be full of ancients, all strangers to me.

In fact, it was so full we had a hard time getting seats; they were almost all filled. The long main room was like a grange hall, and, with long tables already set and complete with artsy-craftsy, corny centerpieces, it was very much like grange dinners I'd been to.

The service was terrible and they ran out of "roast beef" just as they came to us and we had to wait and wait while they sent out to some restaurant for some more. And when it came I could have cried; the "roast beef" I'd been salivating over for two weeks (with visions of rare Baron of beef?) was a gray, stringy, overcooked mess, and the rest of the food was "farmy" and tasteless. The kids didn't like it and fussed about it.

The "show" was so corny I was embarrassed for them: draggy, gaps, mike not work, the promised "star" unavailable, et cetera. The kids were so tired they were getting red-cheeked and sleepy as it dra-a-gged on. There wasn't even any dessert to goad the kids on with.

Dennis and Abbie were good sports about it—especially Dennis. I kept catching a merry twinkle in his eye and a sort of understanding? kindly? look whenever I looked at him. When I cringed as the program ended with a lengthy, corny "Barbershop Quartet" Dennis was laughing merrily, and defending them, "I haven't heard a Barbershop Quartet in a long time!"

When it all ended with a "Community Sing" of Christmas carols, we herded two sleepy kids out, I sort of apologizing/satirical. But Dennis insisted they'd enjoyed. (Personally, I wished I'd had my \$33 back!) Abbie was busy getting tired kids into the car. Dennis gave me a big hug.

We both had long ways to go; we went our separate ways off into the dark and rain.

I gunned my car. I had never gone back up that dark and lonely road to my new house alone so late at night. I got home all right, of course. It had been as hectic a weekend as I'd dreaded, but it all ended up wonderfully: we were all well fed...and proud.

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**November 10, Monday.** It was only 32° out and gloomy. And so was I. All that mess to put back again! I felt I just **couldn't**; I'd done that kitchen and put all those things back, temporarily, so many times! And freezing temperature. I decided I'd better go check the car—battery dead? I threw on some old clothes, whatever came to hand, and, laughing at myself and the strange get ups I was coming up with—really freaky!—went. The car was ok.

I went back in and, still feeling tired and sick—and the luxury of solitude—before I tackled that mess again, I simply lay down just as I was until about noon.

There was a knock on the door! I asleep and the heaters so noisy, I'd heard no warning approach. I scrambled and grabbed my plaid coat and added it to my wild attire and peeked. There was a lean, dark, mean looking man on the porch looking around surveying all the woods.

"Yes?" I opened the door.

"Can you tell me where 23—(etc.) 105th is? Seems to be 28—s here. An acre for sale."

"Well, it wouldn't be in Sultan Estates; there's no acre lot here," I said.

"Oh, yes there is!" he disputed me.

"Well...come in...my plat...I'll look it up..." And I muttered about being sick and so on to which he made no answer or apology. And, of course, I couldn't find the damned map.

He acted nervous. "I'll go ask at...other houses."

"Nobody home," I said. But he fled anyway. "Try [Darrell's]!" I yelled after him, pointing it out.

I was very annoyed, not only at being disturbed, but I didn't like his prowling around like that, and I didn't like his looks.

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I still felt like hell but the sun was out and it was warmer and I decided I couldn't sleep a sunny day away, so I threw on some grubby clothes and went to check the mail and gather more kindling to replace what Dennishad used up.

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Later. I called Cases and Macs but neither answered. Marie did when I called her and she was very yakky. When I told her about the guy she sounded quite alarmed and agreed there were no lots that size there. Then she said there would be a potluck party for McNabbs the next Sunday. "You gotta get a dog," she said. No way! but I decided I'd better put those bells Abbie gave me across the steps as warning.

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Later. I got dressed and went and did some more investigating in the car. Darrell and the guys said they hadn't seen anyone, but that they weren't back till one. We talked about the shooting so close.

"Somebody getting a lot of deer!" They all laughed. "Well," Darrell said, "Anybody gets in there, lem me know! I'll git 'im!"

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Cases not home. I begin to prowl the perimeter in the car, checking the other cul-de-sacs and house numbers; no 23000. The Pipeline Road and the power line right of way had 4-wheel drive tracks into where there would be good hunting, but there no way into Sultan Estates from there because of a steep drop off.

Up at the other end, I found what must have been the Johnsons' house and beyond that the timber cut. where, aha! lots of little "Christmas" trees! I'd have to remember that! I was now glad that I'd out, for it was a beautiful day. The mountains were fantastic with a dusting of new snow. I took the other back (Reiner) road to the store and there were lots more little fir trees and "No Hunting" "No Shooting" signs. I went to the store and headed back.

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Case's car there this time. I stopped and knocked and was surprised to hear a woman's voice answer when Edith's car was not there, and more surprised to see all their furniture gone. Only Case appeared and he seemed nervous and upset. "Oh, she (Edith) wanted to move back into her house (in town) and sell it herself." And no, he hadn't seen anybody around; he'd been helping her move. I went home.

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I spent a lot of time down by the car trying to figure out a better way to cover it during freezes. I was surprised to see white blossoms on the blackberry vines—in November! Still racing the sun, I did a hasty job of wrapping some pipes against freezing. Then I strung the bells across the steps.

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Inside, I tackled the kitchen shelving problem. It was such a relief to have all those tools gone from the living rooms walls where they'd been hanging for 4 months! Through, Dennis had taken them home. (and some of mine too, in our mix.) Ah well, he earned 'em.

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**November 11, Tuesday.** I awoke to sun and cold and the unhappy prospect of having to tackle all that mess and reassemble everything again. Usually, the kids would leave things neat; they didn't have time this time.

I went to the stove to burn some papers. I opened the lid. Some small black beastie flew out and crashed all over the room, ending up beating away at the kitchen skylight! It was one of those "darling little birds". A half hour battle ensued, I scared to death—not sure why—only that I was loathe to kill it. Scrambling for access to it meant I had to dismantle my new little shelf—more work later! I finally managed to scoop it into a plastic cup and then into a bag and dump it out on the porch.

I was very puzzled as to how it got into the stove; that chimney cap was supposed to be birdproof. But that had been that strange noise I'd heard in the morning? All that time I had to have the doors open in case it'd fly out, and lost all my precious heat.

There was now soot all over! But, hey! who'd need a chimney sweep, eh?

There was so much work I didn't know where to start and I found discouraging things:

The linoleum: yes, it was split in places; it seemed to expand and contract and then split, and it dented and scratched very easily. It was too cheap a kind?

The refrigerator made a lot of noise; did all that moving of it damage the motor?...I would have to put the bathroom back in order before I could take a shower...

It was very heavy, but I moved that shelving Dennis made for camping out onto the porch and dismantled it and tried to build some storage shelves to fit under the kitchen sink. I found my new saw rusted; Dennis had left it out. I had much trouble fitting it in, and, hurrying, trying to get it done—for it was cold out there on the porch—despite all my measuring, it was on a  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch slant!

The holiday, here was no mail, but I walked down to check on all the thumping noise down the street. I couldn't see what it was, but the woods were full of bird twittering, the birds themselves invisible!

At noon I took a run down to the store and, again, I was so glad I was where I was, able to see all those beautiful mountains instead of back in that slum I'd been living in. By 4 p.m. it was already dark and getting cold—down to 30°.

I'd begun to try to evolve a kind of broom closet to put beside the refrigerator. It took me until six and was my usual crude, hasty work made out of scrap lumber and the peg board I'd brought with me. I kidded myself that it didn't look too bad and that I'd work on it later.

The living room looked strange with all those tools gone, but how nice. and nice, too not to keep stumbling over Dennis' big power tools. The kids kept insisting, like Edith did, that I'd have to get some nice carpeting, but I couldn't seem to convince anybody that I didn't intend to get so "fawncy"; living in the woods I just wanted things easy to clean.

I called Dennis that night to tell him about the bird, just for fun. His reaction was very low key compared to the fuss I made when I saw a cat come strolling down my path and it just ambled snootily on when I yelled at it.

**November 12, Thursday.** In the morning it was cold; the first time I was really chilled, even though I'd had the heat on all night. My fingers even started to turn white. The radio said it was 16°! I built a fire, burning all that linoleum packaging, and, for awhile, it was better, but later, when I had to lug the garbage out, a very chill wind had come up.

I spent the day still working on cleaning up, this time, the loft—all those candy wrappers and so on the kids had left up there. I made little shelves and things like that. After taking one of those refreshing grandma-nod-off-naps in the chair, I started on the bathroom. I had all back in order by 9 and felt so good about it; I wished someone could see it. Abbie had said she was going to bring her sister up again and show the place off. I hoped so! I wanted some applause!

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**November 14, Friday.** It was cold and windy when I woke, but warmer. I had slept very soundly. But I had a strange, rather sad feeling: the end of an era; the cabin is "done"; no more "roughing it. What would I do now? I also found that "Beef" dinner had rather cooled me off on the Center (they were just too corny) and that my phone wasn't doing me so much good after all; it was proving too expensive to use.

About 9:30 I was puzzled and rather worried by a big explosion outside, but cheered when, getting the mail, I found the car was ok and a letter from Mike said they were sending Dennis'and Abbie's Christmas package to my house...fun to come! I got ready and went to

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**Monroe.** I got back about 4:30. I enjoyed the trip, though it was expensive. I spent about \$50 but got all stocked up to "winter in". I found I was now rather enjoying those little trips to town; they were so easy and relaxed compared to the city ones and I was getting to know the shopkeepers. I enjoyed it.

Even the wintry rain; that was part of it...it was so...**November.** Home, on the way back in I paused on the trail and just stood and looked around at the woods in the gentle falling rain and gloated. It was actually more of a fog on the tree tops starting to condense. A rural winter. I loved it! Included was the sight of lights on in houses where my new friends were; Easterleys'kitchen light on, lights on at McNabbs", Case reading the paper. And it was nice to come back to my cozy, clean, cute little cabin in the woods. And a very rural, November touch when I let out a scream, startled by flushing a grouse as I went in.

I went in and built a fire and gloated over all the "treasures" I had bought, and looked up recipes for cole slaw, which was what I'd decided to take to the McNabbs' party.

That evening—holiday coming—I used the phone despite: I chatted with family—Dennis and Abbie, and Aunt Alice and Phyllis Doolittle about Thanksgiving plans.

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**November 15, Saturday** was a bright, sunny, rather warm day. I spent the day primping and fixing salad and deviled eggs for the McNabb party. I was interrupted before noon by Marie calling and saying that she and some of the women were down at the gazebo decorating and why didn't I come down and help? So I walked down, but found myself just standing around watching them do it their way (pretty corny). In my unpacking I'd found some things I thought could be used, so when they all said they had to go, I went back and got them and loaded the car and went back and spent about an hour adding my touches. "Put the fire out when you leave!" Marie had said. So I put the fire out and went home and finished my chores.

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**That evening** I went out to get something from the car and marveled at the stars, but there was a terrific wind blowing, not cold, but very strong. It had blown my covering off the car.

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**November 16, Sunday.**

And it blew all night, scaring the wits out of me as things banged and crashed. The next morning it was still blowing and all the leaves were gone from the trees, and I found that the loud smash in the night had been my lawn chairs blowing over on the back porch.

### The Party

**By 3:30 p.m.** I was on my way back from it, very loathe to leave all those people and the roaring fire down there and go back to my dark, silent house, where it was already dark and so cold I'd have to build a fire.

It was a good party!

There was a big turnout: even the Cases and the young Nyes seem to have forgotten their feuds and came. Marty and Ralph were there and Irene Brown came and greeted me like an old chum! Absent, though, were the Dukes, the ones there'd been all that dog kennel hassle with. And neither did the Moore gal or the Parkers or Jerry Smith show up.

There was lots of good and varied food and a huge fire going. And the gabble, gabble, gabble of talk was deafening. The mood was much better than at the meetings—friendlier, gay and partyish.

Every one kept asking me if I weren't lonely and scared up there. I kept saying "No, no! So busy!" No one seemed to understand except Irene.

"Like me," she said, "I was so busy!"

The old Johnson couple sat near me and I tried to talk to them about their land up there on that north side and about getting a Christmas tree, but I got nowhere. They were strange people; very unresponsive.

There was some business done,; things left over from meetings; much signing of "legal documents". And when someone asked about all the junky cars sitting around, they only said "We brought that up at the meeting."

They hadn't found anyone to replace Macs yet."Wait till spring," they said. "Meantime?" I asked.

"Meantime lock the place up; who needs it in winter?" they said. I didn't exactly agree with them...all the holidays, but...

Marty sat next to me and nearly put my eye out with her jabbing gesturing. She was very pretty, with short, boyish hairdo, and very aggressive and assertive, whereas he, Ralph, though very good looking, was very meek and retiring. I asked Marty if Ralph had gotten his job, rather hoping they might move, for Marty tried to run the whole shebang her way.

"No. We don't know yet, but don't think he will."

"I understand, if he works for the city, he has to live there?" I put in hopefully.

"Oh no!...What do you think of our **trashy** neighbors?" she asked me.

"The Parkers? The renters?"

"No, no...the Witherows!" This surprised me for they seemed to me to be the least of our troubles on that street, but I never did get to find out, for she was yelling around to the other women, "Yeah! Boy! I **hate** it here! I **hate** my neighbors!" (this with me sitting right next to her.)

"When did **you** move in?" the other women were asking her, while I sat smug, reminding all that **we** were there **first**.

Marty was talking to Mrs. Neal about the 10-foot easement along the creek, but it was so noisy I couldn't hear it all. "I'm building a rock barrier (along the creek)," she said to me.

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There was one thing unusual: my mention of that "rich old couple" that I'd liked so well at the last meeting: they were there. She said they were going to build up here after all, which delighted me with visions of new friends my age. But she seemed to have not the slightest remembrance of our last talk. I had to repeat everything. When I got to the A-frame part, she cried, "Oh, that's what she wanted to build! Could they come up and see it?"

So, later, before the ending cleanup began, we drove up. They had left that idiot sister of hers sitting out there in the cold in the back seat of their car. One couple who'd sat across the table from us followed us as far as the entrance to our street. I would have invited them in, too, but they just waved and went on.

"Oh, Charles! Look!," she exclaimed, as we started up the trail. And then I began to hear the things I loved to hear:

"I love trees!" she cried. and, inside, they just raved!

Always. I'd debated about making the bed before I left, but didn't, for all the times I'd hoped someone would want and come to see after the meetings, no one ever had. Why I said this time was unusual. (But my "Indian design" print sheets I'd bought just for the cabin did look ok—"cabin").

"You mean your son dug that septic tank field by hand!?"

"Yep". I was so proud and puffed up at their raves.

"Gee!" said Charles, "by the time we do our septic field and all there won't be a tree left!" I just nodded.

Somehow I gathered it was she who had the money, he, in his grizzled, rather arty gray beard, somehow deferring to her.

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When we went back they just raved to everyone about the cabin.

"How did your son ever **do** it?" everyone asked me. It seemed that our cabin was more famous and noticed than I'd thought.

I was rather annoyed when one couple said, "Oh, yes, they'd been in there looking at it." Intruding! I would have been glad to show it to them. But I was sure puffed up at the raves!

By the time we got back there was a great scramble of leavetaking, even the Macs. There was nothing to do but gather my stuff and go home to my empty house. I had rather thought the party would last all afternoon, and I always hoped there would be loiterers to sit around the fire and "post hoc" it, but they never did. They all scrambled off; the party was over.

I wended my way home thinking of how I'd thought the Cases would drop by sometimes, but they never had. And now I couldn't invite them for Edith was moving back to town. I was burdened with leftover salad and some of the ivy growing down there I'd added to the décor and brought home hoping to grow to replace the plant I'd moved with me that had died.

I built a little fire and rather disconsolately pattered around trying to while away the rest of the day. The wind had stopped and so had the bombardments on the roof. But by 7:45 p.m. my fire had gone out and it was cold and it didn't seem worth while to build another. It was also dark. What a time to go to bed! But, in a month, the long nights would begin to shorten?

I put on a crazy conglomeration of clothes to keep me warm and got into bed with a book, only to be disturbed by a mechanical BZZT BZZT noise. something wrong with the heater? But I could find nothing. So I curled up to while the night away, thinking of all those people asking me if I weren't afraid there. I went to sleep thinking wryly that I'd found out it isn't the "beasties" one has to be afraid of; it's the **people!**

And then...around 4 a.m. I was startled out of a sound sleep by the sound of a car trying to start and my window and whole cabin were bathed in light as if someone were flashing a big light in. I was scared!

I sneaked to the window. Two big car headlights that looked as if a car parked beside mine were shining in. I crept up in the dark to the loft to get a better look. The car sat there for about fifteen minutes, silent, with those lights on me. I was scared! This had never happened before. Poachers? and all that talk today about my being there alone!

Finally it went. But I was awake and curious by now. I threw on some semblance of clothes, and, taking my torch I'd always claimed would be defense enough (I'll blind 'em!) I sneaked cautiously down to the car, being careful to stay behind my light. I couldn't believe what I saw!

Two huge, round brilliant lights were positioned just far enough apart on Carrolls' porch to look like headlights from my place. Their whole front yard was ablaze with light. New? Or hadn't I noticed until the leaves were gone? I was furious! That blasted fraidy-cat, Marty, lighting up the whole woods and my house and blazing me out of sleep because she gets scared' i.e. the scared one ends up scaring all the others?

I banged into my car trunk, slamming the lid, and pretending an errand and flashed my light around and went back in, vowing I'd call her and tell her off in the morning. By the time I got back in the lights were out and it was gently raining.

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**November 17, Monday.** The weather was calm and warm and overcast. That storm over? But I was on the war path. I decided I'd call Marie.

Oh wow, a bad beginning; I'd gotten her out of bed! I thanked her for the nice party and told about Marty and the lights. She wanted to know why Marty had the lights on at 4 a. m. (a good point). "You're so brave!" she said, "I would have been (too?) scared." Then she went on to tell me that young couple wasn't the Nyes...

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And then I called Dennis and Abbie and checked about Thanksgiving and told Dennis the raves about the cabin. And then...well. I spent about the whole damned day on the phone...

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For I was still annoyed that I couldn't get any information about who owned the woods on the north side of the cabin, and with all the developing going on, I was curious and suspicious about that guy that had come to the door. Was he a developer prowling around? Would there be a development encroaching on us—the very thing I'd wanted to get away from? I couldn't seem to get any interest or help in finding out.

So I decided I'd ferret it out myself. I got out myriad papers, plats and maps I'd used on SR2 report and in our building. Mmmm...we were in Section 24...

Much Highway Department-bureaucratic-type phone calling later I snagged a possible. I called the number. A man answered.

"You have 27 acres adjacent to Sultan Estates?" I asked.

"I do?" he asked. "Wanta buy?"

"No!" He sounded coarse and vulgar and quibbled a lot about just where this land was, giving me the impression that he had so much land he didn't know where it all was?

"No," he finally said, he was only half owner with Bob Waltz.

"May I call you back?" I asked, having no intention of doing so.

I looked up Bob Waltz in the telephone book. Odd. The address was similar to ours; was that what that guy had been looking for? Studying map, I find it's in Everett!? (Only a long time later did I find out the vicinity's weird system of mapping which produced so many far-separated similar addresses.)

I scrambled through notes and papers wildly: "Wagner, half-owner with Bob Waltz. Has sections 9,10, 14, 24 leased to "Selective Logging"..."

Alarmed, for we are in Section 24, I try to call Case for a check. No answer. Not seeming able to get anybody, I left the mess and digressed..

I called Lu. Boy! did she ever talk! About Sultan Estates people. She said Jim Peterson worked for the store below. I didn't know that! That one of the old men, one of their best friends, just died of cancer. "How fast that stuff goes!" she said, "Why, he was all right six months ago! And Mrs.F?? thinks the gazebo should be left open so people can go there and play cards," et cetera. I agreed with the latter.

Well, it was mid-afternoon before I caught up with the man I wanted: Bob Waltz. He was very nice and easy to talk to. It was a long, interesting and jolly talk and I found out a lot.

Among the things: he said he owned Snohomish Lumber Company. And "No, that man you were talking to--(the one on the phone) that's my son-in-law...divorcing my daughter.. He is trying to wheel a deal...(wants to sell it off-make a fast buck) We're going to buy him out..had a meeting last week..."

We laughed and chatted and got along famously.

"I'm 65," I said.

"I'm 66," he said. And..."We don't have any intention of cutting those trees. Don't need 'em."

I'd explained my concern.

"Save the trees!"

I laughed. "Yeah!"

"As long as I'm alive they won't cut," he said. Et cetera, et cetera. He even said,"Sure! Go ahead and cut a Christmas tree! What I don't know won't hurt me!" Laughs.

I hung up jubilant! Victory! I was right! There was a developer moving in danger!

I called Dennis and Abbie and told them. Dennis knew what I was talking about; my concern for that woods going for a development. They were pleased. I was exhausted. I took a nap and it was mid-evening before I woke up. But I was still excited; I wanted to tell my tale to people! I dared to call Marie.

"Hunh?," she said. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Don't you remember that prowler?" Evidently not. yet she was the one that was so upset when I told her about that guy. Dumbies! I wanted to tell my story and nobody would listen. I wondered if I'd get a brush-off from Case, too?

I dared to call him, though it was late--about 10 p.m. We had a long talk and many laughs. "Oh some old gink owns that land," he said. But he knew what I meant about the danger of developers. In order to explain myself, I kidded, "Maybe I'm writing a book!"

He laughed. "Lorna, why don't you go jump back into your book! Gee!" he said, "I wouldn't confront people like you do! You're so brave!"

"Well, they're jus t people," I said.

I was unaware I was using a phrase foisted on me so often in the past when I was notorious for being such a retiring shy violet for so long; I guess life and/or the business world must have changed me?

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In all that wild phoning I had trouble getting the use of our (4 party) line. Some woman went yakking, yakking on in a plaintive, querulous voice; no one I recognized or could account for. One call I made was to Marty and asked her about the lights. She denied there were any lights. I didn't quibble; I just hung up puzzled, (for I'd seen them) and disgusted at the whole Sultan Estates bunch.

It was an exhausting day and I didn't get anything else done at all.

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**Tuesday, November 18** was a dreary, wintry day. I just stayed in and read and puttered.

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**Wednesday, November 19.** Rain, but the weather was milder—"mild for November," the radio said. It was dismal, though, which I'd been afraid winter would be in the woods. I felt as if I were turning into a lazy, ineffectual recluse; which I hadn't meant to be. Was it the weather? winter? change of lifestyle? As for visitors, I had asked Lu to come up and see the progress on the cabin before they left, and was puzzled when she acted...almost...exasperated...and she never came.

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I spent the day inside, at home. I called and found out the Senior Center Thanksgiving dinner was earlier than I usually cared to go to town, but I called and made an appointment to leave my car at the AAA local Representative across the highway from the Center for a free winter check up while I was at the dinner.

Then I dug out my data and tried to figure out who might own the woods on the west, but gave up, finding myself rusty on reading plat gibberish. Then I finally got around to defrosting and cleaning that filthy refrigerator which hadn't been scrubbed since it'd been moved.

The rest of the day I spent on making curtains for the lower kitchen shelves in lieu of the cabinet doors Dennis wanted to make someday, but I, secretly, didn't want for there was not enough room for swing out doors. It was a long, boring job—especially sewing those dozens of rings on by hand, but they looked good when I finished and I was proud of them. It was a frenetic day and I was glad, later, to see the full moon and go out to the orchard on the east and see how serene and lovely it was out there.

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**Thursday, November 20.** I woke to mild weather and the radio predicting rain and new cabin worries: added to the east heater not seeming to work too well the day before, there was now a steady floop, floop, floop noise, which turned out to be, after fearful investigation, just the shower head dripping. Trusting it didn't mean trouble, I got ready and left for Monroe.

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At 4:30 I was home. It had rained all day, worsening as the day wore on. On the way down I'd been annoyed by one of the local driving problems—a loaded big quarry truck tailgating me all the way down on that winding road where there is no place to pass.

I went straight to that scruffy roadside towing/gas/ tourist store place which was the local AAA, and I stood about and got chilled and damp in the rain while three scruffy looking, but very nice, people broke their necks to tend me and the car. While the kid worked in that pouring rain on my car we enjoyed joking and talking together.

I read the local paper while waiting and was pleased to find out they were going to "rubberize" that awful railroad crossing that was the only entrance into Main Street. But they were going to do it and close the street at the height of the Christmas shopping season, which, it said, made the local merchants very irate, and I couldn't say I blamed them. Later, when I told this to local people I was surprised that none of them knew about it, and it roused some very hot reactions.

The guys did a very thorough job on my car and assured me it was ok. "You're just fine!" said this one guy, "you won't have any troubles at all—in winters like ours!" I left elated.

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**Senior Center.** I got there too early; the dinner wasn't ready, but I didn't mind. It was just nice to have a place to come into, for I was chilled, damp and had to pee! The place was jam-packed—overflowing. Lois French, all dolled up in a long "hostess gown" didn't seem to know me, so distraught.

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she was with her hostess duties—nor did I see anyone else I knew. I paid my \$1.40 and sort of roamed around, but no one paid any attention to me.

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Later, I nabbed Lois and asked her how many there?  
"200 signed up," she said.

I finally took a seat at the back near the office from where I could see the whole room. I had a sketch pad with me and was dying to sketch all those fantastic characters, but decided it would be too cruel; they wouldn't want to be shown looking as they really did. Crowded as the room was, the chairs around me were not taken. I felt as if I were in a sterile "penicillin circle"—so isolated. And the few who sat on the outside of the circle kept their backs toward me and faces averted. But, at least...people around me. I sat and watched.

Suddenly the door at the back opened and 73 high school kids marched onto the stage with band instruments—(the program said there were 73) and their exuberant band master started them off with a blast that nearly raised the roof! "Everybody sing! 'America the Beautiful!'"...a few cracked, weak voices only. The din the band made was...well...enough to raise the dead. I looked around the room...our table... nothing but gray hair and glum, glum faces...(of the ...almost dead?)

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Later, I got some seatmates. Across the table from me was now a very well-dressed, well-groomed little old woman, stooped/bent, obviously in the last stages of osteoporosis, (the calcium-lack disease). She was being served a carton of milk. "I never drink milk!" she said, pushing it away.

Next to me sat a big, buxom, farm-type woman. "Used to own a dairy farm here," she said, as I tried to make conversation. "Sold it. Trip to Australia...ever been there?"

"No," I said, rising to the bait. "Tell me about it..."

But, lost chance, as this battleaxe of a "Mistress of Ceremonies", also in evening gown, began blaring over the loudspeaker, "Sorry, we don't have the usual birthday (ritual) but would you please all sing 'Happy Birthday?'"

We did.

"Now!" she shouted, "I have something to tell you! George—(the name impossible to catch in that din)—passed away last week."

"George who?" everybody started whispering all around me. I shrugged and reached across the table to retrieve my own local paper that some woman and simply confiscated and was now busy scribbling on so I could look at the obits. "No George," I said. Everybody was beginning to look at me oddly. Then here came this corny, trite, printed sympathy card.

"Everybody sign!" shout from the MC.

"Who's George? Who died?" everybody was saying, but we all signed and passed it along...

We had been sitting for an hour. My rear was getting paralyzed on that hard seat—and still no food had been served. I was getting mad and so was everybody else. Lois came up and put her hands on my shoulders: "Would you come and join us?" and she began to rearrange the people at "my" table.

I took the break as a chance to pull a quip I'd been repressing, and got...

"Oh, Lorna! you are so clever!"

I don't remember the food, only that it was cold and disappointing. I was just glad it had finally appeared and I could eat and get out of there.

I went out into the rain and down to Monroe and did a few errands and went home.

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There I called Lu and told her about the dinner and tried to cheer her up about how spry Marv was compared to those graveside ancients I'd just seen.

I was still dressed up when the phone rang.

It was Case. "would mind feeding the cats while he and "Max"(Edith) went to California?" I tried to get out of it by telling I'd be gone over the weekend (Seattle) but I had to concede—to be a "good neighbor". He said he'd come up and bring me the key, refusing to let me meet him halfway because of the muddy trail.

I rushed around, making the bed, putting tea water on, digging out my bit of wine to share with Edith—the hostess bit. But Case came alone—"No, no! he was in a hurry!" and he handed me the key wrapped in a ten dollar bill—which I refused, of course—(being a "good neighbor"! ) And he left.

The phone again. Edith, calling from Seattle, "So nice of you to take care of ther cats!" She was so sweet. (Hypocrite! I thought.) (Meow!)

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**Friday, November 21.** I did not wake till 10, roused by the feel of garbage truck tremor. He was out there so long I went to check if a note or some trouble? but...no. But it was raining like hell and my car was sitting out there uncovered.

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**Later:** And when I went for the mail there was such a deluge that it was like walking in the bottom of a swimming pool. I decided that if that kept up, those cats of Cases' would just have to go unfed. I went back in and, waiting out the storm, worked on Christmas cards and listened to the news, which was full of dire things locally: flood warnings, river cresting in Gold Bar and Monroe and vandals cutting the telephone wires into houses!

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I pattered and finished up all the curtains, which made me about all finished with things for the house, and I realized I'd miss the looking for things for the cabin when I went shopping!

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**About 3 p.m.** The, weather abated, I ventured to walk down to Cases' to feed the cats. The rain had stopped, but there was a thick, gray blanket of clouds scooting from the northwest and the country drainage ditch around the cul beside our driveway was aflood again (because I'd refused—couldn't afford—to put in the drainage pipe they'd demanded there.)

At Cases' I was surprised at the messiness of the house and how carelessly tools had been left outside subject to rust in the rain and stealing, and wondered where I'd gotten the idea they were neat and prosperous people?

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As I walked back, that huge big dog followed me up the road, growling and threatening. He really scared me!—and there were gun shots to the southwest of the cabin as I went back in.

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I worked on the cards some more and then went out and put them in the mailbox, though I hated the risk of leaving things with checks there with the flag up when that Ron brat prowled around so. The rain had stopped and the puddles had drained into the ground and there was blue sky, but no sun; I would have to add this to my record of how the weather would be like my first winter in the cabin.

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All afternoon there was such an uproar of dogs barking down below that I became very annoyed. At one point I even went out on the porch and "barked" back, á la "Dr. Doolittle", hoping my "talking to them" would shut them up. It didn't.

About 5:30, I resorted to calling Lu and asking her if she could hear them (and be my witness) or if they knew what, or anything one could do about that big dog. She only said there was still a dog around down there (their dog had died.)

And then she told me that they'd be moving the 1st of December and that Marv had fallen and broken his rib.

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About 7 p.m. the dog ruckus was still going on. I got so mad I took my machete and flashlight in hand, and, with murder in my heart, walked down and confronted the dogs. "You shut up!" I yelled brandishing my axe. Mr. Duke came out and tried to hush up his four kennel dogs. I tromped on back, not scared, just mad!

There was a full moon out, cold and eye-like. I went back cussing at getting thus embroiled just to feed those cats; the next time I'd have to get the car out—just to avoid that dog! Maybe I should have taken the \$10! if I'd known what what "neighborly act" was going to cost me?

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**Saturday, November 22.** I was cold in the night and saw why when the thermometer at only 30°! I rushed down to the car to get cigs and see if my posted mail was ok. I tried to take the plastic off the car: I couldn't—it was frozen! The first time! And I was embarrassed when I looked down and saw the whole Parker family out looking my way, for I'd just put on one of those wild get-ups of anything handy that I was getting more and more prone to do. I went back in.

The radio had predicted sun all day. It was just beginning to come in around my place. I listened to the weather report, anxious about it on my big trek to the city: "Nice week end, but rain first of week. No local rivers flooded though 7" of rain." Gee! I was finding that KIRO radio station very useful in spite of suffering the commercials.

But our dog problem wasn't pleasing me at all. I was getting completely out of hand in the neighborhood. And I wasn't the only one who thought so; the Board was getting irate about it, too, though they didn't seem to be doing anything about it or about the other problem that bothered them—and me—too: all those jalopies and junkers everyone had sitting around in their yards. Like Cases: even if they parked them to work on couldn't they park them less unsightly? It was maddening that there seemed to be so little I could do about these things.

During the morning I went out to gather wood. Hearing the rush of the creek, I went down to see, my feet in boots squishing through the carpet of sodden leaves. The air was crisp, but not cold. The creek—was a river!



I stood and marveled at—our own waterfall! The water was pouring over the only piece left of that old logging bridge.

I suddenly felt the thrill of ownership: Our cabin! Our land! Our "river"! Our waterfall!

I started to gather firewood with new relish; I'd been cooped up too long—gotten too civilized!

I went back in. There was no sun in the cabin; its orbit was now too far south for it to hit the cabin windows. But I enjoyed building up the fire and cooking a simple fare of oatmeal garbed as I was in boots and wool shirt—roughing it. This was more like it!

**Later:** Starting to prepare for my trip out I went to Sultan to expedite things by going to the bank there and was furious to find it closed. But I was glad I'd gone, for it was refreshing to get out for awhile and I was reassured by the car's starting all right—though did I fancy anew smell of mildew in it?

Sun? No! The ground fog was so thick I had to turn on my lights, and the fog even worse down on the highway by the river. I couldn't "see a thing"! And it was cold! Yet, oddly enough, there were cyclists and kids in running shorts and trailer campers all over.

When I went back up the hill, the fog had "burned off" enough to make a very dramatic view of banks of fog hugging the valley with wisps floating off to show pretty pockets of bright leaves-strewn areas and snow capped mountains and little houses with smoke pouring out of chimneys and all those people and kids "recreationing" all over. It was..very Thanksgivingish! Old fashioned. Rural. Thanksgiving at Grandmas' type of thing. I relished.

Later, some woman on the radio in Seattle was speaking of some kind of doings up at Sultan..."the charming rural native bit," she stressed. (When she said it, it sounded...yukky!)

**The cats.** I stopped there. No dogs or people bothered me, but, of course, this time I drove in. This time the cats were inside and meowed at me. I spoke nicely to them and fixed their messy cat food. Eat it? Hell no! They stuck up their noses and flounced out and hid. I hate cats!

I was loathe to go back in to my dark, cold, empty cabin— I beginning to get cabin fever?—it had been nice to get out for awhile.

**Later:** I worked on the wood supply, lugging, sawing, sorting, so I'd know just what I had on hand when I wanted a fire. Not knowing had been one reason I hadn't used the stove more.

**Later:** I worked on cleaning the house, especially the floor, in preparation for tainge down the working tools and turning it into a home. About 5, when it dark, I put up curtains on the woods end of house to see if that would make it warmer, the radio saying it would get to 30° again. It made it seem warmer-homey and cozy anyway.

I then got out my boxes of house "décor", as yet unpacked and proceeded with a rather heart wrenching job: would this be the last time I'd ever unpack? would I never move again? It seemed very strange to think so; I couldn't quite absorb it. Lorna actually landed and going to stay someplace ...forever?

A hesitation still, unpacking, thinking about how I really should wait until after that final inspector? he might kick me out? But I got absorbed in unpacking seeing I had more sentimental knick knacks than I had room for, but I hated to part with any of them.

I set to work...in a pause, I looked around...gee! it was beginning to look like a real house already!

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By 7 p.m. I'd spent all that time on it, dismayed at how fast my wood supply had burned—almost gone again. Dismantling what had been a "workshop/living room" for so long was the hard part: I did get sentimental about it. Working furiously to get all those tools out (what in hell was I going to do with them all?) I began to cry as I pulled all the hanging nails out with the old claw hammer I somehow seemed to have inherited from the two we had had. **End of an era.**

It all was, of course, more of a job than I'd figured on. There was a small shelf carpentry job I'd wanted to do before all the tools were put away, but I was too tired. Yet there was one thing I could do yet? That long, heavy board Joan Whitehill had given me that she'd painted black and used for a coffee table—Dennis had the idea of using it to fit between rafters for a book case. Well, I could at least mark the notches for Dennis to cut. But I was so tired. Somehow I had the feeling an accident about to happen. It did.

I was trying to lean that heavy thing against the rafters, when **pow!** it hit the lamp I'd hung rather precariously on the wall—the bulb, lighted, blew up—glass all over the place! I was down on my hands and knees again cleaning up my clean floor...again...

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**Nigh dawn!!** I awoke. I'd been so tired I'd just fallen on the bed. But I had the most intense yen to go out and see if there was still a moon—I don't know why. Whatever, I got up, put on boots and robe and that silly fur collar, took flashlight and keys, and with getting cigs from car as an excuse, I went out to the car.

I was so surprised to find...big freeze predicted...it was actually **balmy** out there (the weather; not I, going out in middle of the night.) There **was** a moon in the east! And it was so quiet! And peaceful! No dogs. no barking. No activity below. No "searchlights". How come? Just a big silence. Peace. I went back in and snuggled back in again...happy.

And thought about how I'd even unearthed some of my music and began to play a little bit on my little toy organ again that week—at last in a spot where I had privacy enough to do so!

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**Sunday, November 23.** I didn't wake until 10! It was so cold in the cabin I checked—only 36°. How come it was so balmy at 5? Tools and cats on my list for the day; what to do with the tools? (Not say what I would have liked to do with the cats!)

But decided to do them first. **Cats.** Got dressed and decided to risk walking. Put my hatchet (weapon) in my pocket and set out. A high fog and drizzly mist out. I passed "Jake", Carrolls' dog. he only stood and looked at me. On. No dogs. Black cat came running when it saw me, but then hid. I fixed food and left. Only one bark from that dog on my way back and that was from inside a house. Mmmm. Oh: At Cases' one would have thought they'd left in a big hurry—everything so sloppy and careless and electrical extension left plugged in and trailing across porch—nothing on the end of it. Geez! Would only have taken a second to unplug that!

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I went home and tried to figure out about the tools and where to put all my bric-a-brac, anxious to get it all finished so it would look nice for Christmas and the kids could see my house finished before they left...forever. I wanted my treasures about me; I wanted to show off how it was supposed to look; I wanted to get rid of the boxes. I wanted to get it all done, even though I'd have to move it all again to make room for the Christmas tree.

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Later. I unpacked my books and put them in one of those cardboard storage boxes I'd bought and stashed them and extra knick knacks against rafters under the black board...temporarily. The tools I'd dumped for nonce in a smaller box I made out of one of the big packing boxes.

About 4 I'd gotten the living room done but I was so tired I feared for my health. My nerves were frayed, too, by the ceaseless barking of some dog and no radio to listen to—all football games.

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Nightfall, I put my packing-foam "curtains" back up for warmth, built a fire, put my dinner on to cook and then tackled sorting the tools again. I couldn't believe it was only 6 p.m.—such a long day, it seemed like midnight. But my cabin sure looked snug and cozy!

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**Monday, November 24.** I woke puzzled as to why the sky seemed so light all night and then discovered the full moon shining in the center of the Aframe window. It was beautiful! But it was so chill in the house—a new chill even the electric heaters were working at top budget-breaking capacity didn't dispel. I peeked. It was only 30°!

The radio mentioned: Only 5 weeks left in the year. I couldn't believe it! One month until Christmas! And I panicked at the thought of Dennis and Abbie moving away; **who** would enjoy spring and summer with me?

Also traffic messes: I began to dread that trip down to Seattle, but news of earthquakes and fires et cetera otherwheres cheered me; I felt so lucky and happy and safe where I was!

They also telling about nearly a thousand people coming up to Goldbar from all over to a big fund-raising bake and rummage sale and to gawk at the rural rusticity. (And I couldn't get anybody to come see me and my rural goodies.) I wanted to call Lu and chat with her about the Goldbar thing, but I'd been feeling uneasy with her of late; she never calling me.

Yet I found myself feeling good as I started my day—the living room done! After the holidays I'd be free to get to other things, like the woodwork staining. I began to get a little excited about packing for my trip—it's been awhile!

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Later, when I went to get wood the trees were bathed in sun. Nice! And it felt good to get exercise in the fresh air; I felt so "woody". In my wood checking prowling about I investigated across the creek, where it seemed that dog barking had come from. Right. There was a car and camper-trailer there that hadn't been there before. I would have to check that when I went out.

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**About 4 p.m. Back from shopping.** And it was already getting dark. As the man said on the radio, "It's so sudden! No twilight!" I didn't like coming back to a cold, empty house in the afternoon and having night descend immediately.

The car engine killed about six times on the way down but then was ok. I stopped and fed the blasted cats and brought the mail in though they hadn't asked me to. I wished, instead of the ten dollar offer, Edith had said I was free to use their washer/drier, but she hadn't.

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On the way: There was a camper parked by gate at McNabbs, so I hurried to see what was going on, expecting friendliness and explanation. It was Marie and Orv. Orv was staggering under this huge TV antenna, looking like some kind of modern day Christ with a cross. I knew then. I looked up. Yep. Mac's trailer house was gone. I drew up slowly, and all friendly like, made pantomime of sorrow.

Marie acted rather impatient and then, rather exasperatedly, came over. At my expression of sorrow, she said, "Oh, it will be better for Marv. He's so bad he should be in the hospital." Then she kind of brushed me off and called to Orv, asking him if he was all right? Orv waved a hand at me over his bent head. "I'm going up there and check on those dogs," I told Marie. She nodded. We parted. It hurt a little; no hey, why don't you come and help? (Mac's moving.) Up the street I found no sign of new people or dogs. Marie and Orv were gone. I went on.

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My trip out had not cheered me; besides the above, along the part of the road I called "Christmas tree lane" P.U.D. had hired tree trimmers and they were busy lopping off the tops of all those pretty trees we'd watched grow up. When I came back, alongside the "Do Not Cut Trees" sign the trees were all butchered and the ugly poles and wires exposed. It hurt a little.

The sky was overcast and rather a cynotic blue in color. The mountains looked blue, cold, icy, wintry. It was a desolate scene. It hurt a little. Farther on, cattle were now all fur covered, cows lying in the grass (to keep udders warm? They hurt a little? ha ha) At the store, a raggedy little blonde girl had come up to me, and for no reason stuck her chin out and started yelling "Cow! Cow!" at me. It hurt a little.

When I got back home, whatever dog it was was still carrying on. I felt like sitting on my porch and howling!

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Thursday, November 25. I woke to pouring rain. It started in the night-like a sudden burst of tears. I lay and listened to all the horrible tragedies on the news: fire, earthquake, war, etc. Even Mt.St.Helens acting up again. And I was annoyed at the rain for I'd planned to go do a wash and it was bothersome to lug it in the rain.

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Later: I got ready and stopped to feed the (censored) cats. I'd forgotten the key. Back. Not find. Was in my pocket. Went on. I'd decided to try that dingy little laundry in Sultan; why go clear into Monroe? I didn't have that much wash to do. So I went Sultan.

At first it was kind of fun. Such a corny little place, but bustling with corny, friendly people. The euphoria didn't last long ; the place was filthy and most of the machines broken down, and no attendant. This one woman put her wash and money in the big machine and lost both. We had a hell of a time trying to find owner and help. When she did get her wash out it looked like it'd been washed in sewage. She left, cussing, saying she'd have to re-do it by hand at home. And I nearly vomited; two of the machines I looked in were full of dirty diapers, feces floating around in the water. Really! However, I was lucky; mine came out ok, but I swore I'd never go in there again!

I went out, deciding I'd stroll around in this quaint little town and amuse myself. I was just strolling down the two block "Main Street" when I nearly hit the pavement; a noon blast from the fire station across the street, so ear-splitting it nearly blew my brains out. I could see the guys in the station all unconcerned and the natives just walked on.

I decided to treat myself at that corny little bakery. I bought an apple turnover...40¢. Went back to the car to eat it and read the paper. The turnover was burned. It was then I found I'd lost one of my new driving gloves. Went back everywhere I'd been...no...no..nobody had seen. Was about to weep when I saw it lying on a window ledge where someone had put it.

I wanted to top off my gas tank for the trip, but only two stations in Sultan and one, Chevron...just closed my account (to shorten story) and the other only self-help pump which I didn't know how to work, so that didn't work out.

I was loathe to go home to that gloomy cabin in the rain. And I stalled, but I could think of nothing to do, so, I salved my self-pity with a steak to cook (something I was sure notto have at the kids) and wended back home.

Only to find our hill completely socked in in fog. I found it eerie: I'd joked that people acted as if I'd disappeared, but when I drove up our street, it was a bit too much—the cabin, my woods, were all in such a thick mist that the outside world couldn't see us nor could I see the world out there, except to see that the sun was shining—there.

I tended the car and turned to go into the cabin; it had disappeared into the mist like some fairy tale!..like "Brigadoon" or something..all the woods and cabin looked as if veiled behind a thick scrim curtain. I ran...Hey! Wait! Wait! Don't go away without me! I'll go with you!

And I disappeared into the mist.

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I went in, built a fire, sat and wrote my report waiting for it to heat up, and listened to the news. And I thought about funny little Sultan. And Goldbar; they made \$4000 on their bake and junk sale—so many churchy women around the area!...and all the war news...

THE MEN KILL AND PREY:  
THE WOMEN BAKE AND PRAY  
I wrote.



I had a hell of a time getting the fire going, while the news went on about Hollywood gambling places all on fire and mountains about to burn up, but at last I got my fire going and my fine dinner cooked and nice music on. It was very pleasant and cozy.

But I got to thinking about holidays past and I got a little blue and lonesome. As if to tease me the phone blurped once and quit. I ate and gave up, leaving the mess, and went to bed.

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**Wednesday, November 26.** No wind. No rain. A crispy November day when I tromped down to feed the cats. Parker was out viciously chopping wood, but he paid no attention to me, nor did he when I went back, though I'd meant to wish him Happy Thanksgiving. But the dogs did; they came out after me again.

The cabin felt warm and cozy when I got back. I kept a fire going all day. I went out into the woods to gather greens for my little gift for Auntie Alice and I really enjoyed it out there and down by the creek. Very Novemberish. And, again, nice to have one's own piece of land and woods. It was very quiet—only the thunk! of Parker's chopping down there, which only added to the fallish country feeling.

**Later.** Trip ready, a nap and attempt to call the kids, having **very** much trouble getting through party line and operator. Finally got Dennis. They were all whee and excited; yes! about 1:30 would be fine with them! And they were pleased to hear that the stove and chimney were working so well.

**Thursday, November 27. Thanksgiving day and day of trip**

...and pouring rain! I got soaked lugging stuff out on muddy trail. And the rain made driving harder—all the windows steamed up. I stopped and fed the cats and then chagrined to find Monroe all closed up tight—even the gas station. So I just went on...in the pouring rain.

I got as far as the top of Alki hill when my car that "was just fine for the winter" blew up on me. the heater hose blew up and I had to call Dennis to come and rescue me. And he had a hell of a time trying to find a part and working to fix it out in that terrible storm that lasted all the three days and nights I there.

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**HOME**

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**Sunday.**

**November 30.** I got back from trip about 2:30 p.m. I lugged stuff in and got a fire going. It was a hard drive back in that four day storm, but I made it all right. In fact the weather was better in Monroe than it was in Seattle.

But it was a very good trip, despite the weather and car troubles. A very nice visit and lots of good food

Despite the nasty weather, Abbie and I did take the kids to the Aquarium Friday while Dennis worked on my car, .

And then Saturday Abbie and Sarah and I went down to Doolittles' where Sarah enjoyed the animals and I was glad to see Alice up and around. Abbie drove my car and I was glad to have her do so; I hated driving in storms.

When I left, Abbie loaded me down with some turkey and gave me the bedspread to finish; she said she was getting tired of it. All there was to do was the crocheted border which I told her I thought I could handle.

I didn't get any pictures. Much to my chagrin my flash wasn't working; a new camera one of the things I'd meant to get in Monroe, but I'd found it all closed up.

When I got home I was glad to see no storm damage. The house was there, silent, hiding, waiting—all just as I had left it. Except for one thing, which made me laugh: On the woods side porch, the roll of leftover linoleum and some lumber I'd piled there, out of the wind, had fallen over and blocked the steps. I laughed, for, evidently some "beasties" had prowled and must have really fled when that stuff came crashing down.

So. All was well. One holiday was over with.

DECEMBER 1980

**Monday, December 1.** I spent the day at home, alone, of course, unpacking and settling back in and working on the bedspread and thinking about our weekend.

Dennis had gotten hurt at work—crushed between two loaders—bad hip, but no bruises. He spoke of "how the kids would enjoy the woods in the spring",, giving me hopes that maybe they wouldn't be moving as soon as they thought?

Speaking of hurting, the crocheting, I found hurt my hand, but I got it finished by mid-evening and was cheered by Dennis calling "just to chat", he said. He said his hip was better and asked if I were warm enough. I lied and said yes.

During the evening—a disaster. One of my kitchen spotlights blew out, the expensive bulb, that, as far as I knew, I could only get in Everett. It just broke off leaving the base in the socket. I just left it till the morrow, it being too dark to see to tackle it.

**Tuesday, December 2** It was cold and rainy and nasty—a gale wind and only 33.° But I tackled that light, having to turn off the electricity and dismantling the whole thing, but I simply could not get that bulb screw out. I had to give up.

**Later.** I ventured out in the bad weather and went to Monroe and got some electrical pliers (which I would give to Dennis for Christmas) and made a big investment in light bulbs. I also bought a new camera and some plastic to put over the loft window where the wind came in so cold. And I picked up a package at the post office, which turned out to be my Christmas package from Mike and Marylyn!

I was very annoyed that Cases weren't home, for I wanted to return his key and borrow his step ladder so I could start that staining job. Nor were they home on my way back. And was more annoyed when I got caught behind a school bus and had to stop every two houses in that awful weather while they let off kids. And then, when I got home, the light bulbs were the wrong kind. And I had hell of a time trying to get a fire started being out of the right wood again.

Cussing, I set to work on that badly needed kitchen light. It took forever and I in rage and fear, climbing up on the sink, couldn't see or reach, etc. but finally got it fixed and was very proud of myself.

**Later:** The rain seemed to have stopped and I took a break and wrote about our first Christmas in the cabin! ("We're all excited! And the kids are busy making paper chains and ornaments. All we'll have, for I have long since gotten rid of tree ornaments in all my moves.")

**Wednesday, November 3.** Was not a very nice day, but looked like the storm was over? I had trouble getting a fire started again. I decided I'd tackle the staining "for Christmas". I called Case and asked him about the ladder. He said he wanted to take me out to dinner sometime for taking care of the cats! I demurred, of course? or?—(nothing ever came of it.) He said he'd bring the ladder up. And he did, but again, I couldn't get him to come in or stay.

"Well!" he said, "It sure looks better in here with the leaves gone! You can see!" (Grrr.)

I started to work on the staining, worried about the fumes and whether I should have a fire with them? So I left the doors and windows open and found myself quite warm enough. I didn't get the staining done— too big a job—I had to quit.

I called Mike and talked to him and I called Case, both just to chat. Case said I could use their oven to cook a turkey and that he thought Edith was going to stay in town for Christmas. I made a mental note to invite him to join us. He wanted to know if I wanted one of the two divans they had there. I would have liked it, for it was a handsome one, but it was too big for my living room; I didn't have room for it.

I went to bed amidst the paint fumes, tired, and angry I hadn't been able to finish the job.

**Thursday, December 4.** I woke, gloating when the radio said there was snow in Seattle—none where I was! Until, wondering why the sky looked so queer, I jumped up and looked. **Snow!** And I without wood!

I stood and looked at it. Everyone had said how pretty it would when it snowed. It wasn't. It just looked drear. And, oddly, there seemed to be no snow around the cabin or under the cedars—just farther off. Nor could I tell if it was really snowing or just falling off the trees.

I sighed, for I'd wanted to get that staining done and now it was so cold in the cabin I wouldn't be able to have it open versus the fumes?

**Later:** I dug out Julie's old fake fur parka and ventured out. The cabin was in an island of very little snow, but, surprisingly, it was sticking on the steep roof and the temperature was below 30° (What about "too cold to snow"? ) I tried to brush the snow off the car, but gave up, my hands freezing, gathered some wood on my way back in and got a fire going, my feet very cold, while the radio now said the sun was shining in Seattle!

**Later.** Curious, I went for a walk down to see the creek; it was flowing merrily. It was still hard to tell what was doing, snowing? or just blobs off trees or...it was raining! but the thermometer still said under 30°!

**Noon.** I stained one wall— nasty job—the stain made it look even darker inside. And I had a headache, due to fumes? The snow was almost gone; it had turned to rain.

**Afternoon.** I went on staining, determined, despite a headache and head feeling funny. The stairway was a bitch to do and I used up almost a gallon just on it, and I didn't like it too well—it was too dark, but it did look more "cabiny". I got it finished and cleaned up but it was so cold, and I was afraid to build a fire because of the fumes.

And I was very upset at the kitchen floodlight not working again.

**Later:** I dared a fire and read the paper. Burlington Northern had postponed their plans to fix that Main Street crossing; they couldn't find anybody who knew how to do that kind of "rubber" crossing. How dumb!

I finally decided to give up and just—hibernate; jump into bed early and snuggle. The first snowfall in cabin! Frankly, I was disappointed in it; I'd expected it to be Christmas-card-pretty—it wasn't. Though, as Dennis had said, the trees did protect the cabin from the snow.

**Friday, December 5.** I had a hard time keeping warm all night, though I left the heat half on. The radio said it was snowing in Seattle and would be colder and no relief in sight until Tuesday; temperatures 10° below normal and might get down to 20 by Saturdaynight. I felt dismay. I wondered if I could get down to Sultan—if the car would get stuck in the snow—no snow tires. I checked outside. It was "snaining"—neither rain nor snow—like coarse salt.

By noon, I and the painting mess cleaned up, it looks more promising, the sun trying to come out and birds chirping, though still only 30°. I had to struggle with the fire, the wood too small, went too fast—I needed bigger stuff. When I came back in the paint smell wasn't too bad, but I'd coughed and coughed all night.

I got to Sultan and did a wash, (evidently daring to try that laundromat again?) It was deserted. I got coffee and french fries at the restaurant nearby and sat and wrote a letter to Mike while waiting. The mountains were all obscured in heavy, rolling clouds, but enough snow on them so that they looked wintry-pretty.

I stopped at Cases'on the way back and he gave me coffee and mince pie and revealed somewhere in our talk that he was 57 years old. I was surprised; thought he was younger than that. I got home just in time; it started to snow again—lightly.

**Evening.** I changed the bed and put on Abbie's knitspread. The effect was stunning! I liked it. I called later and told her so; she seemed pleased. She said Dennis had found a rug, orange and yellow—did I want it? Mmmm. It was hard to tell without seeing it. She said he would be up next week end to fix the linoleum, but she didn't say whether he'd be alone or not.

**Evening.** I found I didn't feel too well—tired and ill feeling. I was surprised to see insects in the house—a mosquito or two, a moth. I'd stopped at the hardware in Sultan. They did not have what I wanted, but when I told them about my light bulb, he said, "Oh yes. Power surge—lights blow out. Have them all th time around here." I spent the evening just puttering around and cringing at the (expensive) noise the electric heaters made.

**Saturday, December 6.** I woke up late and just had time to note more snow—the powdery kind—when phone! Dennis, all excited about the snow. "How's it going? Never seen snow up there! Is it pretty?" I tried to describe it..like powdered sugar all over everything." "That's because it fell straight down." "Oh?" "Are you ;warm enough? Got fire?" "Oh, sure," I lied. "Be up next week end." "Yeah."

Later, I went out and tried to take some pictures of the snow—what there was of it, it having ceased. The camera jammed; wouldn't work. I cussed. I just messed around in the house rather enjoying a winter day experience in the cabin, but shocked at the thermometer; it was only 22°! "A very unusual cold snap," the radio said.

When I went for the mail it was pretty by then—a winter wonderland- so I bundled up and enjoyed a crispy, crunchy walk to the creek in a world full of sugar coated cornflakes. Then bored, but excited, and ignoring cost, I phoned my sister, "Tiny", in California and had a long fun talk with her.

**Evening.** That assessment Sultan Estates had slammed on us: I called seven neighbors to ask them what they thought about it. I couldn't get a soul except the last call, Charlie Finesilver, a member of the Board. He was very chatty, very nice. "You need help?" "No, no." "Well, if you do, call me!" I asked him what happened at the meeting, about the dogs and all. He blathered on, "Got quite a problem with loose, stray dogs here. They are digging foundations out from under mobile homes trying to get under tokeep warm."

"You're kidding!" I cried.

"No, no. And dogs barking, raising Cain at dawn..."

"I know!" We discussed certain dogs. I hung up, having enjoyed, but warning myself to be careful of him as I didn't know which side of the fence he was on.

I puttered through the evening. Dismay! when I opened the refrigerator, everything was frozen! I gave up on that day and went to bed to keep warm (or should I have crawled under the house? Move, over, Rover!?) The heat had been going full tilt all day.

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**Sunday, December 7.** I woke to a cold house, colder than I'd yet experienced at the cabin. It was not snowing, and only a light dusting of snow and a pinky sky promised, perhaps, some sun? But it took so long to appear that I began to brood and worry about the short, gray days and the long, long nights and my car sitting out there in that cold and the increasing swelling and hurting of my fingers.

Later, bright sun came out and I rushed to check my camera which seemed to be all right, after all, so I rushed out to finish up the roll of film, wondering if it true that it had been 12 days since I'd seen the sun?

Crunch! crunch! crunch! underfoot. I looked down; Dennis' icicle phenomena he had been telling me about! It looked like coarse glass grass coming out of the ground, some "blades" topped with pieces of gravel they'd pushed up out of the ground!! Amazing! I tried to get some pictures and went back in and made cereal on the stove and wondered why I felt so ill and my teeth hurt so?

**Midmorning.** I tried to call Lu to see if they had gotten their phone yet. No answer. I called Marie and she told me they hadn't, and were having as much trouble trying to get a phone as I had had. She said Marv was very sick and she, herself, all crippled up with a bad back. I found I had hardly any voice when I talked to her.

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**Later.** Radio saying local building codes bad; "they discourage building and innovation—are a mishmash of (foolishness) and increase building costs 20%."

**Later.** I went down for wood. My squaw wood about gone. I got stabbed on the head by an icicle hanging on the roof edge. Noticed my lungs seemed to feel better outside; had noticed this before. (Was there something irritating in the cabin?) I put out crumbs for birds; none came. The car had an inch of snow on it.

I went in and washed my hair, and cooked on fire and all waiting, uselessly, for sun and chance to take more pictures. By 4 p.m it got to a "sizzling" 25°, but, by then, it was already starting to get dark and I realized that it was not just the days getting shorter but no sun getting into the woods.

I had horrendous symptoms of...stomach flu? but I got out my tiny box of a few Christmas things preparatory to doing cards and began to cross off names of former friends I seemed to have lost by my move. I puttered at more little improvement projects. Then, cold, tired, discouraged, in painhell with it!—I gave up and crawled into bed.

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**Monday, December 8.** I woke up cold, cold, and I'd been cold all night, despite my bundling up and leaving heaters going all night. And it was only 23° outside—no new snow but none had gone. I was getting weary of it; discouraged. It was no help when my 3 big precious logs burned so fast without warming it any and another kitchen spotlight was out—a total of three! If it that bad in December, what was I going to do in January!?

I stood, disconsolate, at window and looked at my car out there in that chill, drear scene, but was cheered by radio telling of 200 traffic accidents already, making me glad I didn't have to drive in traffic any more, nor did I wish I were back in any of the former city dwellings I'd left behind. Below, I heard a car "rev up", "spin out"—silence. Stuck?

Bundled up in all the family cast-offs I could find, I went out to hassle wood, noting birds, not disappeared, but chirping again...a good sign? as radio said, "...tail end of cold spell today."

Later I didn't feel good, but I worked on putting some plastic insulation over the windows to keep out drafts. When I went for the mail, I noticed a car in the ditch below—what I'd heard earlier? About 2 p.m. the plastic done. I hated it—"milky"—I couldn't see out but—only a temporary measure?

Worried about how much of an electric bill I was running up, I went and checked the meter and was aghast at the reading which, seemed such a short time ago, had read 0. Not sure what the rates were I called Case and asked him again. Although I doubted his veracity, I sat and did some hasty figuring on the quote he gave me; \$5 a day!?? Oh, no!

I gave up and began to wade through the bales of crumpled receipts on building material costs Dennis had saved for me and I'd kept, meaning, someday, to tot up what we spent on the cabin. Someday was right! I sighed and gave up; that job would take me...forever.

The cabin was beginning to be warm and cozy with the fire I'd built and I put on a nice little dinner to cook. I changed the radio to that hour of nice "dinner music" I liked and ate.

Then, thinking of my financial dilemma (pretty broke just before Christmas) I worked on devising ways to make the room warmer, like heat deflectors, etc., laughing and paraphrasing as the radio played

♪ "Impossible Dream" ♪ "...and try, with your la-ast ten dollars! to pay ♪  
the impossible bills!"

Then I dug out my Christmas Carols book and was surprised to find how well I could stay play them on my little "piano". Had fun.

Later in the night, I woke up and was **too hot!** what a change!

**Tuesday December 9.** When I woke I found that, although it was still 26° cold, I felt thawed out and had new energy and felt obsessed to get on with getting Christmas cards done. I began to work on them.

**About 11:30 a.m.** I went to Monroe, feeling blithe and happy and came home about 4 p.m. a nervous, upset wreck—and broke. it was already by then starting to get dark.

Things started out fine. There were a couple of things in the mail to cheer me—my first Christmas card—from Noah, and the car started fine, which made me feel smug as I passed Darrell and Case working on Case's car. The sun was shining and a bit of Christmas when there was a gold-trimmed tree set up in the middle of the golf course.

I made it to the Senior Center just at noon, where I'd planned to have one of their nice lunches and sign up for their Christmas dinner. I had primped carefully and had worn my red clothes to look Xmas-y.

But nobody seemed to notice when I walked in; in fact nobody seemed to remember who I was—no glad cries of Lorna! Lorna! Lois nodded to me, but I felt myself wandering, at a loss. The "staff" moved away and the only person left for me to talk to was an old biddy who seemed on the make for an old guy who seemed uneasy and wary. Besides, when I tried to talk to her, I found she was hard of hearing. I made a vow right then to be sure to see if they wore a hearing aid before I sat down near any of these seniors.

I signed up for the dinner, used the toilet, chatted briefly with Lois until she began to pick my brains again about how to do some artwork procedure, murmured polite lies about the charms of their gift shoppe full of corny handicraft and fled.

Next I went into the AAA service station to have the anti-freeze checked. The kid was unctuously charming and radiator checked ok for 20°. He insisted on giving me a discount. All fine until I started the car it steamed and smoked like crazy.

I went back in. This time he much less charming. "Err...umm...could be a...radiator leak..we could put in some sealant?" So he did. And told me to come back later in the day and he'd check it. I drove around town and did my errands in utter panic, for the car kept heating and steaming. A new radiator I did not want to be made to buy just before Christmas. But I ran late, and the car simmering down, risked it and I went home "on a wing and a prayer" —and with ulcers.

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That evening I called Dennis and went on about the murder of John Lennon, one of the "Beatles", whom I'd learned to like via my kids.

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**Wednesday, December 10.** After a pouring rain in the night, I spent the whole day in rather a state of collapse. I didn't get anything practical done. It was a sort of "crossover" day, trying to recover from all my work and panic of the day before and trying to figure things out, thinking about my "artistic career" and all. Maybe it was triggered by getting my first Christmas card from an old friend, for I ended up calling the old office in Seattle and talking to a couple of friends I used to know there.

And, locally, I had a phone chat with Edith Case: I hadn't known she was still around.

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**Thursday, December 11.** was a gray, glum, dreary, rainy day. I spent most of the day working on Christmas cards, with a trip to the store. The car seemed to work all right, except it kept "killing" on me. I stopped at Cases' and had a cup of coffee, but learned nothing new or interesting.

Back home, I phoned Dennis.

He was in a dreary mood. they had no so he couldn't get the car fixed. Just he alone would come up, but not on Saturday—he had to work on the car—Sunday maybe. He'd let me know Saturday. He would bring their Christmas gifts to hide at the cabin. He said Noah had some kind of health problem, not a cough, he didn't know what it was. He sounded very depressed.

Later, having read in the paper about a forestry job opening, I called him again. Woke him up, but he talked. Oh, yeah. He'd try again, but federal jobs—they didn't like his navy discharge papers. He said he got a nibble about a job at Colville (Indian reservation) and would prefer that to a federal job under Reagan. Said he'd check it out, and he'd do..oh, whatever I wanted done when he came up.

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**Friday, December 12.** I woke feeling better about things, the pressure off somewhat. I had been feeling as if I'd been pushing against an encroaching mountain for...ages. I found, doing my cards, that I'd written "I probably won't be down out of the woods till spring." It was rather a shock finding I'd said that. Was I really giving up the city and all my old life style? No more of the back to the office where I'd enjoyed all the "adulation and back slapping of the retiree returning to visit?

Then I realized I hadn't the slightest desire to ever go back; there'd been too much hurting within those walls and halls. So? I'd given up the city? I found no great sorrow in it. But I also wondered where the refreshing feeling I'd first had when going up to our woods—as if going to a health spa—had gone.

The mail brought a christmas card from my sister, Madeline, insisting they'd come and see the place in the spring, and raving about the picture my brother Bud had shown them he'd taken of it. She also enclosed a picture of the volcano ashfall over there which made me gasp: I had no idea it was that bad!

It rather nice when I got the mail, I stayed out there and cleaned out the car, gathered some windfall wood, raked the path and was enjoying until the sound of a cement mixer reminded me that they would doubtless be doing away with all my woods some day...

I was startled when a truck came in and it was the telephone man. When I kidded him about more troubles, he said he was just switching over to a new line.

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Errands in Sultan, the car acted a bit draggy, but seemed all right otherwise. The mountains were fantastic! Talk about the alps!

I had some more amusing encounters with local characters who were not aware they were "characters".

By the time I started home the weather had changed dramatically to a complete white out fog.

At home I had another heat saver idea: I made a heat deflector screen out of that piece of "styrene" "glass" left over. It worked fine! Heat in that corner went up 8°!

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**Evening.** Wondering if that telephone man had been working on McNabbs' line I tried calling them. He must have been, for this time I got them: Marv.

He was full of terrible laments: had two broken ribs—had fallen before they moved and said he had hurt like hell and had been unable to get hold of a doctor because of no phone. He called Lu to the phone and she went on like a fishwife about the phone company troubles.

"We called them and told them, 'Distress!'" she said and we got some action!"

We chatted then and I was shocked and alarmed when she said Dooxies' nice double trailer place had been bought "by the renters", assuming she meant the...Parkers—those tramps!?...surely not! She never did explain, even when I went on about what uncooperative and bad neighbors the Parkers were.

Then I told her, cattily, about Edith leaving. When I mentioned Case, she bristled (she hated him!)

"How come you called us?" she asked.

"Oh, just a hunch," I said and told her about the telephone man.

I then called Case and congratulated him on his neighbors, Dooxies' place being right across the street from his. He sounded unhappy, and a bit doubtful and cagey. He said Dooxies had been there, but had said nothing about it.

I shot my mouth off then about how all "you" people had moved in down there and spoiled our privacy and investment because we had no way to get to our place without running the gauntlet. Whatever my message was, I sensed he got it, but wasn't exactly "with me". He was nice enough, though, and mentioned that Edith had gone back to town.

I then set to work on making a Christmas wreath. As usual it took more time, mess and effort than I'd counted on. So, exhausted, I gave up and went to bed when it was finished.

Then, in the wee sma' hours, having so much to do I forced myself up, did the chores, and made a little banner to put on the wreath for Dennis to see when he came: "Thank you!" (for the cabin and all.)

Then, when setting the heater for the night, my new reflector fell on and cut a gash in my foot. I cursed and climbed to the cold loft and back to bed.

**Sunday, December 14.** I woke to a drear, dark, rainy morning that frustrated my plans to have Dennis cut and fix a stand for a Christmas tree. I got up and got ready for him and was ready two hours before

**Dennis came at 11.**

**5:30 p.m. Dennis left.** In the dark, of course. He left the usual mess, putting me way behind in my schedule again plus he didn't get all the things done. I knew he wouldn't have time.

He didn't get that wood cut, so I was out of (accessible) wood again. We burned up what I had extravagantly, making it hot in the cabin—hotter than we needed it. He didn't get around to my broom closet; in fact what I had gotten done was wrecked in moving it to get it out of the way. But he did get the linoleum done and cut and fixed, and fixed that shelf board for me in the living room, doing a fine job on both.

He liked the little dinner of a roast beef sandwich and a can of string beans, and my wreath and all my work. He said it looked really great and Christmasy and reiterated again about how he loved the cabin et al.

But the best of all was us scrambling clear up into the north woods in the light rain to look for a Christmas tree, he wearing plastic sacks over his tennis shoes to keep them dry. (They didn't last long!)

That was really fun...and hard work. We didn't find a fir, though we did stumble on a huge, beautiful fallen fir branch, some of which we lugged back for greens. We settled on a little hemlock and it was Christmasy to struggle back through the underbrush et al and see the lights of the cabin glowing and the fire warm to dry us when we came in.

I took a picture of Dennis coming up the west steps with the tree and greens with my new camera...."for posterity". [Post hoc: the picture did not come out—too dark.]

Dennis day—more on—

I saw him coming, but I waited until he'd seen the wreath. He was pleased.

He came in laden with four or five big bags of wrapped presents. We stashed them in the storage closet. He said he and Abbie had spent all their money and he hadn't even gotten her anything yet, "but ho ho ho...not to worry".

Later, while he'd worked on the bathroom, I had cleaned the stairway corner and set up the tree, using a green plastic garbage can for a container. The tree was beautiful—just right—green and bushy! I went to the organ and played "Tannenbaum" and other carols while Dennis worked. And the sentimentality worked? for he left carried away with Christmas spirit and love of cabin and plans to bring them all up for a tree trimming day with the decorations the kids had made. He said they were, at last, well, and so excited!

He even complimented me on my (shaky) playing and brought out that he'd written a poem—the first in ages—recently. And he said that Abbie would love the singing and organ as they'd never had any musical instruments when they were kids. I couldn't believe it! Eight kids and no music!

"I must remember to bring my harmonica," he said.

He was still toying with grandiose ideas of fixing up the cabin that I could have cared less about—like putting in a big dormer window with a view over the creek.

"By the time you build that," I'd said, cynically, "There won't be any view...be a shopping mall over there." (The way things were building up so fast all around.)

"Well," said Dennis, as we gave each other a big bear hug as he left, "We said we'd make it to have Christmas in here...and we did!"

"Yeah!" He glowed.

And so did I when he left. It had been a memorable day and it was going to be a memorable Christmas—just like a dream come true—the cabin story-book perfect as a Christmas setting.

I found my legs stiff and sore after our clamber in the woods. It was hard work for an old lady—and dangerous—the risk of falling in all that precarious footing. I had had to let Dennis go on ahead to the top of the hill, where he said he'd found a road of sorts—perhaps an old logging road. It was pretty up in there, unspoiled woods—even a hidden watercourse...

The phone rang. It was Abbie wanting to know when Dennis would be back. We remarked on how nice it was to have the phone so we could check on things like that. She said her family had given them a new stove for Christmas and asked me if I wanted Ed's little apartment sized electric stove. But, too late, I had't had the cabin wired for a stove, so I said no. (I didn't really want a stove with an oven, anyway—not being the baking kind of grandma—and it a good excuse not being "the hostess with the mostess".)

I let the fire go out and left the mess and sat and practised Christmas carols. It was fun. Then, refreshed, I did the dishes, cleaned the mess and fell into bed...happy.

**Monday, December 15.** Something I'd long noticed was that "peak" (happy) moments never lasted. I woke to radio news that there'd be another cold snap starting Thursday. That meant that everything would be more difficult: I'd have to take time from doing things I'd meant to do to bother with wood gathering; the driving would be bad for the kids' trip up; lousy weather for the shopping I'd be doing, and so on.

I'd lost the mood, but I forced myself to write and make homemade cards for my usual Christmas checks gifts. I risked putting off my shopping in the better weather, for I was very curious about a package "from Oregon" UPS had left a message about. (A gift from my Vancouver friends or what?) I finally called them—a complicated long distance call. "Not able to bring it until the next day. If gone, leave a signed note on the door." Darn! But, hey! There'd be somebody besides family to see my Christmas wreath!

The mail relieved me with a lesser electricity bill than I'd expected!

I was distressed to see that Marty had, indeed, another dog down there. Jake, the first one, was now well trained, but this one raised Cain every time I appeared. I cussed.

But then I was struck by the beauty of the December scene down in that old orchard, the brush all dormant now, I could see into it. That one apple tree was still laden with golden apples on bare branches and the ground was literally covered with golden apples. I saw movement—the grouse family in there! They chirped as I turned to go back in. Such a typical wintry, Christmasy scene—sketch? no no...things to do...But couldn't resist; went back and got stuff and did a sketch.

More old friends Christmas cards in mail!

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Later, I continued on my card making chore, "framing" my sketch as a gift for Mike and Marylyn, and then just slammed out the rest, impatient to get out in that rare weather. I finished by 2 p.m. and went to Sultan to mail them, glad of an excuse to get out.

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And it was kind of a fun trip: Sultan was so stereotypically "small town", everybody jolly and merry and in a holiday mood, leisurely, domestic and babies-laden, chatting, joking; no grim lines to wait in like in the city.

And the drive back was like on a summer day, and the moon up in the sky in broad daylight. "Hard to believe Mr. Winter would be back," as the man on the radio said. And one could see Mt. Rainier from the road on the way down. Dennis had questioned this, but one could!

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Such a beautiful day that, after I got back, I just grabbed tools and went down to work on wresting my "driveway" from the encroaching salmon-black berry vines and to cut off alder stumps I kept tripping over. I didn't dare use the axe, just chipped away with the hatchet. Maybe someday I'd be expert enough to whang away and cut kindling without chopping my foot off. I really enjoyed, especially after all the men and their dogs went away and it was peaceful and quiet except for the grouse family chirruping away down there. I stood and watched them and the brilliant white moon fading away into a pinky sunset.

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I went back to the cabin as it got dark. What a mess I'd left! I started to work on my Christmas garlands. I was so tired...when the phone rang. It was some man. "I understand you want a load of wood delivered up there?" "Who' calling? How'd you get my number?" I snapped. He began to laugh. It was Steve, Pam's husband, calling from Lacey, WA! "Just got your card!" they laughed and we chatted merrily. "How do you like your cabin?" they asked. "I love it!" I said. That was fun!

I worked away on my garlands, grieving at the futility of all Dennis' fuss and work on the linoleum, still lumpy—was too cheap a kind, evidently.

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About 8 p.m. I decided to call Marty and ask about her new dog. My gosh! She went on and on and on! I couldn't catch quite all she said she talked so fast and rather garbled. But I was shocked at all the things she told me were going on down there I didn't know about—Board meetings—things I wasn't being let in on—things on our street—things about the Witherows. the young couple I had thought so nice. "You're kidding!" I said, shocked. "Parker!" she said, irately, "He's carrying on a business down there!" "I know! I know!" I said. And so on. I hung up realizing I didn't get to know anything about what goes on down there with the McNabbs gone. Nobody was including me in.

I went to bed, tired, and got up and did my chores in the wee sma' hours, enjoying the fact that I could—now had the privacy and freedom to be able to.

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Tuesday, December 16. Woke marveling: "Heavy fog in Seattle". Sun! where I was! I lay and thought about how I'd like to have open house and have them all come and see our cabin while it looked all decorated and pretty. But I couldn't while the kids were here—I hadn't enough money, and...and... they wouldn't come anyway: the McNabbs—Marv was too sick—and the others—all busy"—and so on. I sighed—and gave upon social gestures.

By early afternoon, the UPS man still hadn't come with the mystery package. So I spent the time out cleaning porches and fixing the Christmas tree and, yes, gathering and chopping wood, This time I tried wielding the axe—did pretty well—was proud of wished somebody to admire! Pretty good for an old gal of 65!

I marveled when I realized I was working on the wood under the house and was bathed in sun—under a house. It made a spotlight on my work, which was splitting the wood into different sizes, and stashing it under house—enough to last awhile. Was fun! Enjoyed, this being the kind of work I'd visualized myself doing at cabin. There was sun all over, shining on the creek and tiny birds swooping and singing in their high-pitched, bell-like tones.

I worked on the Christmas tree, setting it up, bracing it with rocks of which I didn't have enough (there are very few rocks in my wood) Then I painted the shelf Dennis fixed, trimmed my greens on porch, cleaned the mess. It was all fun, and I was glad I'd done it when I did, as the fog rolled in.

The mail brought more cards with letters in them. How nice it was to have things in the mail! I liked Christmas!

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Early afternoon the phone rang. It was Edith. At first I was delighted, for the fog had stymied me on further plans, and would be fun for her to ask me down there—or why didn't I ask her to come up?

"Whatcha doing?" she asked. "I'm all alone, drinking wine."

"Yes?" I waited for the invitation.

But, instead, she went on and on, after "Would you mind my cats?" To stop her whining monologue, I finally said, "Look, Edith, why don't I walk down and get the key now?"

So I did, meek patsy that I was. Working on me about the cats, she put out, "We want to take you to dinner."

I'd heard that before. "Uh, why don't you just buy me a bottle?" I suggested

While we were talking—rather she was—one of her cats, the black one, went crazy!

Ears laid back, like pictures of a Halloween cat, it struck at her, hissed, growled, clawed her, drew blood!

"Darling!" she kept saying to it. Zzzt! went the cat. It was weird! (And I was supposed to feed that cat?) But for how long?

"Oh!" remembering, "I'll be busy!"

"Oh, but Dwaynes' gone..." she whined (I didn't blame him!) I took the key and got out of there—furious!

---

I tried to while away the foggy, foggy day waiting for the UPS man. By about 5 I'd given up for it was dark by then. But here he came, in the fog and dark, down the trail...and my long anticipated surprise package was...oly the vitvitamins I'd ordered through AARP's mail service. But, by that time I'd remembered what it would be, so...no shock.

That over, I got busy and found myself unpacking all my books, though I hadn't meant to. I was delighted to find they fitted exactly under the shelf Dennis had made. And I was delighted when, though tired, all through. I did feel, then. at home. I'd waited a lifetime to have a place to store those books—permanently!

I tackled the mess, one thing leading to another, of course, and ending, of course, rearranging the whole room to accomodate the tree. When the radio gave a little sermon about "giving of yourself for Christmas" I heard myself growl: why I agreed to Edith's request! Meow! Ssspit!)

My arm was very sore from my wood chopping, but I was still proud of my accomplishment and I'd learned something: those flying chips can be...lethal!

Then the moon rose while the radio played "Moonlight Sonata" and I was gripped with memories...I fell asleep

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Wednesday, December 17. I woke stiff and sore and the place a mess, but the weather report was good. I began to panic about Christmas: the tree stand wasn't working; the cats would be a big nusciance; and it didn't cheer me that Edith had said that no good son of theirs was going to move back in with Dwayne ; and I didn't know how long it would be before they'd be back and I could get rid of their it was spoiling my décor...

*ladder*

I got ready to go to Monroe. The sun was shining brightly, a very nice, crispy day, but there were deafening sounds of bulldozers and chain saws. And the radio was reporting a #7 earthquake off Vancouver island! But there were some more pleasing cards in the mail, including one with pictures of the cabin my brother took, the first ones anyone had!

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**Monroe:** I was home by 4:30, it being necessary to get home before dark on the now short days so I could see to lug stuff in. I was surprised to find Monroe blanketed in thick fog whereas I could look back to where the sun was still shining on my hill. I stayed longer than I'd meant to, shopping, and doing a wash. And I spent money buying things for my Christmas décor, like red ribbons, not necessary, granted, but fun.

In the bank I asked for 40 new one dollar bills (for gifts) and gift envelopes to put them, in, as the bank in Vancouver had done for me. She didn't have either—small town again. But she did go through the dingy bills trying to pick out the best ones.

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Coming in, home, I paused on the trail and studied my wreath with the porch light on it; it all looked very romantic and Christmasy. (Thank you for my cabin) I breathed as I went in.

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I called the kids, who said they'd be up Saturday to trim the tree, which sent off a thrill of trepidation in me. I told Abbie I was wearing that beautiful white poncho she'd knitted me to the Senior Center Christmas dinner the next day. (I was?) I had to go and dig it out.

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**Thursday, December 18.** I dressed and primped very painstakingly in the poncho, wearing red pants under it and that little "pixie" cap Abbie had made to go with it. I wasn't sure whether I looked cute...or...ridiculous.

The mail was full of more cards—family mostly—all saying they wanted to come and see the cabin! I did my house chores and set out.

And cussed at having to stop and tend those damned cats. What a mess Edith had left that place in!...By the golf course on the way down—people were out playing golf; even in winter! That always puzzled me. In Monroe, I stopped and got gas, feeling a little foolish in that getup and more so when I fancied that nice young man looked at me with rather an amused smile on his face.

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The Senior Center was jam-packed and the whole thing was dull and the food—awful! (salty turkey roll) and it took them 45 minutes to serve us. I thought I'd pass out from hunger, waiting, as I'd had no breakfast. The tables were all full and I had to sit in a deserted area, practically alone except for one old gal all well-dressed and bejeweled and coiffured—some local grande dame? She was certainly not the usual Senior Center type. But she turned out to be witty and funny and I enjoyed her. And old ladies admired my get-up, one old gal coming clear across the room to rave. "You look cute!" (The men shied away from me as if I were poison.)

There was a sophisticated, big-city-type newspaper photographer there. I could see he was looking for "good copy". Although he took many pictures, it seemed as if he had his camera always aimed at me. I kept "posing", thinking what a cute Christmas pixie I'd look in the local sheet followed by (You old fool!) But he didn't shoot until I turned my back! (And when the paper came out even that wasn't in it!)

I didn't linger; I got the hell out of there as fast as I could, only pausing to ask Lois who in hell was cutting down all the trees—the woods that had been right up to the Center. Nobody knew...or cared.

On my way out, I parked the car by what used to be the old Highway borrow pit. And I waded through all the mud in all my finery. "Hey, guys! What goes on?" I kidded them. "All those trees down up there? Isn't this the Highway borrow pit?" They looked at each other. "Uh...you mean state...or..." "State!" I said, and gabbled on enough to "show my credentials".

"Oh. Highway Department! Oh..yeah...well...they moved up the road...nice new headquarters!"

"With our money," I cried.

"Yeah. Yeah." They looked at me with that who-are-you? look.

I told my best SR-2 story—the local streams coliform count—of which the punch line was..."Shit! Shit!" I said. No reaction.

Then one guy cried, "Hey, look!" A column of smoke was rising from the reformatory area. They began to discuss their jobs and where they'd been working when they'd seen some other fire an inmate had set there. Since I hadn't, and thus excluded from the conversation, I took the hint and strode back to my car, thinking about how another example of all the misuse and manipulations of tax moneys I'd seen in the Highway Department. Oddly enough, there was a feather pillow lying in the mud at the roadside. I laughed. "...and featherbedding?" And left.

I went from there to that dingy, cold and deserted ("cheaper!") "warehouse market", where I shopped for about two hours, stocking up on everything I'd need for Christmas guests. Not having an oven to cook turkey in, I bought five little Cornish hens, hoping I could get them into my electric "wok" pan.

When I got home, though tired from lugging all that stuff in, I went to porch to try to see why all the dogs were barking so, but saw no reason except a full moon. (Do dogs really bark at the moon?) The radio mentioned (Henry) Kiss-inger... (At the Senior Center all the old guys were kissing all the old gals under the, supposedly, hidden mistletoe. Nobody kissed me. I sighed and went in and took off my finery.

**Friday, December 19.** I got up and got ready to tackle my Christmas preparation chores—so much to do!—and, irritated at the time one wastes trying to decide the appropriate clothes to wear for the day's wished I'd been born with fur.

Fun! I put up a little tree by the doorsteop with pieces of bread on it for the birds. I'd found some charming imported little birds in town I wanted to put on it, but I didn't for they looked so realistic I was afraid they'd only attract the cats.

I finished the curtains and the broom closet, and when the mail still hadn't come by early afternoon, I phoned the post office, though every call was charged long distance, to ask about it, for I'd put out some to be picked up with the flag up. "Oh, yes," they said, "She'd been there—(SHE!?)—but there hadn't been any mail for me." I cussed. Small town again!

By afternoon I'd finished my evergreen swag and had it up. It looked great—very "olde English". Then I tackled the tree, having to guy wire it, it tippy in only that bucket. In another hour I had it all up and fixed. I was exhausted, but it was done and it looked very pretty and Christmasy. I took a couple of pictures and fell into bed.

About 9 p.m. Phone woke me. It was Edith—and a weird call. For some reason she offered to let me off the hook about tending the cats, but I demurred "politely" saying it was "ok". "Why don't you come by during the holidays and get the key and I'll buy you a drink." I said.

I went back to sleep, noting it had started to rain.

4a.m. I woke and found myself fas excited as a kid about Christmas. I couldn't sleep anymore. I got some bright ideas about more things I meant to do—like stringing those Tibetan bells Abbie had give me across the steps for tinkle, tinkle—and crazily got up and did it in the predawn!

**Saturday, December 20.** I woke to a dark, dreary, rainy day. wishing the kids would let me kow when they were coming as I always got ready too soon and wasted a lot of wood keeping the fire going, waiting.

I got up and prepared all my last minute atmosphere things: I built a fire, put spices on the stove to make it smell Christmasy—a trick I'd learned from a fancy hostess in my past. I turned Christmas carols on...the stage was all set.

The phone rang.

It was Dennis. "Uh...we...ell. You want us?"

"Why, Sure!"

"We...ell. Noah has a cold...and I don't think Abbie will come..."

I got a little stern. "Am I hearing you don't want to?"

"Oh...no. Ok." He sighed. "Will be up about noon."

I hung up, hurting bad; I'd even put Abbie's new bedspread on the bed.

I went up to the loft and cried.

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Noon. Nobody. And I'd wasted a lot of wood. Past noon. Nobody. I felt like letting out one loud primal scream; were they coming or weren't they?

---

They were. And did. They came soon after the above, and left about 5:30, it already getting dark by then.

---

It turned out to be a wonderful, wonderful party! And Abbie did come.

The kids came laden with paste, paper and things to make trimmings for the tree, to which I added some more stuff. They were busy, busy busy all afternoon, making all kinds of ornaments. It was so Christmasy: everyone working like crazy on tree décor, the fire going and all.

"Too bad, " I'd said to Dennis, "all this and nobody to see it."

Then. "There's someone at the door," Dennis said.

It was Edith with a big plate of homemade divinity candy! She came in and hugged me.

"Sit!" I cried, and went to get her some wine.

"Gee!" she said, "You sure have the Christmas spirit here!"

We sat and talked. It was so nice to have a guest; just purr-fect, for they all sat and talked about...cats.

The kids were so quiet and polite while she was there, I was much surprised; I never got to see their social manners much. Dennis and Abbie were very gracious to her, and said afterwards they thought she was nice, but the catty talk must have rubbed off on me; must say I got a little bored with her non stop me-me-me talk; I'd heard it all before.

And, though it was nice to sit around and talk, we didn't have much time. And she kept lighting yet another cigarette and eyeing that wine jug until I hinted at her, "You are driving back tonight?" That didn't work, so I boldly asked the kids when they had to leave. That did it. She left.

"What's divinity?" Sarah asked. I couldn't resist. "It's something President Carter tried for, Reagan hopes for and we all try to find!" (Ha ha.)

For food we had the cocoa and chili I'd tended so long on the stove before they came. It was consumed gratefully with the sandwiches and snacks and grapejuice and bananas for the kids Abbie had brought. Abbie wasn't drinking; seems she had a hangover from a big evening with her family the night before, (which may have accounted for her attempt to beg out?)

I thought I had them all filled up when Noah wanted to know if I had any popcorn? I went out to the car, where I'd left a lot of groceries, to get it. This was when Edith was still there. I gloated, seeing three cars in my driveway! Like a party! Noah did the popcorn. Seems it was for garlands to hang on the tree.

After Edith left, I fooled around at the organ with carols. And they all began singing and then the kids tried the organ and Abbie took many pictures with my camera. It was all very much fun.

Dennis was pleased with the way the linoleum looked, but announced he wanted to work more on it and glue it all down. I groaned inwardly at the prospect of more disruption, but appreciated his wanting to do a good job.

Abbie cleaned up most of the mess before they left, saying they'd be back for Christmas and bring both cats (groan) "And I'm going to sleep in the loft!" Noah announced. (Groan) he already had demonstrated what a good commanding captain's control deck that open loft made.

They left me with the most wonderfully old-fashioned, homey Christmas tree and Edith forgot her plate and the kids forgot their glue. As the old homily said, a sign we want to come back?

It was a nice party.

I took a nap and then got up to see the full moon lighting up the woods.

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**Sunday, December 21.** Winter solstice! I awoke after a good sleep to find the day dark and drear. Later, it started raining like hell. I worked on cleaning the bedroom, the storage and the closet. It was a joy to have my own place and clean it in my own way without interruption or interference.

In afternoon, I worked on the rest of the house, even cleaned the floor; the big houseclean for Christmas. It looked Christmasy and clean and shiny when I came back in from the car. Poor car, out there in the wind and rain; it looked like raped woman, it's "skirt" (cover) up over its head.

Evening. I hung up my cards to Christmas music, and then, thinking of the kids talking about "pinatas" got the bright idea of how I could wrap their dollar bill gifts and spent most of the evening creating long, snakelike "pinatas".

I fell into bed, tired, and puzzling over where the fine black grit in my bed and clean house had come from when I hadn't had a fire.

---

**Monday, December 22.** There had been a big boom in the night that had rather scared me. This, the day I wanted to clean the stove out, I woke up to a morning as black as night; how could one clean out a black stove on a black day? But, later, I did get the stove done and blacked (literally. And so was I!)

There was a nasty, cold wind blowing outside. I found a fairly large branch fallen by the porch.

I cleaned the loft and then went out to go to the store.

**The car wouldn't start!** And the hood was partly open! What in the world!? I studied all my manuals and car care articles. I ran back in and got the pliers and tried to do what they said. No use. All rusted.

Nearly crazed, and scared to death I'd "blow" the battery fussing with it, I tried everything.

Then I got out the manuals and tried starting the car the way they advised (I'd never done it that way before.) The car started right up!

The mail brought more cards with letters.

---

I did go to the store, then, stopping on the way to feed the (censored!) cats, who were feisty.

Evening, I took some pictures of the clean Christmas cabin and called Marie and Lu and wished them Merry Christmas. Then, after a nap, I got up in the middle of the night and cleaned the kitchen

---

**Tuesday, December 23** was a dark and wet day. I went into Monroe, where I spent 3 hours—an awful lot of money—finishing up my Christmas shopping. I even bought gifts for the cats! (Not Edith's!) All went well; the car acted all right, and, in fact, it was fun! People were cheery and friendly. Christmas spirit? It was the first time when I bought a snack in that bakery snack bar a young gal asked if she could join me and was friendly, polite, and fun. Usually I sat alone, ignored.

**That evening,** not having heard from Carrie or Shelley, I called Carrie long distance...and wished I hadn't. She had bad news: her plans had gone awry.

And then I made other family calls, forgetting how late it was. I got Paula out of bed (oh boy!) and Alice had depressing news...so...

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**Wednesday, December 24,** Christmas Eve day and the day Dennis and Abbie and the kids (and cats) were to come. Checking with a call to them, they said they'd come at 12:30 instead of 1:30, which threw me into a tizzy, for I was way behind in all I'd meant to do. And I was in a blue funk from those phone calls. Besides I'd forgotten to get coffee and I'd have to catch the kids and ask them to bring some. Besides, it was a gray, wet day; I felt depressed, discouraged and defeated.

I got the kids about 9 and told them about the coffee/ And that was the last I heard from them.

Noon came and went. 1 o'clock. My precious wood was burning up fast. I sat by the window and seethed, vowing I'd never again have guests. I didn't dare leave the phone for fear I'd get a call that their car had broken down, or something. I couldn't put the roast in until I knew..and/or what Abbie was bringing, and so on.

I had the radio on to listen for the traffic news. And then...the first clue..."There is a traffic mess..I-5 north blocked allthe way down to Spokane Street"...near where they lived, but not the way they come? All I could do was sit and wait....

They appeared, late, with no explanation why.  
And in such a hubbub...no chance to ask.  
And with only one cat—after all my cat shopping.

They immediately wanted to use my camera, Dennis even running down to the store to get more film and flashes; they said they wanted to take lots of pictures. (They did.)

FIRST CHRISTMAS AT THE CABIN

What a weekend! Nice moments/bad moments; friction/fun; some fine, peak moments. In toto—in retrospect—a wonderful Christmas, food, gifts, effects and all, lavish and memorable.

They all had bad colds and were sniffing, snuffling, hacking, coughing, complaining. Abbie and Noah were strewing such a trail of Kleenexs that I finally suggested to Noah that he put them in the stove."Hey! I never thought of that!" he said.

I'd gotten stuff for (traditional) hot rums. I urged some on them, thinking the liquor would help, but they didn't like; they took rum, but with the perpetual Coco Cola—"rum and coke".



At last! In the cabin! My visions of was: house all Christmasy, tired kids in bed, music softly playing on radio, fire going, hot rums...It wasn't like that at all.

"Going to be hard to get the kids settled down," I said, "Christmas Eve and all."  
"Yeah," Dennis said, "they were up very late last night...party...Abbie's family..."

And all of us cooped up in a "one room" house, in the rain...and not exactly used to that. We'd just have to stick it out, until the kids settled down and we could get the presents under the tree.

Well, first, Noah, who'd laid claim to the cot bed in the loft, where he could overlook the living room, announced he was going to bed at 8.

"No!" Dennis pleaded. "Bedtime is at 9!"  
"But they are obviously tired, " I whispered.  
"Yeah, but they'll be up in the wee sma' hours!"  
Then ensued a scramble about beds; the arrangement I'd set up—Sarah to sleep downstairs until Noah settled down, she didn't like. She wanted to sleep in her usual place in the loft on the camp cot . This meant that Dennis had to go down under the house and dig out the cot, and then out in the rain to get her sleeping bag. That took a bit of doing. Finally all seemed quiet inthe loft.  
"They're asleep! "Abbie announced. I doubted. "Oh I know they are" she cried."I went up and pinched their noses so they couldn't breathe and they didn't stir!" I was horrified; I'd never heard of such a thing, nor could I believe a body unable to breathe wouldn't stir. I suspected they were "playing possum". Ah well.

Abbie went to lie down on the big bed and read. I'd put the radio on to Christmas music, soft. Dennis and I were trying to talk softly. Then...  
"Hey! Mom! Dad! Willya turn the radio off? I can't sleep!" Noah.  
I objected, "I want to hear the Christmas music!.if we can't hear it Christmas Eve..." Grandma and grandson began a battle. I lost.  
"Mom? Dad? Will you please turn off the lights and quit talking!"

In the ensuing endless, it seemed, hours I mentioned the kid needed a good spanking. "But it's ChristmaS!" Dennis pleaded. He went... outside. I put in ear plugs and did the dishes. Finally all quiet upstairs ( and downstairs). "I think I'll take a shower and wash my hair,"Abbie announced and came out with my noisy hair dryer going full blast. It was midnight.

"What's that!?" Noah's face appeared at the loft railing. I groaned. Abbie dried her hair and went back on the bed to read. More waiting. I went sneaking out to the porch to nip into next day's dinner wine. Dennis was pacing there and shaking the (empty) rum bottle

Abbie went to sleep. Dennis and I sat, glum, waiting. Finally, three hours after the kids were in bed and way past midnight all was silent enough so that Dennis and I dared start putting the gifts under the tree. He went out to the car and began to bring in so many big, big, big packages that I couldn't help wondering how in the world those kids could afford all that. We fell into bed.

I was very uncomfortable on the couch; I rolled and tossed. It seemed that everytime I made a move somebody started to cough. Finally someone was coughing so badly I asked, "That you, Abbie?"

"Yes."

"Would you like a cough drop?"

"Oh, yes!"

I stumbled around and finally found one in my purse. "Thanks." She went to sleep.

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**Night.** Just before dawn, Noah got up and sneaked halfway down the stairs to check on the packages under the tree. I shone my flashlight on him. He went back to bed. At 7 I cringed as the radio came on; I'd forgotten to mute it. I reached and turned it off. Nobody woke. It was pitch black, though dawn. Sarah came down and went to the toilet, and went back to bed. "See you in the morning," she said.

*Pismo*



Christmas day

And then it began—Christmas. The kids emptied their stockings first, cute and gleeful. We grown ups, as so often seems to happen on Christmas day, were tired and glum and irritable (I wonder why!?) finding it hard to keep up with all the merry merry bit.

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**The package opening.** The usual frenzy. It seemed all those huge, extravagant presents for the kids were from Abbie's mother and father. This relieved me, as I couldn't imagine the kids, so poor, spending that much.

They gave me a bird book and a mushroom book, both from Canadian sources. "That's odd," I said, "I dreamed that I was going to school in Canada!" "We used them at the "U"(University)," Dennis said.

After the gift opening, it became frantic, for one gift the kids got from the rich grandparents was a huge, intricate remote control car layout, complete with automatic lights, etc. Dennis spent all day putting it up and fussing over it, while I had to resort to moving the table up against the wall, for the darned thing took up half the cabin! While Dennis and the kids fussed with it, I fussed with trying to prepare my fancy table setting and dinner with all that underfoot. Abbie, who'd hardly ever been to the loft, retreated up there and spent most of the day there working a jigsaw puzzle, for there was no room below, what with the toys and the tree and grandma fussing in her little kitchen space.

The day was wet and rainy, cooping us all up. Dennis' gift to Noah had been a basketball with the idea of going down to the community park, where there was a basket set up, and teach Noah.

"You can't get in," I said, "they've got it all locked up.

"Jeez!" Dennis swore.

We all did, though, take walks in the woods to allay our cabin fever, all except Noah, the one who looked the most feverish, his cheeks bright red, I assumed with weariness and excitement.

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**About 5 p.m.** My dinner more or less ready, I called Abbie down from the loft..." Wine time!"

She came down and kept the fire and candles going, though it was hot in the cabin. "I like a fire! I like candles!" she said.

I kidded about our two cars sitting out there "talking"; "They know it's Christmas Eve," I said. "Oh, Lorna!" said Abbie.

**The dinner.** I'd gotten out all my table finery for this the long, long awaited time to use it—tablecloth, the whole bit. But, since the table pushed to the wall I decided to make it a buffet. No no. Abbie got Sarah to set the table and brought out her yummys she'd brought.

I just had everything ready to serve when Noah called for all the lights to be turned out, so he could try the lights on the car toy. "Later!" I begged, and finally won. My hens turned out better than I'd expected. The kids were leery of them, never having seen them before. I was in no mood to quibble: "Here," I said, and put one on each plate. "Just stand and look at it!" When they tried it, they loved it, and ate and ate and ate. I'd gotten out my "family heirloom" (horns?) handled carving set. "Here," I said, "I'd like you kids to have this. Do you have any?" "Err...um m.." Finally they said they'd take them.

Dinner over, Abbie did the dishes. I had, at some point, gone out to get something out of the car; the car wouldn't start when I tried it! But I let it be for the time being.

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And then we had a nice, quiet, peaceful evening, the kids so tired they about to fall down on their feet. Abbie was upstairs, working on her puzzle. She came down. "Bedtime!" And then all hell broke loose! She and the kids got the sillies and horsed around for three hours!

"Oh well," Dennis said, "the kids may be up all night, but they'll sleep all day tomorrow."

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**Friday, December 26.** He was so right. they all did. I woke early, but there were sleeping bodies all over. 'so I rolled over and went back to sleep. But about 9:30 I remembered the garbage. I'd called them and they'd said there would be a pickup. So I got up and tried to gather it up without waking anyone. Luckily, it was warm enough so we didn't need a fire, but Dennis roused and got up and offered to take it out for me.

"Give me your car keys," he said, "and I'll see if the car starts." I watched as he went out to try it, wondering why my car always acted up when my sons were around. And then I flew out, hair awry and clothes just thrown on, for he had the hood up and clouds of black smoke were pouring out of my car and down the street. "Dennis!" I cried. "All that black smoke! Pouring out!" "There is?" "It's the samething it was doing when Mike was here!" I cried, alarmed. "I don't know anything about cars; I'm not a mechanic." But he bitched and fumed and fussed around. Then, "You've got big troubles! It's your carburetor! I can't do anything about it."

"It's doing the same thing as when Mike was here! Let's call him! (No?) A Christmas call!" "Oh, no," he snotted. "Well, what'll I do?" he asked giving a hopeless shrug. "Well, let's knock it off and go eat."

We went back in. Abbie and Sarah were up. "There's toast and jam," I said and went to the phone, as Dennis roamed and eyed me. "Busy," I said, "my party line." And the I got through. "Hi! Merry Christmas!" And so on, et cetera. "Hi, Mike! What was your big Christmas present?" "A computer!" "Oh, wow!...Hey! I've got car troubles. Wanta talk to Dennis about it?" "Sure!" Dennis got on and they talked and talked. "Oh?" Dennis was saying, "Oh...do what?...and...uh...say...I owe you a Christmas present..."

When he hung up, Mike says..." he said. And he and I flew down to the car. "This time I'm taking notes!" I said, and grabbed pencil and paper and felt like a surgical nurse as Dennis worked on and I made notes. "Hey! white smoke!" I yelled at Dennis. His eyebrows shot up and there was a big smile on his face—happy. Problem solved. "Mike had already marked the carburetor setting," he said, and grinned, wiping his dirty hands and collecting the tools. "Mike said you'd better put a quart of oil in it."

During this, two things happened: Abbie and the kids came down and Ron, the neighborhood idiot brat, advanced from below with a new bebe gun in his hands. "Oh no!" I groaned. Sarah and Noah fled back to the cabin.

But Abbie advanced to Ron. "Oh my! what a nice gun! May I try it?" And she did, I ducked—just to be sure.

Then I railed at Ron, "Look, will you please get out of here!? We've got troubles!"

Abbie objected. "Well, some kids you can't be nice to," I snarled.

Ron gave me a mean look and turned around and shot the gun down into the orchard where the grouse family was.

I flew into a rage. "You get out of here!" I cried.

---

We went back into the cabin. "Don't you like Ron?" Sarah asked me. Well, I used to...kids...but it's what they let them do..."

We went back to the cabin, and, the weather better, the rains eased off, Sarah and Dennis and I went and explored the woods—to find the property lines and look for mushrooms.

"Sarah can look for them, she's closer to the ground," I joked.

"Daddy! Daddy! Found one!" It turned into a nature study stroll, Dennis giving us a science lecture about the woods. We took the mushroom in and I got out the magnifying glass and we were very absorbed.

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Then we sat around and talked, Dennis and Abbie day dreaming about going to Alaska until I dragged out the Atlas and checked the rainfall **there**...and they decided not. The phone rang.

It was my brother calling from Seattle. "You ok up there? News...we heard Sultan flooded...under 3 inches of water! Index—3 cabins swept away..."

Why, we're ok," I said, surprised at the news (the kids had objected to my having the radio on.)

So they started to scramble to get going, they already an hour later than the 2 o'clock they'd meant to leave by. I walked them down the trail.

"Well, see you in the spring!"

"Oh? Aren't you coming down again?"

"Oh...doubt it..." They all got in the car, all packed with all their new goodies.

"Get out!" Dennis screamed at the kids, "the car's on fire!" It was streaming gas and smoke and...flames!

Abbie tried to explain to the kids and I tried to invent some games to distract them. It was 4:30 before Dennis crawled out from under his car,

"Well...guess...ok...Let's get going!"

I waved them off.

And then went in the house and sat glued to the radio:

"Terrible floods! As bad as the one in '75!"

And kept phoning the kids. I finally got them, they ohing and ahing about "the terrible floods! The river! etc." but they'd made it ok.

I collapsed into bed. It was a **very interesting** Christmas!

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**Saturday, December 27.** I was annoyed to wake and find the sun shining **after** they'd gone when we'd had to put up with all that rain. I tried to sleep in and rest up, but finally decided to get my store errand over with.

I was furious when, down the street, I had to risk driving through gunfire, for some young man was out teaching Ron to shoot that gun, they shooting up and down and **across** the street indiscriminately.

---

When I got back, I called Marty, whom Ron bothered, too, and told her that brat now had a bebe gun. She hadn't known and blasted off about it.

What can we do about it?" I asked.

"Call the sheriff," she said and gave me the number.

I called and got passed around from one person to another. Finally, a man.

I asked him what the rules were about that—allowed or not?

"Not much we can do about it," he said. "We can come and talk to the kid and make him realize the dangers (Ha! talk to Ron? I thought) or you can talk to his parents."

"But it's his parents that are showing him how!" I wailed. "They're out there now." And I described.

"Well, he's not supposed to shoot across a road."

"Well...thanks."

I sighed and hung up.

---

I went out and checked. They were still there. The young man was working on his car, back to me. Because I feared tangling with him, I got in the car and drove down there and stopped.

Ron was on my driver's side of car looking for something to shoot at.

He waved at me, all friendly and totally unconscious of doing anything wrong.

I rolled the window down. "Uh...I just talked to the sheriff; he says you can't shoot across a road." Ron's face broke up and I realized he was going to go crying to his mother...(and then I would be in trouble.)

I turned the car and went back, watching in the rear view mirror. He went over to the guy and said something. The guy just worked on and Ron wandered off. Oh boy! I sure hated to think of daring that street again! Lorna, the troublemaker!

---

I wanted to get rid of Cases' key and find out more about the flood. I called both Lu and Marie, but they seemed more curious than concerned. Not getting any information from them I tried Cases'. No answer. So I got in the car and went down there.

At Cases' I was alarmed to see a pickup with a motorcycle in it there, and hoped it didn't mean that no-good son of theirs was back. All we needed was an insolent young man with a motorcycle around. But no one was there. I sat in the car and counted the cars and abandoned jalopies in their yard. Eight! and Edith's and Dwayne's cars gone. Migawd! I thought, this nice "retirement community club" is starting to look like a car dump! And no "Members of the Board" home or available. First it was dogs; now jalopies...and motorcycles...and guns!

---

I went on to the store. The car worked fine. There was a black storm cloud over our hill, but people, the Highway all looked normal. I talked to the woman at the checkout stand. "Any floods?...Sultan?"

"No, everything ok." I couldn't believe how all that water had disappeared so fast!

"Well, people calling me from Seattle," I laughed. "Just want to check and see how bad it is."

"Me, too!" she cried. "I never had so many phone calls in my life!"

---

When I went back there was nobody round; the place was all deserted.

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I spent the rest of the day recording our Christmas.

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**Sunday, December 28.** I had a nice long sleep in the loft and then woke and girded my loins to go down and face that mess. It was nice to have plenty of uninterrupted time to do it.

---

Later I called Cases' and found him home. I told him about Ron and the gun.

"I'm with you all the way, Lorna. Darrell will probably beat the hell out of the kid."

While in my "good citizen/ trouble maker" role I called Darrell, Ron's father.

"Hey, does Ron have an eye problem?"

"Yes, he does." (That accounted for the oddness of his "look")

"Well, he told you, didn't he, that I called the sheriff—my grandkids here and he shooting..." etc.etc.

"No, he didn't."

"Why don't you set up a target and let him practice?"

"We did."

"Well, the sheriff says one can't shoot across a road."

"Oh? I didn't know that ! Thanks."

I gulped as I hung up—Lorna, the troublemaker! I thought of nice it was when I was just camping—before all the people came.

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December 28

29

30

31...

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**Monday** a dismal rainy day, I spent dismantling all the festive Christmas trimmings with the accompanying "Party's over" thoughts...

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**Tuesday**...I kind of got the New Year's Blues, summing everything up; the expectations; the disappointments.

I called Marie about the Ron thing and that made me blue for it was the first time she'd ever gotten that snippy with me.

"We members of the Board can't police your street! You'll all just have to take care of your own problems!" She did say, however, that they had written to the owner of the place Darrell was renting and asked him to make Darrell take some of that junk out of there.



---

**Wednesday, New Year's Eve Day...**

The radio said the flood damage the last week had been \$9 million's worth...That there would be unusually mild weather for the next three days...

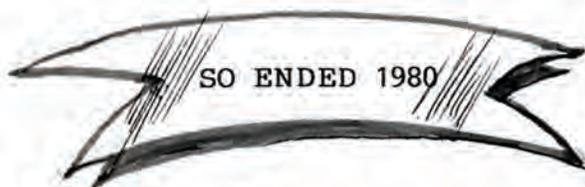
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I, finally—my house back in order—got myself cleaned up and went to Monroe. It seemed ages since I'd been dressed up.

On the way, I saw Ron and his dad moving furniture out of that shabby little trailer home. Moving? Darrell sounded cross and snappish with Ron.

---

In the evening I made New Year's calls to the family.



# Cabin History #3

Jan 1981 ---



# 1981

## January

Wednesday, New Year's Eve

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I spent the evening phoning everyone I knew: my aunt, my brother, former co-workers in Vancouver, Dennis!

He, like everyone else, was listening to the football game. I kidded him about betting with him on the game, though he claimed he didn't care at all about the outcome, and Abbie calling out that he couldn't afford to bet. We talked about the cabin until Noah summoned him for something. He said the kids were all excited about getting to stay up for New Year's Eve..

**Thursday, January 1** I spent alone. I had indulged myself in a big shopping spree the day before, buying new dress type winter boots, new perfume, and supplies for a festive dinner and celebration—by myself.

The weather was thick fog all day, so that the cabin seemed to be floating in misty woods, as if I'd disappeared from the again reminding me of that movie, "Brigadoon".

Later I'd amused myself doing a big primp, washing my hair and trying out the new perfume. Unable to find my favorite kind, I'd gotten "Muguet de Bois", a scent fitting for my disappearance into the woods? Later, cabin fever assailing me I tried out new boots in a walk to the car, amused to find that I'd happened to throw on clothes just the color of all the fallen leaves. It was still foggy out there and eerier than ever with crows cawing and muffled thuds coming from fog-shrouded figures moving around down by Parkers'.

Idly curious if they were moving, I called neighbors. Cases didn't know, though Dwayne said he'd seen a load go out. Marty was chatty...and catty ; said she'd seen a mattress go out, and then went on at great length prying at me about the Cases and complaining about all the old clunker cars around there and at Parker's and about the young Witherows next to her. I regretted calling Marie Easterly for she was snippy and denied the gate to the community park was ever locked when I asked her about it.

I gave up on the neighbors and went back to trying to amuse myself. There was nothing on the radio but the blasted ball games. I built a little fire out of precious wood gatherings; I cooked too much festive food, ate and fell asleep and woke to cold and dark, dim cabin. I gave up and divested myself

of my holiday finery, bundled up in any old warm clothes that came to hand and crawled into bed to read and keep warm.

I woke up in the wee sma' hours very much in the opposite mood of my liting claims of loving my cabin of the night before.

My first winter in the wet woods with unfriendly neighbors and no social outlets was already getting to me? Winter weary and cave crazy? Did I want to call it quits? No. Besides—how could I?



**Friday, January 2**

was full of weather vagaries, one moment sparkling sun and steam rising, the next fog rolling in again.

I spent all morning just doing endless necessary domestic chores, wondering where I'd ever gotten the idea I was going to come to cabin and spend most of my time enjoying my new loft being an artist.

Later, dressed up and cheered by thank you cards in the mail, I gathered all my films and set off to take them in for developing.

On the way down to Sultan, I noted that Parkers seemed to be gone, but the junker cars still there, and a bulldozer on its way up to the next cul. Both things which depressed me; my quiet, pretty, rural area wasn't going to be what I'd hoped it would be?

I was very surprised to see the whole Sultan valley all socked in with fog—like a big white lake, and was glad we'd built up on the hill when I went back home and found the sun still shining up there.

Sultan was all fogged in. I watched a young guy and gal stagger out of a local tavern, both clamber onto one motorcycle and roar down the main street despite the dense fog right pass the police station. Nothing happened.

In the market at the foot of the hill I wondered if my being dressed up had anything to do with the newly unctuous treatment I got from formerly very indifferent check out gals there or if I was more self assured and friendly when dressed up?

On the way back I decided to call on my neighbors and see what was new. I dared to stop at Easterleys'. Marie met me at the door and was cordial enough, but kept me outside until I stated the reason for my call: "Did the Parkers move?"

"Come in!" And I was there a long time.

Their very nice house was still Christmas decorated and very comfortable. Her husband, Orv, was there.

They, too seemed very upset about the new houses mushrooming in Sultan Estates, especially by the new one very close next door to them.

At one point I was admiring the view they had from their porch. "Look at that!" I cried—the Sultan Valley all fogged in.

"Yes! But look at that!" Marie cried. "Can you see it?" Mt. Rainier, misty, but beautiful. They are are only house in Sultan Estates with a view. I was envious.

Marie beganto pump me about the Parkers. She and Orville members of the Board, yet they didn't know they were leaving. "Nobody tells me anything!" she snotted. She said Parkers had been paying \$800 a month for that dumpy place! And that the board had called the sheriff's office about Parkers leaving those jalopies on the road shoulder and were told "that they couldn't haul them away unless they were on private property,"(whi ch seemed odd.)

"You sure have a lot of trouble on your cul-de-sac, don't you?"she continued. "All you people up there—so chummy!"

I was astounded. "Why, we hardly speak!" I said.

When I told her about how dim my lights were preparatory to asking about the Sultan Estates' power pump, she snapped, "Well, get yourself some brighter bulbs!"

"I do!" I cried and told her about what the man had said about power surges hard on bulbs. She flounced on Orv, Do we have **power surges** (snottily) here?"

I never did get to ask about the power pump, though I was privately curious if things like all those Christmas decoration lights of theirs might be a drain on the power. I was getting a little surprised at Marie, who'd always seemed so sweet. She pried at me so that I was beginning to feel like a tattletale and her answers were so vinergary and sarcastic sounding. Then she began to lecture me again about making complaints to the board—the "we are not policemen!" bit.

So that I began to aim my talk at Orv, who seemed to make more sense.

"Oh he can't hear a word you say!" she flapped a dismissing hand at him.

"Yes, I can!" Orv said.

So I began to talk to him more. But I felt it was time to go.

Saying goodbye at the door, I noticed a strange looking plant in their garden. "How strange!" popped out of me. "Oh! Brussels sprouts! I've never seen them growing before!" Orv came out. "I...those..." I said, hoping he'd give me some...No, but...

"Say! I'd like to come up and see your place sometime!"

"Please do!" I said, and left feeling better; at least Orv likes me?

He was a very good looking man.

(Whoops! I thought, as I drove away—(and maybe a "teepee creeper"?)

When I stopped at Cases they were all there and there were many no-good cars parked around haphazardly. My car spluttered and acted up as I stopped and Edith's car refused to start when she came out to leave as I got out, making me wonder if there was some kind of catching car disease going around?

I hailed her down to give her their key.

"Oh, just give it to Dwayne," she said.

But when her car wouldn't go Wayne and this dingy young man came out and began to work on it.

"Hi!" I said, thinking it was their son, David.

But he and another equally dingy young man who'd also come out both just ignored me rudely as young people now did.

I stood and chatted with Edith while the guys worked on her car. She looked awful, her hair not even combed, though she said she was off to town to see people and settle some police citation, or something, her daughter had gotten.

As we stood there, the Parkers, who'd been packing that big truck to the hilt when I'd driven by earlier, drove by. The front seat was full of a bunch of "Okie" type people who who never even returned Edith's wave and greeting as they went by, though they stared openly at us all.

I left and went on, detouring up to the next cul-de-sac, curious about where the bulldozer had gone up there, and saw only a guy clearing with a chain saw and a new double mobile home since I'd last been there.

Going farther up to the end of Woods Lake Road, I saw what Dwayne had meant about not being able to get in there, for that is where all those gravel trucks had been going and it was all blocked off in a cul-de-sac full of new gravel and mud and No!No! signs, one saying "Private Property" and one saying "Loggers".

I had to turn back, frustrated and puzzled about what was going on in that deserted, homeless area that I had thought all the time was a public road up to a lake.

I went back and stopped to talk to Marty to tell her what Marie had said about the abandoned cars. She agreed with me that there seemed to be some collusion between the sheriff and the people in Sultan Estates.

I asked her if Ralph got his job. she didn't answer me, but implied they were very unhappy there and might move.

When I told what Marie had said about Parkers paying \$800 rent, she cried, "That's a lot of bs! They only paid about \$350!" I didn't know which to believe.

I went on home, but finding it chill and dank and dark in the cabin and under the trees compared to the sun below I opted to stay out front and worked happily rigging up a plastic tarpaulin to park my car under. I felt like a sailor rigging up a sail, tying knots in supporting cords to trees with my gnarled old hands. I was quite proud of it when finished.

I drove my car under it and then headed into the cabin, feet wet and new boots all muddy, thinking how nice it would be to walk into a warm and cozy cabin. But, it was up to me. So I built a fire.

And I was very snug and happy, fire crackling, little teakettle burbling, in big chair bundled in new slippers and the "snuggly" blanket robe. I sighed. Now that was more the way I had imagined it would be: work in fresh air and then coziness!

Later I tried to call Bishop, some of our old Highway Department VIPS in news I wanted to ask him about, but his wife, Judy said he wasn't there and she'd have him call me. He never did.

Saturday, January 3. I awoke to sunshine. I wrote a letter to Mike and Marylyn and caught the mail gal and gave it to her. Then, when mail had a bill for only \$66 for PUD versus the huge bill we'd thought we'd have, I dashed off another post card to Mike and called Dennis and told him.

He was delighted, too. He said there was no sun there and he wished they were at the cabin where he and Noah could play basketball, after I'd told him that I'd found out the park gate was not kept <sup>locked</sup>, after all. We exchanged what other news we knew and hung up.

On the way to errands in Sultan, I stopped to check the park gate and found it chained! So, on the way home, I stopped to see what Finesilver, our new board president, would say about it. Nobody was home so I risked Marie again.

This time she was very sweet, and explained "Oh yes! they kept a key at their house in case anyone wanted to get in." She even offered a ladder if Dennis wanted to clean the skylights!

It was such a nice, sunny day that I spent all of it outside and really enjoyed. I cleared brush from the area around the car, no longer treasuring the berry bushes (salmon berry and blackberry) since I'd found out they were so prolific as to be considered weeds by natives. This exposed the woods and fern area which made for a prettier first impression entrance into the cabin trail. But I left a buffer of alders and brush to screen my car and the cabin from the street.

I piled the brush from which I'd salvaged twigs for kindling on a gravelly area and tried to burn it but it was too green.

There was no sign of the Parkers coming back, but there was very, very loud music coming from around Marty's place, who'd complained to me of her noisy neighbors. She came out and left in her car, paying no attention to me working there.

I was trying to get through in time to enjoy the sun in the woods behind the cabin while I burned Christmas boxes and papers, but I didn't make it in time. The sun was gone there, by the time I lugged the boxes and threw them off the porch. But daylight still lingered, which surprised me; I hadn't yet learned that the trees cut the setting sun off early.

I built a bonfire and burned the boxes, sitting there tending them, enjoying, warmed against <sup>now</sup> the creeping cold by the fire. But I did not enjoy the incessant barking of neighbors' dogs that replaced the birdsong I'd enjoyed when I'd camped there.

After the fire was out I wandered down to the creek, gloating over how clear and merrily free running it was and with the new little waterfall over remains of the old bridge since I'd cleaned it out down there.

I'd found a piece of pegboard from my apartment days under the house, so I went in and spent the whole evening trying to redo my attempt at a broom closet that was so flimsy Noah kept knocking it down all the time. My amateurism took so long I had to start turning on lights, first on porch, then inside where had to put in brighter bulbs, à la Marie, but couldn't use the fluorescent one Dennis had left as it made static on the radio, which was my only company as I worked.

Exhausted when the tipsy thing done, a sandwich and a nap and then delight to find, when looked, stars twinkling in trees versus the radio telling of such terrible fogs down below planes couldn't fly and the football game called off and people stranded. But I was above it all!

Had enjoyed sunshine all day and working out in the woods and getting my hands into dirt again after all those years of days confined in dingy city apartments!

**Sunday, January 4.** I woke, laughing at my thought that it was Sunday and I could sleep in, forgetting I was retired and all days the same to me.

The weather had turned unstable—sun, mist, clouds coming and going all day, in rapid succession, but it didn't matter, for I spent the day inside cleaning out papers and doing my first-of-the-year financial check.

It was a joy to throw out all those bales of paper on all my slumlords battles—to have that all over! Trying to use the calculator sons had passed on to me was difficult; I'd never used one before and my gnarled, arthritic fingers kept hitting the wrong keys, and when I did get an answer, I found I doubted it. Old dogs and new tricks?

However I tried to do some averages and found I'd have about \$23 a day of which \$1 would go for electric heat, which relieved me, PUD being cheaper than what I'd feared.

I didn't go outside except to see what all the noises and commotions were down the street. Some hammering and a stange car driving off down the street sent me down to see if there were more real estate signs going up and I noted there were two, not just one, lots posted for sale now.

And I felt anger at those two big old jalopies the Parkers had left there on the road. They looked so awful sitting there. But I sure was glad to have that tribe gone; they were always milling around and making messes and noises all hours of the day and night. Then more hammering on our side of the street attracted my attention. Fearing more real estate sign I was relieved to see just another just another car buff jalopy tinkering.

Inside again very loud music blatting away and mysterious thuds coming through even my closed up windows made me investigate again. Marty and Ralph were loading up huge tree stumps (the thuds) but the guy next door to them was working on that jalopy with a radio going as if he were on a planet by himself. I was surprised to see that he looked like a real bum; I'd gotten the impression that the Witherows were some of our better class neighbors. The noise he was making made me so mad I wandered down to kid Marty about having his car towed away and/or kid them about "moving? taking the stumps with you?" but they ignored me so utterly that I just wandered back in—to hell with the neighbors!

I spent the evening working on my papers and railing to myself like an old curmudgeon at the trivialities proffered on the radio.

Monday, January 5. I lay in bed and thought about my new life; it was not turning out as I had thought. For the first time I felt bored; there was nothing to do here and not any friendly people. Marie had bristled when I said every body was gone.

"There never was anyone here!" she said.

That wasn't true; I'd met a lot of congenial people or people I hoped to be more congenial with in all our first dealings with our buying in, but none of them had stayed—all gone—for one reason or another. Irene Brown had gone; the Dooxies had left; Marv and Lu had left. I'd counted on those three my age—all of them nice and friendly. Marie and Orv weren't "visiting friendly"; Cases had turned out to be—freaky—and were talking of leaving, too. The "retirement community" I'd bought into was fast filling up with just young people that brushed off oldies like me.

Anger assailed me when I thought of the hundred lots in Sultan Estates and there was not a single one where I now felt free to stop in and visit. True, only about 30 of them were built on at that point, but none seemed to have any possibilites. And I'd found the Senior Center dull.

I didn't feel it was my fault; it seemed to me I'd tried to be friendly. It was just peculiar circumstances I hadn't known I was getting into. I woke with an urge to go someplace—and then realized there wasn't any place to go. My diary was begining to read: "went to Sultan; went to Monroe; stayed home".

I was leary about calling on Lu; I hadn't been invited and she was busy and tied down nursing a sick and ornery Marv.

I decided I'd go I'd go into Monroe and stop for lunch at the Senior Center anyway. I'd ordered a new robe from Montgomery Ward and was very anxious to get it; it had been a long time in coming. I took great pains in dressing up pretty and set off, pleased to see that the plastic had stayed on the car with the new way I'd fixed it.

The sun was shining when I left and I was surprised to find Monroe blanketed in fog. I was upset to find SR2 all torn up with construction, and the Highway borrow pit I'd put in my drawing was all bulldozed out and a real estate office there with a big sign: "Lots for Sale!" That's where the big new mall was to be.

It distressed me for soon all the rural beauty and small town quaintness would be wiped out and SR2 would be urban blight like 99 had turned into. "The Spoilers" I called these developers. Later, when I talked to people about this, I found most of them unconcerned; only the crippled older guy at the service station said he didn't like it.

I went in to the Senior Center all fired up to talk to someone about this. There were very few people there and my welcome was most indifferent: "Well, stranger!" Lois said. In fact they all seemed so evasive of me that I found myself crawling back into my shell again, instead of trying to be chatty and cheerful as I had before.

And the only reaction to my distress about the new mall was a throwing up of hands, shrug. "Well, whatcha goin' ta do about it?" The lunch was lousy and after it they all drifted to the basement to play bingo. I left in disgust.

While I was there, I gotten a new alarm. A senior paper there with headlines: "FORMALDEHYDE POISONING FROM PARTICLE BOARD IN HOMES". We'd been living with exposed particle board, which Dennis and I both hated, on floors. Though it was now covered with linoleum there were six months when it wasn't. Why did Dennis use it? Because it was being commercially promoted as "latest thing" and was cheaper and easier and quicker than the hardwood floor he's wanted to do. But I'd been puzzling all this time that there seemed to be something in the house that bothered my respiratory tract; it always cleared up and I felt better when I got outside. And Abbie and Dennis and Noah always seemed to be all snuffed up every time they came. And perhaps I only imagined that my problem was better since the linoleum in?

That paper also said there were 20,000 senior citizens in Snohomish County: I was not alone, I thought wryly. I signed up with Judy to have that paper sent to me.

I slipped out of the Center and rushed to Monroe to see if my robe was in. No. I sighed and salved my building self pity in a shopping spree. I bought me some leotards in lieu of long underwear

the idea being to cover the gap in my midriff that always got so cold—and many other little cabin improvers. I was sorely tempted to buy a beautiful piece of green carpeting on sale, but talked myself out of it for Dennis had said there was a piece of discard carpeting at Sears he could get for free. It didn't sound like the right color, but I decided I'd better wait and see it first. I laughed, wondering if it would have poison glue on it?



I went home well laden—and broke? And was delighted to climb out of the fog into sunshine at the cabin again. In fact, there was the most beautiful red sunset, and—was I reading a weather change in the clouds? Whatever, a wind storm started, so I scrounged wood from under the house and built a fire to enjoy while I gloated over my purchases. Sure enough. It began to rain.

**Tuesday, January 6.** More on the article on particle board:

"Eye irritations; asthma like symptoms; skin rashes. People over 65 with pre-existing conditions...worse in winter when closed up...symptoms go away when away from house..sources can be particle and plywood board...and mildew preventing chemicals!"

It sure fitted! And all those things I'd been living with! i.e. my lovely cabin is poisonous!? Oddly, there was more on the radio:"...gets worse...not better..."

So, that and other things—it was a day of disappointments: Weather changed and I was finding my cabin unpleasantly gloomy when no sun. The wind blew off the car plastic and tangled it all up. Trying to cook pancakes on the stove did not work. Telephone bill in mail was much too large; I'd have to quit phoning people I missed on long distance. I called about my robe order and told it was "permanently out of stock": I nearly wept; Mike and Marylyn had sent me the money to buy it—my Christmas present. I hadn't been able to find any other that was what I wanted; I'd have to make one. laboriously. by hand. When I went down to get my pictures later I was very disappointed in them; very few came out—my flash hadn't worked and the kids had wasted a lot of film. I spent the evening sorting and trying to find ones good enough to get reprints to send. It was a trying and difficult job.

To store; and more evidences of changes not cheering to me. Passing Cases', those surly young men seemed to have taken over with their junking and junkers making me decide the friendly coffee chats I'd had with Dwayne and Edith were a thing of the past? I would miss them—all I had.

And a big truck with grader on it stopped at Witherows' making me wonder what despoiling was going to go on there.

When back the rain had wet all the wood I'd meant to gather.

Before I went to bed, I stepped outside; there were stars—at least.

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**Wednesday, January 7** was a day spent at home, adjusting and learning about my new life style—winter in the woods—alone. The weather was cold, only about 30°. The radio talked of fog in Seattle, which I had learned, meant it would be foggy in the river valley of Monroe, so I gave up any ideas of going to town, though my need for a warm robe was becoming more urgent.

What was new, too, was realizing the impossibilities of clothes shopping in this remote, isolated area. The mail order hadn't worked; there was no place locally and driving miles of freeway and traffic to shop did not appeal to me. Besides, I had to realize that I would have no need of nice clothes. This situation would be a good time to wear out old clothes. I also had a storage problem: hardly any room for what clothes I had, much less new ones. I began to realize how—and why—I, too would become a small town frump.

I went outside and gleaned more wood twigs as a break in the monotony of my new year's financial accountings and for fresh air and exercise. And, though it was cold, I enjoyed, and, again, wondered why I felt better outside. And saw something new!

I was startled by a big, swift bird flying low and then up through the trees uttering the queerest, raucous sounding "Sqwark!" call. It wasn't a goose—I'd heard those..

I worked on the year's papers, filing and sorting—organizing. Filed the year's personal letters—that didn't take long!—though the mail had brought me a nice long letter from Mike telling all about their holidays.

Then I took an other break outside and to car.

This time I found Marty out in the street, cruelly (to me) doing what she called "training" that second (spotted) dog she'd gotten. Since I'd found out this was a very serious business to her and she brooked no interference, I grimly ignored her and simply went back into the cabin, wishing very much that I had some friendlier neighbors and suddenly feeling very lonesome.

I had built a fire and kept it going all day until I'd exhausted my wood gleanings by evening to my regret, for, it began to get chill and I had no warm robe. But I showered, shampooed and puttered the evening away.

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**Thursday, January 8.** I woke with decision to go to Monroe though things not exactly encouraging. I had Christmas guests' bedding to launder and I wanted to do something about a robe, though my finances low, and I holding out to see how much my car insurance would be.

By the time I was ready to go I was very depressed: First, I'd discovered a lump in my throat—was I getting a goiter like my mother had? Then the radio telling about how Burlington Northern (Railroad) was storing some very dangerous chemicals in Monroe. (I thought I'd moved away from all that.)

The mail brought nothing to relieve my long wait about the car insurance, adding to other long waits about getting inspectors on the house. I wondered if I was ever going to have official "permission" to live here and be able to relax and enjoy it?

Then there was the weather: I 'd wakened to dark clouds and the sound of wind. In fact it was now very nasty and windy, and the plastic blown off the car, and the radio saying a year ago there had been 8 inches of snow and warning of fog and rain to come.

But one thing was good: I noticed how quiet it was without the Parkers around!

But I made it to Monroe, where I did my errands and bought some material to handstitch a robe. I got back late afternoon to find it dark as night in the cabin. But I was excited about starting my robe and did so, finding I had to turn on every light I had in order to be able to see. I had ten lights on!

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About dinnertime I ventured to call Finesilver, our board president, that being the only time he was available. I wanted to ask him about the Parkers and what was being done about the mess they had left, for I had heard on the radio that all abandoned cars should have their license numbers reported. I was full of misgivings for I didn't know Finesilver (what a name!) and he very touchy and I had no desire to get too deeply embroiled in Sultan Estates infighting.

I dialed Finesilver's number on my party line...and the strangest thing happened!

Before the phone even rang there was a woman's voice on the line. "Parker?" she asked. "I am trying to get ahold of them. Would you hold, please?" She kept checking with someone while I waited angrily for a long time, puzzling how in the world my call had been thus interrupted.

Finally, when she came back, I asked her "Where are you calling from?"  
"Everett. I'm at work."  
"Well, this is costing me money," I said, "a long distance call!"  
"Well, it's costing me, too!" she said. "Wait! Wait!" and then..."What did they look like...the Parkers?"  
"Oh...uh...fortyish...uh..."  
"Well, they skipped out on a huge grocery bill!"  
"Well, they skipped here, too," I said, disgusted."January first."  
"You sure?" she asked.  
I intimated she could come and see for herself and hung up very puzzled.

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Her constant consulting someone while she talked made me think she was calling for her boss? And I'd better alert somebody.  
No answer—Finesilver, Marie, though she annoyed me with her always putting me in the position of complainer and informer. My interest was in trying to get that old jalopy hauled away. "I'm just trying to keep the place up here nice-like yours!" I pleaded with her.  
"Well, that's not my job!" she bristled. "Call Charley! (Finesilver)"  
"I tried, " I said, "no answer."  
"Well, they don't get home till eight. Try then." And she hung up, ending the annoying clicking sound that was on the phone all the time we talked.

Later, I did call Charley. He didn't even know the Parkers were gone. I told him about how upset Marie was at my calling her." I hung up, no wiser, and puzzled why Marie hadn't told him about the Parkers.

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Sometime later in evening I got Marty on the phone, for we both wanted to get rid of that jalopy and I thought I'd tell her the latest. She was strange. I had a hard time understanding her. She wasn't much interested in the Parker story but went whining and blathering on about things of her own until I began to wonder if she drank behind those windows so completely covered over with bed sheets? In answer to my questions, she said the neighbors next to her were just the two Witherow guys—his younger brother and she didn't know if the airline stewardess still there or not.

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A call to Case. He was very chatty. When I told him about that strange call, he said something about "We've got that interfering woman on the line here...you have a party line, you know. Maybe she overheard you talking..."

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Then, when "cheaper" calls, a nice long talk with my sister in California and Dennis, with whom I didn't talk long. When I voiced concern about the Reagan administration he said,  
"Oh, don't worry about that. we'll (his generation) handle that!"  
I didn't go in to the mess here..."Oh, just...involved.." I said. I wasn't sure if he said something about being laid off at Sears and/or bringing the rug up. I was tired. I'd been on the phone all evening.

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I enjoyed my sister, Dennis and Case talks but the others annoyed me; I was hurried and impatient with them And I was glad not to be any more involved with them than they seemed to want to be with me.

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**Friday, January 9.** I woke to it very wet outside, but a spot of sun, and, it staying fairly nice, so though, loathe to, decided I'd better go to Sultan and take my films in and do a wash. Not a fun trip, for I had very little money left.

I got the car all loaded and started the engine...and the car just went crazy! **Noise and smoke!** It acted just like it had during Dennis'and Mike's visit when they had fixed it for me.

I went into panic, not knowing what to do, there not being a soul around to help. Hysterically, I didn't even think to phone: I just starting walking down the hill toward Cases'—without a coat—in the cold.

Case wasn't there, but those two young guys were. Dave, his son, insisted on coming back to see what he could do. As we walked back, our progress was so impeded by a big healthy playful dog that rushed out of Dukes' that I was getting very annoyed.

Mrs.Duke, still in her bathrobe at high noon, came out and called it off. I was even more annoyed for the Dukes had fought and pleaded with all the tenants and the board that their dogs were sick and dying—why they had to have an (illegal) kennel there: "Wouldn't we all please be merciful?" No matter that their kennel of dogs kept us all awake at all hours with their noise! It looked like a very healthy and youthful dog to me!

Dave had gotten his tools and both the young men, whom I'd dubbed bummers, were very nice. He asked me to unload the front seat to give him room to work, which he did for a very long time and finally got it going all right, but warned me I'd have to be careful and he'd have to do some more work on it in the morning.

I was so grateful, I insisted on giving him \$5 out of my meager cash, and he took it with little quibbling. He said he and his dad would be able to fix the car for me. They prided them selves on being mechanics ,though I had my doubts—all those jalopies they were endlessly "fixing" down there. I told them I'd pay them when the job was done. Later, when I came back from Sultan, broke and rest of month to go, I wondered if he'd told his dad I'd paid him \$5? I'm sure Dwayne would not have taken it from me.

My trip to Sultan was a horror; almost had a nervous breakdown. Not only was I scared to death about the car breaking down again, but that dingy laundromat, the dryers all full, had a long wait, and the lunch I bought so carefully with the few pennies I had left mostly crumbled all over the car, just making a mess; it was one of those days when eveything seemed to go wrong.

Maybe the car wasn't, but I was a wreck when I got home. I just left everything in the mess it was and began to work assembling my robe listenin to a play on the radio called "The Long, Long Winter" that made me start to cry. And then I just fell into bed in the just pinned together robe-pins and all.

**Saturday, January 10.** I woke late, but to sunshine! And then, seeing the car's plastic cover asail in the wind, I raced out in the robe, trailing pins all over to fix it. To my delight, my idea of anchoring tie ropes in the car doors had worked and all was all right—not ripped. And it was warm out there! 50°! And my robe was warm! And it was so nice to see the sun and to be have the privacy to be able to run out without getting dressed!

I went back in and let everything go, though I was so far behind and still had the house to get back in order after the Christmas visitors and then..and then, surely, by the next week, I'd be able to get with that long deferred cabin cost project? And I'd have to go out and check the car again, but first..I disrobed and began to work on my robe to make it wearable enough to wear to clean that mess up in..

About noon, I was sitting nigh naked in just an old rag in one of the biggest messes the cabin had ever been in, stitching away when there was a tap on the glass of the rear door...!!!?

No one had ever come to that door before! That startled me. It was Orville Easterley! He could see me through the glass panel of the door.

There was nothing to do but let him in. Not only was I startled at having someone come to the woodside door—no one had ever done that before—but, of course, I was terribly embarrassed at being caught like that, especially by a member of the Board! I was still in awe of them at that time. They all impressed me as being very rich and snobbish and very resentful and suspicious of "Poor white trash" like us coming in and messing up their private little club. I wasn't too sure if this weren't some kind of an inspection check. Yet none of them had seen our place and Dennis and I were proud of what we were doing and Orville had said he wanted to see it. So I let him in. But of all times!

He seemed quite at ease, whereas I was so flustered I couldn't think. He sat down and lit a pipe while I nervously lit one cig after another.

"Well," he said, after we'd chatted quite a bit and I thought he'd never leave, "Aren't you going to offer me a drink?"

So I produced one from my small stock, refusing to join him until he insisted. Just as I was doing this, nervous about having this married man in my house under the circumstances, there was a tap on the front door.

And there was a young, handsome "Jehovah's Witness" man all dressed up.

"You read your Bible?" he asked me.

"Err...uh...no. Uh..I have company."

He left me a tract on God's Word to read and left. Of all times!

Orville and I sat at the table a long time then and talked. I found him quite interesting, and he didn't seem too deaf. He said he'd come to that door because he'd cut across the woods and creek from their place—shorter than going around—and a route he used to take when they used to come up hunting in these woods before we came.

I asked him and he told me a lot about Sultan Estates that I'd been wondering about. Most of it was distressing—about the estate business and its future: that there was much talk about them selling out or just disbanding and letting the place go to the dogs. He said nobody chums or fraternizes over there where they live, which surprised me: I thought they were very thick and that I was being left out.

I wailed when he told me the prospects about maybe selling out. "But I haven't even had a chance to use the swimming pool!"

"Oh, nobody ever uses it," he said. "We're thinking of not opening it. And oh...it would take a 66% vote to sell the estates," he added.

We talked very long, but didn't drink much for I had very little in the house. He talked as frankly about Sultan Estates to me as if I were a member of the Board which made me feel much better, instead of this "none of your business" bit I'd been getting. He told me about the business he'd been in—working, managing, owning a shingle or lumber mill—How that was how he lost part of a finger—"A saw! Dangerous business!" And that they'd built that nice house themselves—that he'd been retired for six years. He and Marie work in Sultan Motel—mostly to have something to do. Golfs. Fishes. Hunts. "Did I want duck?"

"Sure!" (But that was the last I heard of it.)

He wanted to see the cabin and I showed him around. He seemed very impressed. "You've really got somethings here!" He even noticed my books and music. Nice guy. Intelligent. Easy to talk to. Sense of humor.

All right. What you really want to know is: did he try to seduce me? Yes. But his advances didn't go well; we were both too scared and nervous and I too uncooperative and—cynical? But, giving up, he was quite the gentleman and became very apologetic as he fled off through the woods the way he'd come, pleading with me, "Please don't tell Marie I was up here! I'm sposed to be cutting a tree...and Marie—she doesn't drink—doesn't know I keep a gallon of whiskey hidden in the basement." M m m m, I thought—m m m m.

But, except for the spot he's put me in, I'd enjoyed his visit. Nice guy. And—gee! I'd had two gentleman callers in one day! And they'd left me feeling good with their raves about the place: the "preacher": "Nice here. So pretty! So beautiful!"

"Yes, and I intend to keep it that way," I'd said. I closed the door and locked it after they'd gone.

My day lost by then, but still warm, sunny "record breaking day!" radio said. I spent the rest of the day working on my robe.

**Sunday, January 11.** I woke to a sunny, balmy day, but I was determined to stay inside until I caught up with that back log of work. But I was also determined not to be caught like that again. So I spent til noon showering, shampooing, and finishing up my robe. It was not stylish; I looked at if were tied up in a gunny sack, but it was comfy, warm...and modest!

I then girded myself to go out and see if the car would start. It didn't. but, having discovered I was out of cigarettes, in a smoker's nicotine frenzy I tried until it started enough to think about risking a trip to the store. With this in mind, I went in and scrubbed the floor so it would be dry to wax when I got back and went out and tried to car again. Nope.

Now I was desparate! Cigs I had to have! I called Edith and told her to tell Dave about the car, so he'd come and work on it. But she said he said he couldn't work on it if it were warm; it would have to be tomorrow. But she had cigs if I wanted to come and get some.

I walked down. Brr. By this time it had gotten cold and overcast. Edith offered me a beer, but I took coffee, as I now had a "troubles" headache and I wanted to get out of the chaos there. There was Edith, three men, two cats; the TV on; a car engine dismantled in the kitchen, everybody talking at once, non-stop. And Edith with her same old whiney complaints I'd heard countless times. I left there a wreck.

And I was dismayed at what I might be getting into with letting Dave work on my car. Mike had worked on it two hours before he found out it was the choke, and he'd left directions about what to do if it happened again, which Dennis had followed and the car had been running all right since.

But Dave and his dad refused to follow my suggestions; they insisted the choke was not the problem. Odd, I thought, if they are so good, how come they can't seem to fix all those cars they have parked down there and were constantly working on?

I went home, tore into housework, waxed floors, defrosted, put my hair up and had a clean, shining house again. It had taken me over two weeks to clean up after a two nights guests stay!

I ate and fell into bed and did not wake until 3 a.m.—to dismay: How was I going to live up here without my car? I needed it!

**Monday, January 12.** This was the day Dave was to come up and fix the car. It turned out a beautiful day—just like spring. I waited and waited and waited for those guys to come about the car. I even went out and sat in the car and waited. Mail brought the car insurance, at last.

Finally, cussing, I went in and called them. "Oh, they'd forgotten!" Dwayne said. It was almost noon before Dave and his friend came and rapped on the door. It made me feel good how they raved about the place, though, loitering and admiring. "Oh, I just love places like this!" his bearded friend said. Dave wanted to take the car down to their place—something about tools down there he's need. I rather suspected he wanted some help from his dad, but I let them take it.

I went to the loft and worked on my pile of papers collected during this retirement change: the battle for my Social Security; the battle of the retirement request; the property buying papers; health problem papers; arrangement for my death papers; my will I'd gotten made; troubles with landlords and moving; a paper anent the battle over mother's will...a paper trail of the procession of the years...I made a file for "hospitalization and illness" possibilities.

Well, I thought, as I waded through it all—I'm past that...and that...and that...

I was getting a little worried, my car gone so long; had they run into trouble? Then I saw Dave and Dwayne out there. I went out, calling to and kidding them. They were so pleased with themselves! they had it running smoothly. "Anytime!" they said, and wouldn't take any money. "I'll fix that old valve for you sometime," Dave said. "and I can always give you transportation," Dwayne said. When they left, I felt wonderful! the sun was shining, and I had neighborhood mechanics to work on my car!

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I dashed down to the store and the car ran so well and the day so springlike that I just felt like hitting the road and going someplace. But I decided it was as pretty at my place as anyplace. On way back, I stopped and thanked them again and repaid Edith the cigs I'd bummed. Such a lovely day! Only the sound of a bulldozer was ominous...

It was so warm I turned the heat off and left the doors open and went out to glean windfall wood and clean up brush. The moon was still out and the creek low, but even the wet paths were drying out. I worked and worked, discovering that chopping wood can be dangerous when one hunk of wood flew up and hit my temple, nearly knocking me out.

About six the phone ringing took me in. It was my poor old Auntie Alice. After, I couldn't resist going out again in that unusually nice weather. I'd noticed that the high, dense tangle of salmonberries had already begun to bud, but still brittle enough to break off and get through. So, curious, about just where my east property line was, and nobody around, it might be a good time to crash around in there and put up a property line.

That a job I hated for it made me feel fenced in, but there was beginning to be too many people moving in and intruding into our place. Perhaps it was a mistake to start in so late, for it turned out to be a hell of a job, though I enjoyed it. Until Marty came home and let her dog loose and he made a bee line to rustle me out of his woods, but Marty finally yelled and screamed at him till he went home.

I worked on deeper and deeper into brush gay over my head and absorbed in trying to include on my side of the line some of the choicer beauty spots, and include at least half of that fallen, but still fantastically blooming old apple tree. And, even though the line kept snarling and all it was really fun. My own land to do with as I pleased! But the sense of utter privacy I'd had during my camping days was gone, Carroll's new house there now—so close. I could hear Marty training her dogs. And, ever since Orville had told me he'd cut through the woods there, I had an uneasy feeling that I might be being watched, and I, belatedly, cringed to think how I'd bathed, naked—a "spit bath" in those woods when I'd camped, reveling in the utter privacy I'd thought I had.

It was dark and the moon high in the sky before I finished, but that was fun, too, after all those years incursions and other people's property. And now I knew more about the trees, their habits and where I needed screening: I could clean out what I didn't want and leave what I did.

I went in, put on my robe, built a little fire, cooked my good little steak dinner and ate it listening to that interesting lessons in classical music program. I was surprised how wet my boots had gotten, but I tucked them near the stove to dry. I was very cozy, very happy. I'd waited long for this. It was so cozy it made me very unhappy to think that Auntie Alice was too sick for me to bring her up here to share some of it with me.

Some of the music they played was some my ex-husband, Ed, used to like and play. I realized it was his birthday, and I sat and reminisced: how odd to think he was dead and I here where I am.

It had been a wonderful day, the kind I'd dreamed of having in my cabin—my new rural home. At the store people were upset: a man had fallen and been killed climbing in the mountains nearby. How different from the city". where it's rather hard to get killed falling off a mountain!

**Tuesday, January 13.** I was unable to recapture the enjoyment of the day before. I woke too late to enjoy what I'd found was the time the sun came inside the cabin. And my legs were stiff and sore from my unaccustomed taming of the wilderness, which, I wondered at one point, if maybe I was overdoing it? For I wanted to keep the natural look and not come out with a too neat park look like Irene Brown had done down at her place. She had everything cleared so that only bare ground remained under the cedars.

I went out with foreboding and tried the car to see if it would start. It did, but I fancied the engine "raced"? Then I worked on cleaning out papers again; this time old medical records. Depressing. As bad as living through it again.

Note:

A 15 year interim in here—Now 1996. I am going to try to sum this all up as sparsely as possible. At age 81 I have other things to tend to...

(delete - or  
Sports story -  
eh?  
did she? or didn't she?  
survive)

Tuesday, January 13, con't. As the sun started to set, I went out and worked in the woods again to try to get as much as possible done before the rains came again. I worked till sunset, which comes fast in the woods, I'd found out. I worked around the big cedars by the creek, cleaning the deadwood out. It wasn't so pleasant this time—chopping wood. Another big stick hit me in the face, almost putting my eye out and leaving a big gash. And the quiet and peace I'd enjoyed before while camping was rent by incessant, all evening dog yapping.

Inside, later, though I an amateur, I managed to make and cook on a wood fire and sat and read the Senior Citizen paper I'd picked up. Then evaluated things: It was very pleasant—cabin—nicer and quieter than I'd ever had before, though the dog yapping was new. Versus Vancouver—no drunken neighbors slamming about...train? Yes, but now at such a far distance its tootling sounded romantic again. Lots of room around me. And I didn't miss TV at all. Nobody understands that but me.

The Senior Citizen groups in the area: I decided I'd gotten stuck with a real cornball one: the one in Everett more lively and sophisticated—shows and writing classes and other things versus crocheting, sewing and bingo, period, locally. And their dances...

"We are not getting attendance at our dances" wrote our local Center. Why would they? I'd tried them. I found out the old coots that dared to come wouldn't ask anyone to dance except the women they knew. Besides, who wants to dance, cold sober, right after lunch in a glaring, daylight hall when one is old and ugly? Who's going to date you up at a barnyard tromp? What they need is evening...soft lights...romantic atmosphere...

Wednesday, January 14. (More adjusting to new life in cabin—)  
 Finances: not as cheap as I thought it would be—property taxes et al...  
 Skylight: by desk enjoyment—view out on woods. Not so. Skylight all opaque with dirt, or something...

I went on with my outside work and really enjoyed it, this time "stooping" to dress like a "woodswoman"—in the proper working clothes. The sun left the woods about three, but it was very pretty while it lasted. I chopped up bigger branches and set aside to dry for firewood; I scabbled out a little clearing in an area I hoped to have for a sunning place and tested it in lounge chair when I needed a rest break. And marveled: Imagine! I never thought I'd be able to sit out in a lounge chair in the middle of January in the northern woods and even "enjoy" mosquitoes! But it wasn't quiet like it used to be. There was much loud shooting going on and a couple of dogs barked so incessantly I thought I'd go mad with their noise...And later a bulldozer began.

I cleared a round-about path and discovered things I didn't know I had on the half-acre...

Later, inside, listening to President Carter's farewell speech in warmth of my little fire, I got a poetic urge, listening to that soft, sad, voice, "Farewell, my fellow citizens" and stepping out on the porch where there was the moon and stars it had been so long since I'd been able to see. The trees stood tall, silent and hushed. There was a murmuring shush from the creek below. The brilliant moon was just coming over the roof ridge. the air was very fresh. The fire crackled quietly behind me...I felt like writing a poem



Instead, I got a sudden urge to drag out all my boots and clean them, and, looking for something to read while I ate happened on an ancient volume of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales given to me by an auntie who had inscribed it to me on the fly leaf when I was a mere child. I opened and began to read "Red Shoes", which, to my surprise, I found not the sugary version I'd heard all my life, but rather a gutsy little tale. Fairy tales, fairy tales...it all seems like...fairy tales...I thought...

I called Dennis that night and we had a long, good talk. He mentioned the merger of those two Seattle newspapers whose feuding I had heard about all my life, the Times and the PL. And he spoke of another tentative plan to go look for work in eastern Washington...

**Thursday, January 15.** A trip into Monroe to pick up my snapshots. It was so warm and sunny I hated to go back to my cold, dark place. Was I starting to get cabin fever? News item about putting speed limit back up to 70. Now I know I'll stay off freeways...

I went out and worked in woods again and really enjoyed. There was a very strong wind from the east that made ferns and tree tops whip like mad things, but I was safe and protected under those big cedars. I noticed I was getting stronger and could wield the hatchet better and found out a trick: pretend the wood is someone you hate and pow! takes the grrr out of you. I discovered: #...that if I jumped up and down on a pile of branches—quite a trick to that; try it—the dry ones would break without having to use the hatchet. I laughed, thinking if someone had told me to do that as a gymnastics program I'd deeply resent it! #...that a fallen vine maple made a nice bouncy, springy chair to rest on when tired. #...that a forked branch made a better rake than the one I had bought. # that one should cover one's face when chopping; those flying chips can be vicious! #...that fallen vine maples put out sprouts that made a natural fence. #...that I could glean enough "squaw" wood to keep me warm and cook my dinner each night. Etc.Etc. It was really fun.

As it got more and more chill after the sun went I took time to survey what I'd done and wished I'd been able to take before and after pictures: nobody would know how much work I'd done.

It was good to come in, tired, but fresh-aired and take off my boots and woods-working grubby clothes and put on soft, warm, slippers and robe and curl up all snuggly by my little fire. I was very happy. This was how I'd imagined it would be in my woods home—what I'd waited for a long time for. I'd really enjoyed all that nice weather and time and freedom to work outside. It was nice to sit in the sun and listen to the radio to all the troubles in the world below. And look at those three little houses down the street and think how I was the only human being around; they all at work and only come home to sleep. How silly! What a long drive to bed!

Friday, January 16. It was so windy in the night and when I woke that I didn't know if I dared go outside and work, The way the trees squeaked and cracked and waved and whipped was scary. I was afraid I might get clobbered by a falling branch?

I spent the first part of the day working in the loft. It was really enjoyable, racing up and down stairs to get things, from one of my work stations to another—a light and chair here, another there; a place to do this, a place to do that. I'd never had that before. It was nice to be able to get all my stuff out and leave it, out of sight, but there ready when I wanted to go back up and work on it. It was the first time I'd been able to enjoy and appreciate the loft and room I'd yearned for for so long. And then, when I wearied, I'd go out on the porch and lean on the railing and take deep breaths of fresh air, look at the nature scenery and think about how in Seattle they were all breathing carbon monoxide according to that long pollution alert.

In the afternoon I did venture out and work on the wood some more. And city gal had more adventures on living dangerously—like chopping wood.

Another biggish hunk of wood slammed into my temple the same place the other had. Oh, it hurt! For a minute I felt sickish and thought I was going to pass out. Then, later, all that wind, I got wood chips in my eye. I was just about through when I looked up into a cedar just above me and saw fairly biggish limb, pointing down—dead? A danger? Dared I? I reached up and pulled. A piece as big as my leg broke off and hurtled down and plunged into the ground beside me. I laughed

(in relief?) I took a chance on the rest, this time ducking and covering my head. It shattered and huge chunks rained down on me, one biggish one hitting my shoulder—Ouch! That about did it. I decided I could use some days off to recover from wood bruises. My thighs were all bruised, too, from using to break sticks for kindling.



I went back in and spent the evening working in the loft. I can't stress enough how I enjoyed working there. It was the first time I'd actually been able to make use of it as I'd intended it. To be able to lay all those piles of papers out and just leave them. Heretofore, the loft had been used as a bedroom and playroom for the grandkids on their visits, which meant a constant spread/hide chore after I discovered some of my art equipment mysteriously damaged beyond repair.



THE LOFT; One thing I didn't like about the loft; it was draughty. Was it those vents I'd mistakenly insisted upon, being unable to read the badly xeroxed code papers Snohomish County had given me? And I kept thinking about all the "advice" I'd been getting from men who insisted I needed a fan in the upstairs (to keep the heat down?) Heck! I didn't need a fan; I had a draught up there!

I decided to sleep in the loft th that night. There was something nice about being away from the doors downstairs; somehow I felt "safer" in the loft. And nicer to sleep under a vaulted ceiling and not on the "cave shelf" downstairs. And, romantically, I was closer to the stars and the moon. I was closer, too, under the roof, to the wind that howled and raged outside, bombarding the roof with twigs and branches. That was scary. It sounded like a military flak attack. I stood and watched the trees wave and bed; I was glad I didn't have to drive the freeways!

But everything up there was palely bathed in moonlight from the big windows in the loft. I snuggled down. Thank you, Dennis, for a strong house!  
Goodnight!

Saturday, January 17. I'd gone happily to sleep in the loft, thinking I'd see the moon and the stars and wake to sunshine there, and, at last--papers all sorted out in piles ready to go to work on--be able to work uninterrupted on cabin costs and get it done.

Not so. I awoke late--to a sunless, cold, dreary day and then...

Before I even had time to start my day, the phone rang. It was Dennis--with a hard luck story. "Have you got \$150 I can borrow? They won't give me my unemployment check--said I can't have it anymore--have to reapply or go to work--was waiting for it so Godfrey and I could go and look for work. It didn't come; just a card that said 'Go to work'. I want to go look for a job and they won't give it to me!" "They ever do that before?" I asked.

"No."  
"That apply to Federal or State jobs?"

"All welfare cut off from now on!"

I told him what I'd heard on the news; that the new Reagan administration had cut off all welfare. But so suddenly!? I thought.

"Well, I can't go look if I don't have any money."  
"Uhh," I said, "would \$25 help?" I explained how I'd gambled and paid off a big bill that month, leaving me unusually broke. "Uhh...let me call you back..."

I did, after doing some checking, and offered him the use of one of my gas credit cards.

Well, (did he say "we"?) can come up and get it and get the pictures you have for us. And I've got to finish those porch eaves before the inspector comes..." The story on this was that we had gotten a young substitute inspector the last time, who, of all the things that really needed to be done had insisted that the under part of the porch eaves had to be finished and closed in. This, to me, was about the last thing needed and I had no intention of bothering with it until all the really important things were done. Dennis' premise was that if he wasn't going to be able to get back, he'd better get it done."

"If you have \$50, I can finish 'em."  
"

"I can't!" I wailed, "I don't have any money this month!"  
"Well, the inspector will notice," Dennis said, which meant an even further delay in our final inspection.

"Too bad!" He'll just have to come again!" I cried.

He'd had to call off going with Godfrey, having no money, and Godfrey unable to wait. "I'll have to go alone," he said. "Give up the job hunt tour and just go straight to Coeur D'Alene...(in an old car and in the snow) No, he didn't have an interview or an appointment but his best chances were where they'd lived before. He'd leave Monday and only have a couple of days--lamented he'd missed the good weather and a chance to go with Godfrey.

It sounded like a horrible trek to me, but Dennis sounded quite blithe, almost cheerful. We hung up with that murky understanding.

I was devastated; it proved my private adage: grab happiness while you can; it doesn't last. It had been so nice and now it was all glum and cold and windy and all my food supplies were gone and I'd forgotten to get in more wood. I dashed out and grabbed some wood just as the first rain drop fell. I flew furiously around out there,, checking if the car would start? Yes. Mail? None. But the car was getting all wet (unrepaired dents leaked in the rain) and the plastic had ripped and nature had managed to tie all my guy cords in impossilbe knots. I worked furiously in the rain, trying to undo wet knots. Suddenly the wind stopped long enough to let me try a new way and get the tarp tied down.

I ran in limping, for something was hurting badly in my old boots. I paused long enough to investigate: a tiny stone. Didn't the Latins call it a "scrupula"? A scruple? Knots and scruples! Ya just gotta work away at problems.

I got in just in time to hear the phone ringing. It was Dennis again.

"Hey! Got an idea...if I could use your Union card..I'll pay you back...I just got notice in mail that for forestry jobs ya have to appear at each office--not central like before. Godfrey and I could use his car and go!"

I checked my Union card and called him back and told him it was ok.

"OK. I'll come up tomorrow and bring you that rug (a piece of carpeting Sears had thrown away). Godfrey and I will have to leave Monday."

"And if no job?" I asked.

"Oh, well, I'll just have to go back to work at Sears!"

We hung up, I wondering what would happen if he had to suddenly appear at a new job pronto and I'd be left with inspectors to...It began to rain. Let it. I had inside work to do.

I went up to face the cabin cost work. It had been going to be fun. Now it seemed a horror; I'd have to just crash it out to be ble to tell Dennis some facts. I no sooner started to work than the phone rang again. Now what!? Some kid . Wrong number. Of all times!

I battled all those papers until 7:30 that evening, while the rain just poured down. Costs had to be kept track of for, someday, there would have to be a reckoning on our little family three-way deal: Mike buy the land, I furnish the money; Dennis, (for interim)"free" labor. And my budget was very limited.

I found out some amazing things about our construction costs, but I had no time to evaluate. It was a chore and a bore--sorting, marking--the preliminary work--not the fun part of actually summing up. I was glad I had that day and the loft to work in even though I seethed.

I was rushing, too, for I didn't know who was coming. Were they all coming? I had barely enough food to eke through the rest of the week just for me. And would I have to dismantle the loft and fix up for guests? And I'd just gotten to a stopping place on house arrangement: I didn't want to bother with that rug at that point.

By 7 PM I was rumdum and tried to think of some reason to go outside for fresh air and a break. I decided I'd see if I could use a long stick with a wad on it to get some of that cloudiness off the loft skylight. It spoiled my whole idea of being able to sit at desk and look out at the woods. I just left all the mess as it was and went downstairs. It was cold, cold down there!



I ventured out--surprised to see it had stopped raining--found a long stick, fixd a rag on it and tried to reach the skylight. Story of my life! I just missed reaching it by a scant inch. It began to rain.I gave up. It's awful being little. I went back in.

LATER; I was in the loft, asleep, very very tired when something woke me up. The telephone ringing downstairs. It was 11:30 PM. I bumbled down and answered it.

It was my old auntie Alice, all shook up and upset and lonesome. "Chuck," she said (her older son dying of Parkinson's disease)"just had a two hour operation today..." I listned, as she went on , rattled and upset. "Oh it's so awful down here! The smog and pollution!" among other things. I hung up feeling sad and helpless, but also like some goddess up on the mountain above it all.

That night in the loft I did not enjoy. I woke about 4:30.It was cold and noisy for the wind was raging outside and bombarding the roof with limbs and racing through the loft making quite a draft.

I got so annoyed at that draft, after being outside and seeing the damage potential from those falling limbs that I went to elaborate lengths to make a "wind flag."



I went to all the trouble to go downstairs and ferret around in the tool box till I found a ball of string which I attached to a length of string and took back up and risked life and limb climbing (foolishly) up on that rolled piece of foam rubber and trying to throw the ball over the joist.

Only after I managed to do this did I discover that a spider had spun a web that was already floating merrily in the draft.

Annoyed and feeling foolish, I sat down and lit one of my last precious cigarettes and pondered if there was a draft and which way it was blowing?

Only when the smoke blew back in my face from the vent did I realize that I'd had a simple and easy way to tell all the time.

I did feel foolish then.

**Sunday, January 18**, the day the kids were to come--who and when I didn't know. I woke to very nasty weather. The wind had been raging so it seemed as if there'd be nothing left.

I flew around getting ready for I knew not whom. Food? No bread. I experimented with

what I had until I found a way to make pancakes. I decided I'd let the kids make pancakes.

It was noon when only Dennis and Sarah came. And they stayed only briefly. Dennis said it was a business trip to bring the rug, get my gas card, bring the negatives of their Xmas pictures for me to get developed for them, and borrow some money. I gave him \$25--all I could spare. Sarah was very subdued; she didn't even go up to the loft, but amused herself making pancakes, although Dennis said they didn't want to take time to eat. They were gone in an hour or so.

**After:** I went out and unveiled the car to take the films down only to find they were the wrong ones! Too broke to justify a trip into Monroe, I gave up and went back in and worked four hours on cabin costs it not helping to find I'd made a big mistake in them.

In the evening I tried to figure how much of that carpeting there was without unrolling it. I was quite pleased with it, for it exactly matched the linoleum in color and there was more of it than I'd expected, and, best of all, it was for free! I decided to call Dennis and tell him about the film.

He had news for me: Godfrey was not going, claiming he had to be back too soon. Noah and Dennis were going alone. Dennis said that actually it would be cheaper not to go with Godfrey. It worried me terribly to have them set off in that beat up old car to go clear across the state in midwinter, but all I could do was wish them good luck.

Dennis didn't seem too concerned. He said they'd be back Wednesday and, if he did find a job he'd just have to go. This alarmed me for it meant ceasing work on the cabin and leaving me holding the bag and to hassle with inspectors and all. but, of course, Dennis had to find work. It was a chance we knew we might run into.

**Monday, January 19** was a bad day for me. I went to store for the barest essentials but, too broke to justify a trip into Monroe, I worked off frustration by going out and moving cedar logs for awhile (They were still piled around cabin where guys had cleared them to start building) And then I went in to make up 3 copies of my cabin finances report to find one of the numerals on my typewriter was broken! And I tried all day and evening, without luck, to get either Mike or Dennis on the phone.

**Tuesday, January 20.** I woke to a more promising weather report. This was the day I was determined to finish that cabin cost job. And then I'd have to face the grim task of contacting the inspector and finishing up things somehow without Dennis, in case of his perhaps imminent departure.

A great sadness intruded on my heretofore contentment. If they went, I should miss them so and, not only the unfinished cabin problem, but I realized I'd have nobody. It would be a very lonely life; not what I'd thought it would be at all. It had turned out that the kids were the only company I ever had or could expect to have ?

That day became an example and I was in a very bad mood as the news (the hostage situation and the Inaugural,) I wanted to share and see on TV. How I wished the Cases would ask me down there to. But no.

And I'd found the Senior Center no help to loneliness--at least not mine. When I'd gone there nobody would talk to me and I been unable to find anybody compatible. It seemed that only the very desparate went there, the misfits, discards. They were all too old for me and either spouse involved or lonely, silent old women who'd lost all interest in life.

So I listened to the news alone. I was dismayed about Reagan, that secondrate actor getting in; I did not want someone like him to be president. The sun had been shining when I'd first started to listen, then suddenly a rush of cold air went through the cabin and a door slammed shut and the sun was gone. Prophetic?

I was so lonely--for the first time in the cabin--when it was over, I couldn't stand it. Desperate for someone to talk to, I called Abbie . We had fun catting about Nancy Reagan. No, she hadn't heard from Dennis, but was not worried. She said the Joneses, with whom he planned to stay would have let her know if they had not arrived.

I went back to the news--let out a cry of anguish: Reagan had just called a freeze on hiring all non-military government workers. And Dennis out looking for a government job! In anguish I called Abbie back. Line busy. Tried again. Got her. Told her. She...indifferent. No, she didn't know if it Federal or State job Dennis was looking for. I didn't seem to be making my point clear: But mid-job search, they freeze 'em!

"Well, I s'pose I'll have to listen to that for four years," was all she said.

The wind had come up again. I went out by the car and sat on the grass and bowed my head and tried to recover my equinimity. The wind had ruined my plans for any work in the woods. A noise. I looked up, startled. A huge limb was lying fallen by the path.

Sending me back in where I tackled cleaning out my little notebook of convoluted scribblings of money jugglings and notes on cabin I'd been lugging around on trips for what seemed like years, wondering if I'd ever see the day when I'd get them in order.

**Afternoon:** A storm was whipping up--sky gray and ominous--threatening. I went out to battle putting plastic protection over car. In the process I broke off the swiper on the driver's side! Just when I'd have to be driving in the rain! I took angry kicks at logs on my way back in.

...to work doggedly on those papers some more until I was finally through the hard part and ready for the fun part: what would be the amount actually spent?

**Evening:** Listening to the Inaugural parties and celebrations, things better...a fire going and my little dinner, I cozy from the wind howling outside, but feeling a little bitter as I listened to news. It seemed a little odd; Carter, defeated, still trying to rescue the hostages, while the Reagans danced...Nancy in her \$3000 ball gown of beads...while Dennis, out there on the frozen plains looking for a job now "frozen"...

I woke about 3 AM. the awful wind had stopped. It was raining, gently. I thought about Dennis out there on those roads? Would it be snowing? I felt very lonely...and scared.

Wednesday, January 21. Things seemed better. Morning thoughts: Oh, it was so nice to have all that mess of papers totted up neatly at last! I was really proud that except for the electricity, we'd paid for everything so far....Lonely here I'll be? But I could watch spring come to the woods; in the city I couldn't see spring come...one advantage to winter...no bugs or beasties to bother me...

Things good enough, I dared to venture out to the store. It turned out to be not a bad trip, after all. the weather wasn't all that bad and the mountains were very dramatic, all navy blue, only slightly sprinkled with snow under a not stormy sky made me feel maybe Dennis had made it, after all?

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NEIGHBORS; On the way down, I debated about stopping at Cases and asking about my car, but I figured if he saw me go by he'd be outside when I came back. He was. I merely asked if it were possible to change the position of those rain swipers. He did it for me! And Dave came out and very nicely, unasked, started to check the engine, Case and I having a long talk, waiting.

He told me what was bad news...to me. His wife, Edith, had gotten a job in town and was moving there. That meant I lost the only, though albeit not the greatest, nearby woman to socialize with.

And it distressed me to hear that Al Breuner, that crooked? contractor had decided to take up his development of Sultan Estates again and was going to put up 3 new little house near us (I cursed inwardly when he told me that) And that Witherow, another contractor, was building two more houses, and he, Case, was going to build another house on our street--all of these, of course for speculative selling. I didn't say anything for Case and I differ on such matters.

It was nice to talk to someone, though, and I thanked them and, relieved about the car, went on home.

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I got the numeral on the typewriter fixed good enough to belabor out the rest of my report. And then it got exciting! Fun! Working toward the moment of truth when I'd know what it all had actually cost us! The last page done! A three year's mess of crumpled papers and notes on four neat pages.

I couldn't resist a peek ahead before I totalled all those columns. I did a quickie peek, and, weary of numerals typing rounded the figure to

H \$12,000? I just sat with my head in my hands and tried to think: So? Was th at good or bad? I didn't know. ("I'd cry tomorrow") \$12,000? I'd started out with \$5000 ready cash. Mike had said it would cost me \$10,000. Well, it had, hadn't it? And more.

# And I had a "cost over run" of nothing put in for the time, sweat and labor Dennis and Abbie and I had put in.

# Nor did that include personal expenses, the cost of trips, gas, camping gear, long distance calls...Loans to Dennis didn't count; he'd been good about paying me back.

My brain was too weary to figure out a discrepancy I sensed someplace: How could I have spent \$12,000 I didn't have?

I took a break, so thankful I could get outside and breathe a little fresh air and get some exercise and not be imprisoned in a stuffy, too-many-people-surrounded city apartment as I used to be.

I went back in and plugged on. I finished about 9:30 and so excited at what I found out I wanted to tell Dennis, who wouldn't be home, and I knew Abbie wasn't interested (in the building of my home!) But I tried anyway. And glad I had, for Dennis and Noah were home!

Dennis sounded quite blithe and happy. Oh they'd had a little car trouble, but nothing too bad. I told him about working on the figures. He sounded delighted that I'd gotten it done.

"How much?" he asked.

"Guess!" I teased. And then I told him. He sort of quibbled with that figure, confirming my suspicion I'd done something wrong, but then he began to talk about his trip.

No, he hadn't found a job. And he didn't know if that job freeze applied to forestry jobs. But Sears had called him back to work for a few weeks anyway. He had seen 5½ acres near Coeur D'Alene that he was interested in buying, but he still wanted to look into the Indian Reservation jobs in Colville.

Noah had stood the trip well, but collapsed when he got home...etc. etc. After we hung up I realized I hadn't asked him if he'd gotten his unemployment check. I needed to know if I could be reimbursed for the money I'd lent him, or I'd be in trouble when my bills came due. It was a good talk. I went to bed, tired, but happy.

**Thursday, January 22.** I worked long in the loft while it poured rain outside. I found my mistake. That figure was for the total investment both Mike and I had put into construction in 3 years: He and Marylyn had paid \$4000 and bought the land, and contributed \$1000 for the electricity. I had spent \$7900 in cash. (How in hell did I do that?)

Dennis had contributed no money, but three years of free "spare time" labor was a major contribution I certainly hoped to see him reimbursed for someday.

With that in mind, I began to work on a chart of how much time he did put into the cabin, for, after I'd be dead and gone, there might be a terrible hassle about the convoluted "business deal" we three had made. What I gave him out of my "cabin fund" was his pay (until better paid). It was a way of "subsidizing" them in that time while they struggled to establish themselves, a sort of "cushion" so to speak. I could not afford to pay Dennis a contractor's fee, but I helped where I could, and I hoped, that, someday, I would not be accused of diverting Dennis from "his family duties" but keeping him busy during times of unemployment learning and doing on something he liked and wanted to try.

I worked on and came out with a figure of (roughly)-\$5400 Dennis and I had thus far actually spent on the cabin. I hoped that would make him feel better! In fact, it was lower than the figure we'd estimated we'd spent.

And what a bonus to me! For I really enjoyed having such a perfect place to do all that dull work in January--in the rain. I could say the work went swimmingly!

In the midst of all this financial struggling, I got a nice surprise--bonus? A raise in my Social Security! A bonus of \$79--some mistake they had made in figuring my retirement money! I took it as a lucky windfall. Only later I realized that now it wouldn't matter if Dennis's check not come!

That nice surprise was rather negated when I found that ancient cherry tree beside the cul-de-sac near my mail box was down--crashed clear across the old homesteader apple orchard. I felt like crying; I loved it so! It was the first beautiful thing I'd seen in my first trips up to the site. And, despite its age, it had bloomed profusely every spring...rather encouraging to an old lady starting the end of her days. I assumed the wind had felled it, and it had not been pushed over, though Marty and some people, an isolate group, had been out there the day before.

And, earlier, from the loft I'd seen a bulldozer that had parked in Witherow's side yard leave. (Here we go?)

It was a very enjoyable day, so much so I called Dennis that evening to share and tell--and wished I hadn't. For, though he was nice, I could hear him snapping at a grumpy Noah and he couldn't talk long as he had to go to a Scout meeting and he didn't think he was going to get his check and he had to go to work for two weeks (which would put off our inspection hopes again). I hung up with my mood spoiled.

I worked till midnight, getting disturbed by new noises; dogs wildly barking and thumps around the cabin after (new, too) radio warnings about con men going around posing as PUD workmen...

**Friday, January 23.** I woke to see my car sitting out in fog, all uncovered. It seemed to look so lonesome and sad. or was it me that was?? I needed a break after all that finance work, also a laundromat washing (Monroe), and I wanted to get that report mailed to Dennis, but it was such a nasty-looking day.

Monday? Wash? But Monday a bad day to go to Senior Center, only place available to me for a social rest break during errands. (At that time there were no restaurants--or even a park--in downtown Monroe) But I didn't like that place; it was too institutionalized, like visiting a Vets' hospital.

And Sultan Estates I'd given up on; it had gone to the dogs (literally!!) fast. I found it deplorable that Al Breuner was taking over and trashing the whole place, moving in more trailer homes, those ugly things I hated so, and even moving in himself and he and Case all buddy-buddy. The things I'd come for, the club, the swimming pool, nice people my age--the retirement community--all were gone. it was turning into a rural slum. Urban blight had reached out and followed me; all the charming, bucolic atmosphere gone--like the fallen cherry tree. But I was too committed; I'd just have to hang tough as long as I could.

Also, I'd just have to coast till Dennis got more straightened out and then we'd have to get together and figure out the next phase. The recluse role I was getting into...if I could just hang on...I supposed in spring people would gravitate more?

**Later:** I took the garbage out, noting that I had hardly enough to warrant what I had to pay for the service...The car worked, reluctantly. It was foggy plus pouring rain. I got dressed, thinking how silly it was to dress all up, even to perfume, just to go to Sultan, but it made me feel better... The radio mentioned an earthquake at Alki Point (where Dennis and Abbie were) at 8:15 that morning, but said nobody felt it.

Mailing that packet of finance summaries to Dennis was rather futile? I had called the post office and found they closed at 5 and not open on Saturday, so I had forfeited fun, and finished it up frantically to meet that deadline. Useless, probably, for the last urgent cabin business package I had mailed them from Vancouver I'd found sitting unopened in their house when I got there. Abbie hadn't even told Dennis about it--said he had enough papers to fuss over...

But I went to Sultan. I made it all right, but I came back tired. It was a very nasty day and the added anxiety about possible car troubles wore me out. Home, I just sat in the car, rain pelting on the roof and looked in at my little cabin--with love! Despite everything, I couldn't think of anyplace I'd rather be than in it. And I thought happily how I had January all to myself to get things done in without so much family involvement.

I spent the evening working on more paper filing, annoyed by that abandoned pet cat thumping around outside, scaring me so at first. I closed up the paper work. Now I'd have to get that god-damned inspector to check and close up the cabin building phase. Only then would I know how poor I'd be "from now on in". Would I profit by the "free rent" I'd envisioned? Or would debts amount to the mortgage I didn't take out? But this money outlay would not be just rent going down the drain; it was an investment! And I'd get to live in a place I liked! And it my own place!

**Saturday, January 24.** I spent the day and evening working on unpacking all that stuff in the loft and starting to set up my lifetime-long-wished-for studio". Unable to buy things, I created a work table and "cupboards" out of two of the big packing boxes the state had bought in their transferring me from Yakima and put them by the window. Crude, but served the purpose. I unpacked tools and set them up.

At first it was fun, but by late evening the loft was in such utter chaos of unpacked boxes that everything was beginning to crash and fall and there wasn't room to put a foot down. and I was t-i-r-e-d. The joys of being able to set up my art desk for the umpteenth hundredth time and knowing this time it was for keeps! had gone. But it was still nice--finally!--to have a place to put all that stuff!

**Sunday, January 25.** I woke to a wet, drippy, chilly 38°, making it a morning chore to go out and scrounge for wood. There were a lot of birds outside, and bird calls: I could hear what I called the "squark" bird, and some grouse? "cluck" and some bird that let out a sort of wail and then began to drum "ta-da-dum, ta-da-dum" up in the woods. I was not familiar with birds, but found it interesting--vs. the city.

I spent the afternoon struggling more with the cabin finances until exhausted and until...the last straw...the metal flap on the desk came unhooked and dealt me a vicious blow on the knee. I got mad and quit and went outside to find something to whack back at. Victims of anger, axe and saw were a pile of "big" (4-5") logs ended up on porch for firewood.

Then I stopped to do the picnic table a favor by dumping the water off the plastic cover and the big anchoring rock, though it could have rolled anyplace, opted to fall on my foot. Ouch!

Then I went to check the car to see if it all right. It snarled and the engine raced at me, renewing my worries about it. It was getting dark by then and I felt...cross!

I went in and built up the fire and started on a big primp. It had been ages! And I began to understand how lonely old women get to looking like such freaks. I, who had always had to work and live in my adult life in crowded city apartments...in public, so to speak...had always taken great pains to be well-groomed and "look nice". I'd sure let myself go! I shampooed and intended to do my toenails (even hermits have toenails) but I got carried away having fun experimenting with cooking on a wood stove!

That evening, having heard something on the news I wanted to tell my brother, Bud, about, I called them. Both he and Paula sounded glad to hear from me and insisted that in the spring they were going to come up and see me and see the cabin.

**Monday, January 26,** my go-to-town (Monroe) day. It was a bad time to go for it was nasty and raining outside. But I decided to, for I simply had to get out of the cabin, and who wanted to sit home all day and just burn up wood? Ready, and just about to shut the radio off, it played that song "It's going to be great day!" Ha, I growled

**Monroe** But it was! I had fun! As I left, the weather brightened and the birds were zipping and whistling and the car started all right!...And, in town, the sun broke out and everyone seemed in such a good mood and I joked and laughed and chatted with tradespeople...I'd gone with only \$25...all I had left for the rest of the month... and I shopped very carefully, using the calculator...first time I'd ever done that! And I ran into so many "bargains" that I was able to splurge on a good salmon dinner for that night and stock up and still had money left over!

The Social Security bonus? I put that in the bank to cover the bills in case Dennis couldn't pay me back.

**The bank:** That was the first adventure. While waiting in line at the drive-in my car radio warned against going to a shopping mall in a nearby town; "A robbery going on. Stay away." I got my money and went from there to the laundromat.

I told that little fat woman attendant in there about it. "Why, we just had a robbery here!" she cried.

"Where?"

"At the bank."

"Which one?"

"Seafirst." (the one I'd just come from!)

"Did they catch them?"

"Oh yeah." Later I heard that the chief of police had wrecked his car--ran into a tree--chasing that robber. But what struck me was that the natives in town seemed so unconcerned about it all.

The library in Monroe had been closed every time I'd tried it. This time it was open. I went in marveling to the woman in there about the little trees in the yard.

"In full bloom! In January!" I cried.

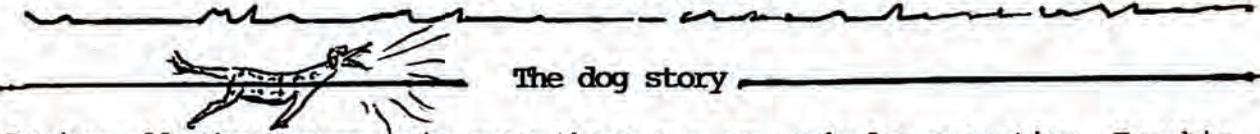
"Oh, they always do that...bloom twice a year, she said.

I got some books and signed for them, that all they required.

Then I went back to the little Monroe "mall", so called, and did my shopping, again joking and laughing with all...strangers...Who would have thought it fun and exhilarating to make a trip to Monroe? But I was in a good mood and all dressed up...maybe that was why? It took me so long it was starting to get dark. My last quip that made them laugh was, "Gee! I shopped so long I had to buy a flashlight to get home!" Of course they didn't know about my trail. I didn't go to the service station for they had the street all blocked off.

I just got home and all my stuff lugged in when it began to rain...

I got inside and changed into my comfy robe, built a fire and began to cook my good food just as a storm began to bombard the roof with twigs and the temperature dropped and it started to "snain" (my word for snow and rain.)  
I was home; safe, snug!  
It was a great day!



The dog story

During all the Monroe trip prep there was so much dog commotion. Two big dogs running out from the back of the lot made me realize all those new noises I'd been hearing (and fearing?) were all the new loose pets that had moved in?

That morning Marty's new dog, "Ryan", was just going crazy barking. Marty and Ralph both gone all day, working, and leaving the two dogs inside their chain link fenced yard. Jake, the first dog, Marty had very well trained. This new one...not!

It was a white dog with black spots...what they used to call "a fireman dog". It was so upset that, before I left, I walked down and talked to the dogs through the fence. "What is the matter?" Not me, him, Jake seemed to say. But they acted like they were trying to tell me something and kept pointing (going on "point"?)—down toward the community park area. They both shut up after I paid some attention to them. But I decided on my way down I'd try to see what was bothering them so.

Well, there was an unattended big bonfire burning outside the fence at the park. It worried me a little. but there were workmen in the next cul-de-sac. I couldn't tell who they were or what they were doing. That dog had barked non-stop until I came by and then had pointed right down at that fire!

So, later that evening when I knew Marty was home I called her. "Who's building those fires?" she asked me. Yes! She'd noticed them!"She said the nearby neighbors were gone all day. I told her about her dog.

"You've got yourself a fire dog!" I said.  
"That dog! I'm about ready to kill him!" she said. And when I told her about the other dogs loose she was very curious. In unusual rapport, we began to chat; she said Ralph got his job in Seattle...would commute... We laughed and joked and giggled. "Well, nice talking to you!" she said.  
It was a very fun and social day after my long hermit spell.

then..Troubles

January 27. I was late up. Mid morning the phone rang. I leaped hoping to hear from Dennis about those cabin costs reports. It was just the phone company, checking; they were working on the lines, they said.

I started on catching up neglected correspondence. Later, I was fast asleep when the phone rang again. This time it was Paula:

Chuck, my cousin, died Sunday night!

They were waiting to see when the family could get together. The services would be in Orting (near Puyallup) at 10AM Thursday.

It was dark by then. I finished my correspondence and took my new flashlight and stumbled over roots in the path to go out and post them in the mail box. One hell of a wind had come up out there.

Then I began all the necessary phone calls. First, Dennis. After I told him I'd be down, and soon, I asked him if he needed money? No, he'd gotten his check.

Then I began all the family calls, furious when I couldn't get through on the phone line. I finally called operator and pleaded: "There's been a death in the family!" and then she finally got me through and I finished the calls.

And then I went up to the loft and started crying. Poor Chuck!

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**Wednesday, January 28.** I overslept. The weather was better. Even sun. I began flying around to start to pack. Checking by phone to see if the service station would be open, I couldn't get through on the line again! Finally, the telephone company; "Sorry, they were working on the line. Would switch over that day. And didn't I know that to call Monroe was long distance?" (8 miles away!)

The rest of the day was frantic; I was full of dread of that trip. When I called Case to alert him I'd be gone he offered to drive around the cul and check on things in my absence. Nice of him.

**January 29.** It rained hard all night. When I awoke Thursday, later than I'd wanted to be to get going, the radio bleated about traffic problems in Kent (where I'd be going.)

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The funeral I shall not tell about, it not relating to my cabin story, only to say that Dennis and I had a chance for a good, long, private talk at his house. He paid me back the money he owed me plus some for the gas he had used. Their finances, it seemed, were not as bad as I'd thought, though I was surprised to learn that he owed Abbie's family \$3500 for that "dead horse car", as he referred to it. What did interest me was that they seemed serious about buying that 5 acres out of Spokane.

They planned to sell Ed's house. In fact, he'd had a real estate man there to appraise it while I was there. Then Dennis would go on to Spokane and start building their house with his friends there, while, if necessary, Abbie would stay on in Seattle and tend to the house deal and let the kids finish the school term. "Now", he asked me, "what are your plans?"

"Oh...uh...I have things I want to do...(write up the story of the cabin--just for the family, but I didn't mention that...he knew that)..." my voice trailed off... We agreed though, that we'd have to finish up that inspector hassle. "In two weeks," he said. When he got his car running again.

As we made (affectionate) farewells, I got the feeling Dennis was trying to think of some excuse to come up to the cabin before that?

"Have we any reason to go up?" he asked Abbie.

"Uh, the rug?" I ventured.

"Oh yes! We'll come up and do the rug!"

Abbie didn't say anything.

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**Friday, January 30.** I got home at 8 that night. Without going into my wild trip on the freeway, I will say that I heaved a sigh when I got on country roads again and I heard myself say, "Never again!" Monroe looked seedy, familiar, but relatively quiet and safe compared to the cities.

Home? Cabin? How did it feel to come home? Well, our street looked shabby and seedy, too. I didn't have much time to sit and contemplate or absorb, for I found myself rather scared; I'd never come home from a trip to a deserted cabin in the woods at night before. In order to start lugging my stuff in, I turned the car lights on high beam and then the inside overhead light on and just sat there, gathering energy for the big haul in. Until I realized I was awfully vulnerable, sitting there with all the lights on.

I'd better go in--get it over with. I got out to do so--just as car headlights approached coming into that deserted, wooded cul-d-sac. it kept advancing. I grabbed my flashlight and slammed the car door, shutting off the light, and turned and beamed the flashlight on that car--all over it, suddenly realizing that's what I'd use to defend myself with in the woods--a blinding flash in their eyes...The car moseyed off. I turned and faced the cabin, loaded up and started into the trail.

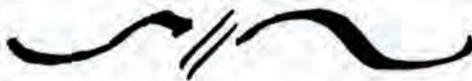
Somehow the anticipated moment of first "great homecoming" was gone. I began to flash that light all over--woods, cabin, all--and then I couldn't get the door unlocked and then it stuck. I heaved my shoulder against it . In.

Whew! I laughed and went to pee.

And then I ran to look at the temperature, two days with the heat shut off--40°. Only then did I look around. The cabin looked a bit shabby, too, and...cluttered, but familiar! Like an old shoe. I turned the heat up, took a sw

ig of wine and went out and got the rest of my stuff in. Then I just sat, sipping wine and making my report, waiting for the heat and till after 10 when long distance calls cheaper to call Dennis and report home OK.

When I did, he was worried; said he'd tried to call.



**Saturday, January 31.** I awoke very late. I intended to. The weather was overcast and still as if at a standstill, a vacuum.

the mail brought, among other things unimportant, my WD forms from the state retirement board: #3000 that year. That put me in "the poverty class" .

Later I called to see how my Aunt Alice was doing.

**So ended January.**



**Sunday, Feb. 1.** February! I can't believe it! But I do believe its the first time I've ever enjoyed the month of January. I still hated to see a new month begin because I hated to see time running out on me: those lonely old age hermit years ahead and the loss of Dennis and his family imminent. They expecting to sell the house by May, for cash...mmm. The gray/nothing weather depressed me ;and I was lonely after being with all those people on that funeral trip. And all that phoning since, listening to all the trouble-prone Doolittles' post-funeral troubles--depressing.

And I was puzzled by why it is so cold in the cabin; it wasn't all that cold outside, until, turning on the (west) wall heater, only cold air came out. I raced and reset the circuit breaker. Nothing. I cursed and wept and gave it a slap. The heat came on. But then went off. I was furious! for I had new problems with everything wet. I tried, but the fire didn't last--the wood was too wet. Ensued an evening of more unhappy Doolittle hassles.

**Monday, Feb. 2.** I woke up troubled, deciding I'd have to call those electrician: about the heater, but I tended to chores first and went for mail, where I found mail for a neighbor in my box. So I walked down to put it in Moore's (is her names?) box and wished I hadn't, for it was depressing to see how trashy our street had gotten. And then, coming back I found broken beer bottles around my mail box, this after I'd been gone awhile and we no longer had caretakers (the McNabbs). And then mail had an order from my car insurance company to inform them of my newest driving habits. That made me mad! They'd never done that before!

I went in and called "OK Electric", reluctantly, for we had parted enemies. The gal said she knew who I was, but if it was Nancy, my former friend, she was not very chatty. She said they'd be out the next day.

It was so darned cold in the cabin I decided to go to Monroe. Case and his son, Dave, were outside burning stumps. I stopped and gave them a check for fixing my car. They took it...without quibbling. I left, wondering why my car made that ominous noise when I backed.

#### Wild game

Down the road, under the power lines--a dead dog in the ditch! Wondering if it was one of the Sultan Estate's tenants' dogs, I stopped and backed up to check, my car making awful noises. It wasn't a dog--it was a deer! a doe! The fur was torn and there were some bloody spots on its side and its eyes were gone (yuk!) but otherwise it was whole. Poachers? Or car hit?

Later, in Monroe, I told about it and the tradeswoman said she thought we were supposed to report them and they'd come and get it. On my way back, the deer was still there, and 'Case was outside. I yelled at him about the deer. His reaction was, "Oh!? Someone hit it with a car!?" (He would take that side, always denying anything malign in our perimeter--(like my hint of poaching?))

In Monroe I was not cheered: Price of gas was going up to \$2.23 a gallon by the end of the year...My Social Security check was not in..and I'd written all those checks on it...The car spewed black smoke and smelled oddly inside, so that, no place else to go in Monroe at that time,\* when I sat in car in parking lot and felt lazy and sleepy I wondered about carbon monoxide? \* Monroe was supposed to be on and "Urban Renewal Plan". Downtown had no parks or any relaxing place. They had torn down lot of things, but thats all they'd done so far.

Anent this, I had stopped in at "The Monitor" (local paper). Monroe had just paid a UW "consultant" a hunk of money for an EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) on how to re-do their town. I mentioned mine, and that we and the state had already done that for Monroe, as I stood and thumbed through theirs. I thought it was kind of fun, but the gal didn't seem to know what I was talking about or show any interest. I left.

And stopped in at the shoe store where I'd bought those (expensive) boots to ask why my feet sweated so in them. That nice "old" gal in there was fun! We chatted and jokekd for a long time. When the train thundered alongside Main Street, I began to rail about it. "They've been a month putting in that new crossing," she said (so that was why Main Street had been blocked off so long?) "And now they say the water table there is so high a new crossing won't solve the problem."

She talked me into buying some expensive woolen socks for my boots. (When I got home and tried them, they had seams that oached all my corns.)

I then went in search of an axe, for Dennis wanted his and besides it was too big and heavy for me. I was appalled at what they cost. Then I bethought me of that second hand store, but theirs were all new, too. But, then, after a long hassle with that sly old guy in there, he produced an older, smaller axe. "A good one!" he said. It had a man's name etched on the handle.

And I bought what he called "a hatchet", and then, a whole box of machetes, I bought one to replace my mysteriously lost one. I spent about \$20 on them.

Then, into the little bakery, now in their shabby little "mall" and had added a sort of snack bar, the only "restaurant" in town to get bread.

But it so late, I didn't stop for coffee. And I was broke. I rushed around finishing my errands and feeling grim and cross. It didn't help when a man, ahead of me whom I'd expected to hold the door for me, did not. He just barreled on through causing the door to swing back and clobber me. I railed at him, "You could have broken my arm!" He just rushed on.

Then some guy came out of Safeway with a pop bottle in his hand and hurled the cap right under my feet. "Litterbug!" I "joked". He snarled at me--"Who cares?"

I hurried home. As I said, the deer was still lying there and I spoke to Case about it. The sun was setting and I didn't know if the Game Dept. Hotline would still be open. But I called, feeling like a fool. A gal took my name and address and the information I had to offer and that was all. She didn't say whether they'd come and get it or what.

It was getting dark and I needed wood. I took my new tools and went and roamed and whacked at things in the woods, still all dressed up--until dark drove me in. Mostly I just sat and made plans of all the things I'd like to do in and to my woods and got very excited about it.

In the house there was such a cold draft over the floor that I dug out that little electric heater and went to bed and read--just to keep warm.

"It will be cold tomorrow," the radio said.

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**Tuesday, Feb. 3.** "The weatherman was right--"A cold snap". It was cold: 28°. Of all times for the heater to go! I had spent a miserable night all bundled up, both to keep warm and for modesty, in case those electricians banged on the door early. I got a fire going, fretting a return of the trauma I'd had about those guys and their erratic behavior before, nobody ever telling me when to expect them. It didn't help matters much when a wind came up and it got even colder.

I worked on dull, dull things...my car mileage for that insurance thing... called the bank--Yes, my check had come in--and then called "OK Electric". 8 rings and no answer...the Monroe paper claim,ing a crackdown on barking dogs and no more than two dogs in one home allowed and a number to call...Ha!...and (scornfully!)...a phone bill higher than I'd expected in the mail...

No electricians. I called again."They wouldn't be out today," she said." She didn't know when...tomorrow or the next day..."...very vague. I hung up and raged and cussed. Of all times! During this cold snap! And here I'd gotten up early and gotten dressed, even to make-up, and tidied the house...OH!

I changed plans and went outside and did things to work off my rage. It was 5:30 before dark drove me in. But it had been fun out there! First I went and looked at the west (away from street) end of the creek and was delighted to find all that free wood lying around and hanging from the trees. So I tackled that first. The axe was a big help and and I'd devised a system by then:I gathered all the bigger limbs into piles and found a "portable chopping block" and chopped them into shorter sections to put into piles to gather when the weather was better. It was fun!

Then I cleaned out the fire pit and burned brush which also kept me warm,

but by this time I was too tired to go on. And all this time, the dog, Ryan, had been having such hysterical barking fits and there were noises and voices down below, so I sauntered down to see. Ryan wagged his tail and shut up when I stopped and talked to him. Then I went down to Cases to see what they were doing and maybe beg a cup of coffee and borrow a rake.

I got two shocks: one, guys had completely denuded that long, steep lot running from the cul-de-sac up on the next street down into our cul. I could have wept. Also, the fools! the rain run off would be drastic, We already had troubles with our cul flooding.

Two: Case had left that fire going unattended in all that brush.

His car was there. I rapped. No answer. Rapped again. He came, evidently there alone, asked me in, offered me a beer. I declined. He heated up coffee and pressed candy, cookies and cake on me. There ensued a difficult, stilted, lame conversation period. He just went on reading the paper and made only clichés or disputive responses like in discussing the deer he claimed it had been there for months, was rotten. It wasn't. Things like that. And he said he's just broken his rake. I was glad to excuse myself and leave.

He came out with me. There was a smell of burning rubber. He got alarmed, "My fire! I didn't know it was still going!" he cried.

I went home with the newspapers he had given me for my stove fires and went on with my work.

I tended my fire, skimming through those papers, and then searched for dirt I then "raked" into it to squelch it. I worked at clearing a spot I hoped to make into a little sunning spot for me. It was fun. At one point, down by the creek I looked back at the sun in the woods and, marveling, thanked my lucky stars I was there and not in that dump in Vancouver! I thought of what Dennis had said, "Maybe that stint (at the "Dump") was to make you appreciate the cabin more." Could be.

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Wed. Feb. 4. I woke to temperatures of 29/55. My night in the loft was miserable. after lugging all that stuff upstairs and reading myself nearly blind, I nearly froze, all the time cussing "OK Electric".

By mid-morning, desperate, I just bent my head down and prayed hard about the heater. And then the phone rang: they were coming! By 11:30 they had come and gone. And the heater was fixed. It seems a defective switch screw; factory fault. No charge: Year guarantee. The guys who came were the nice guys on their crew.

A try to work outside again was too cold for I let the fire die down when a plane kept circling overhead--the fire patrol? My fire had been very smoky; had someone reported me? But it seemed to circle over Case's more than my place.

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The rake. In all that woods work I had done I'd tried to find a forked stick I could use as a rake. I had found only one. It seemed the alders and the kinds of trees that grew in my woods didn't have that kind of branches. So it was precious. I had leaned it carefully against a tree to have when I needed it. This day, rebuffed by Case, I simply could not find it. I made two futile tours of the whole half-acre and gave up--and then sat down right beside it!

There were other things I marveled at that day in the woods. I realized I was getting to know every clump and bush and tree there. And the phenomena of how plants twist, contort, help each other out (without any applauding) never ceased to amaze me. And to find an unexpected plant was exciting! I found I could hardly wait for spring when things would begin to pop out and show me new ones. Was I lonesome? Hell, no! It was...adventure!

And the sharp contrast struck and annoyed me: below, streetside, the sound of bulldozers and barking dogs vs. woods-side, creek gurgling and birds chirping.

A pretty sunset was begining. I quit, tired. And did my errand to the car first where I startled! There was something new--a whiteness in the woods down in the hollow in the nearest of the two unoccupied adjacent lots between our place and Marty's! ! My dim eyes--couldn't be sure. So I crashed clear through all the stickery salmonberry bushes to check. Some of the trees in there were blooming...that old homestead orchard? Apple? No. Tiny little blossoms, but they just loaded! In February! I couldn't believe it! I couldn't linger then, but I was consumed with curiosity...someday...

**Thursday Feb. 5.** It was a cold, but sunny morning. I enjoyed a new little indulgence of having thermos coffee in bed in loft as part of my rising routines. - . . .

INSPECTORS:...My worries about. I was cheered when one of those electricians had told me that inspectors had given him a bad time about not having the now required heavier insulation. He said he'd just held them to the fact that he did what was required at the time he got the building permit. - . . .

DENNIS:...I hoped he'd get his car fixed, but would just as soon they didn't come that week end: I was making too much progress and didn't relish the setback of visitors' messjust then...

I decided I'd use the loft more, sleep up there more, for I felt more...mmm "Lorna" up there...freer; away from the demands and reminders of things I "should'n'otta"do downstairs. I felt stuffy and smothered when I slept in that "cave" down there. Besides, (forced by "codes" et al to have my bedroom as my front entrance) house was more presentable in case someone might come to the door...and so on.

Later that day, still curious about that cloud of blossoms down there, it occurred to me that it would be a good time to prowl in there while Marty was gone. So I got the machete and hacked my way in.

It wasn't as much fun as I'd thought it would be. The machete worked fine;it was a good one, but my arm was lame and sore from all that other work. And it was a hellish job getting through that brush tangle on the steep slope.

It was worth it, though, when I got to the tree; it was an apple tree. And I was reminded of a ballerina--its dainty, fragile froth of blooms and the way it was supported and entwined with a strong and sturdy alder. I had a very nice moment back in there: just me and the sun and the trees. No dogs barked, there were no bulldozers--just utter silence. It was unusual..and kind of eerie.

Later financial work in the loft I got finished, at last--what a relief! And I was rather shocked to find out my income now would be a mere \$8000 a year...a pauper!

After more wood work I went to the store to see about my reprints. I always enjoyed that trip down with the mountains view always looking different. This day they looked like a Japanese print, delicate, as if behind a veil with only patches of snow faintly tinted with pink as the sun set like a huge ball of fire inthe midst of it.

The deer was still there. It had been dragged out onto the road and torn up. On my way back, a boy was walking away from the carcass toward me. After I passed, I saw him hide in the trees and then go back to it. Odd.

That evening I worked in the loft on the prints , marveling at how far we'd come on the cabin;and at how raw and unfinished it had looked when the Mike Chambreaus had been up. I finished feeling good; I was really getting things accomplished. After a little dinner...out to car to get cigs and marveled again at the stars! All those years of city living--I'd forgotten about stars!

I called Dennis that night and told him how I was enjoying the place and how grateful I was for him to make it possible for me to be there and out of the cities and "dumps".

He sounded pleased. "Why thank you!" he said.

I told him I'd call him the next night when we both would know more.

**Friday, Feb. 6.** I woke up with a very sore eye where a salmonberry branch had jabbed it in my apple tree search.

The first thing I did was lug out two weeks of garbage to be picked up, able to go only in my robe, and carry all that weight easily with my new muscles from woods work! It was beautiful outside...all the apple blossoms and the sunshine starting to bathe the woods and all that fresh, clean air, and frost all over, and birds! "The whistle was back? And then another bird called. The birds were coming back? So cheering, birdsong in the morning. I wished I was able to hear them inside the cabin, but not; the insulation? or heaters? radio?"

I checked the car to see if it would start...reluctant, but did. And then I got ready and set off for Monroe.

The deer was still there, on the other side of the road, now, and gruesomely gutted, almost a skeleton by then. I wondered how long it would lie there.

In Monroe..at gas station they said they thought the railroad crossing would be open that night...I went to the second hand store and bought a rake and a shovel from the ornery old bitch in there...I went to the feed store and let an impatient old guy talk me into two pounds of red creeping fescue grass seed--what he said I'd need for conditions I described.

"Don't plant it until March", he said. That made me mad, for I wanted to have some "lawn" on Dennis' septic field for him and Abbie to see before they left.

I roamed in the "ten cent" store trying to find some more suitable clothing to wear to work in woods, but could find nothing. "Gee, I have money and I can't find anything to buy!" I said to the saleswomen.

"Don't tell that to the manager," they said, "He'll descend on you!" I ended up buying some yarn and knitting needles and a How-to-knit Manual with the idea of fixing up some of the old clothes I had.

I stopped in that bakery/deli and bought myself some lunch and sat and watched all the funny people and wished very much that someone would talk to me, but they all edged away or turned their backs. But it was better than that dull Senior Center.

All the strange characters! I was inspired for the first time in a long time to sketch, but didn't; they wouldn't have "understood".

I went to the drugstore and asked the death's head faced pharmacist about something for my eye. He said, snottily, that I'd have to see a doctor. I knew he'd say that. I...isn't this boring?...But wait...I went into Safeway and things got better; as a few people actually talked to me! Not the young ones; they and their children pulled away from me as if I smelled or something. But

An elderly woman and I got very chatty over the price of asparagus. "Look at that spindly stuff! Why, it's gone to seed! We used to grow asparagus and sell it to Del Monte. Why, they would have thrown this stuff out!"

I fought in line at the fish counter for smelt! And got stuck with two pounds of it! "Only package they had left," the gal claimed. I bought chives to plant--smelt and chives! (traditional) signs of spring!

Then, some intelligent looking (many in Monroe are not) woman came up to me. She was handsome, dark haired. "How are you doing?"

"oh..fine.." I said, trying to place her. "You don't know who I am, do you?" she said. "Oh yes, I do! You're...uh...Delp!" Wife of one of the Sultan Estates Board Members.

We began to talk a mile a minute about Sultan Estates, getting in everybody's way. "Heard from Lu and Marv?" (our former caretakers) she asked.

"Well...no... Rather thought I'd wait until they called me..." "You and Marty...are you...(chummy)?" "Well...no..." I told her.

It was a long and good talk; it was so nice to find I knew somebody in Monroe and someone I could discuss Sultan Estate things with.

It was after five, when I got home, But an event, a day away from cabin! [Trivial events, perhaps, but city gal learning new ways and adjusting... someday it might be interesting to read about...I picked up, my journal...]

At home I spent a busy and frantic evening. Cleaning all that fish turned out to be a bloody orgy and building and rebuilding the fire to get them cooked and eaten while fresh made me late in calling Dennis.

He was cross, sounding exasperated and impatient, as I chattered trying to get business things over with first. No, he didn't need money...had been working all week at Sears and had enough to get car fixed, which he'd work on the next day and would let me know if it would run and then I could set up a date with the inspector for the next week. He was very short and emphatic. "Hunh?", puzzled at his irritation.

"Well," impatient sounding, "I've got to go to Colville about that job chance for maybe something on the Indian Reservation...No, he hadn't put a for sale sign on the house yet nor had he heard from the real estate people.

I blathered on about things that had riled me up...highway things on the news and denuding of trees and bulldozers around, but he obviously wasn't interested at the moment for he cut in with

"Did you get some grass seed?" And then "What is it?" when I told him, my tongue stumbling over that name, he sighed.

Still puzzled, I hastily changed the subject and began to rave about the woods and spring and so on.

"Gee!" he sighed, wish I could be up there!" And then, crisply, "I'll call you when I get the car fixed."

"OK." "OK."

**Saturday, Feb. 7.** Weather nice. After puttering inside, in afternoon I simply had to get out of the house and try my new tools. It was hard work! I'd never cleared a forest before! But I experienced two thrills before I had to give up, too tired to go on.

One: This is my own dirt! My own piece of land! I can do whatever I want with it!

Two: I unearthed somebody's old campfire site...a ring of charred rocks...kind of eerie...the anthropologists' thrill...who? what? when? why?

Before I went in I sprayed red paint on my tools finding them too hard to find when I laid them down in the brush to work.

The evening I spent trying to learn knitting and planning curtains and waiting for Dennis to call. He never did.

**Sunday, Feb. 8.** Cold! coldest yet! 22°. I'd kept the heater on all night, though the noise of it nearly drove me crazy. Sunday!(I realized I was still a working gal, not used to retirement yet. Sunday still seemed like a rare at-home day to get things done in.)

I got up and built a fire, the heater not enough, and puttered around in my robe, devising a little knife rack and puzzling over those odd crack! sounds I'd been hearing around the cabin.

### ~ ~ ~ The cop. ~ ~ ~

Just before noon, I noticed a car parked beside mine out in front. In panic I hastily brushed my hair and pulled my robe about me as a man in olive uniform with insignias on it and wearing a gun came up the path. (the cops! What have I done?)

I opened the door to ask him in, but it seemed that when anybody came we always ended up talking on the porch. So it was this time.

He was from the Game dept. (Whew!)

He was a really nice young man. "I'm late because of a mix-up in the directions given me," he said. "I meant to be here several days ago."

I prattled on about the deer. "I hope I didn't do the wrong thing?"

"Oh No! You definitely did the right thing! And next time you hear shooting like that call the State Patrol!...We can't get here in time...and we'll see if we can catch those guys!"

We had a long, nice chat. He told me he lived in the area. Then he

explained, to my horror, when I asked why the shooting was at night, how they freeze the deer with lights and then just kill them. "You'll probably see some more deer in here, as hunting season goes on," he said. He left.

And left me all shook up! I'd have no world intrusion on Sundays? I'd said. But I was all puffed up about having done the right thing--for once. I was just dying to share that news with someone and tell all in Sultan Estates what to do in case of poachers. I'd try Case first. I called. His son, Dave, answered. I told him. He gave me that same line that hid dad had: denial--that the deer hadn't been shot, just hit by a car and the shooting I'd heard was just blasting at the quarry. "But...thanks," he said, and hung up abruptly.

I no sooner hung up than the phone rang; it was Dennis...to tell me he'd forgotten to call the evening before. "I got the car running, but it still needs more work and more money spent on it, so I can't make it until the week end after next...(Hurray! No inpector for awhile!)...I have to take a test in Olympia the 17th, and am still going to Colville...later." He asked me to call and see what days the inspectors covered our area. I told him about the deer and the game warden and my start on a lawn. "I wish I were up there," He said. I hung up, relieved--a reprieve.

Then I called Charlie Finesilver, the current president of the Board and told him. He was real nice. thanked me. Said he was glad to know. I told him what I'd read in the local paper about Snohomish County crackdown on dogs. "Good!" he said. I told him about running into Mrs. Delp and asked if there was to be a meeting? "Oh sure...guess so..."

Mrs. Delp had said they were usually at their cabin on Sundays, so, with the idea of telling them, I got better dressed and started to walk down to see. But there was a pickup truck parked in the cul-de-sac beside the two adjacent vacant lots, the ones with the homestead fruit orchard trees.

It was loaded with chain saws and gear and a youth was up in one of the roadside fruit trees with a chain saw and a man standing directing him. My heart sank, but, seen, caught, and blocked in my progress down the street, nothing to do but "cheerily" ask what they were doing? "Oh, just clearing a little brush so we can get in there," the man said, and went on working. Though I sensed a "nosy lil ole lady brush off", I prattled on about having a romantic liking for those old trees. It wasn't until I mentioned how lovely the blossoms were that a woman peeked out of the car and then got out...and we stood and talked for a long time.

There were four of them, all handsome, prosperous looking people (making me feel embarrassed in my old grubbies) a man and his wife and two teen age kids. There were no introductions made; we just began talking. I gathered it was their lot, the woman mentioning something about having had it for ten years.

"Your sign fell down," I ventured.

"Oh, it doesn't matter. We took it out of real estate hands. We decided we aren't going to sell; just keep it that way for awhile..."

The man and boy were beginning to fell a big alder near Marty's lot (oh oh, my insides cringed...all this sensitiveness about unsure property lines...) "You'd better ask Marty!" I called. "IF you know where her line IS!"

The woman rolled her eyes. "I don't know mny of the people around here by name," she said. And she began to ask me a lot of questions about the place and the Club and about what had been happening. I told her what I knew.

She lamented the trashing that had appeared and told me how nice it had been when they first came. We began to get along just fine! and began catting about the dreary people that had moved in.

She said they'd just let the lot lie fallow...Oh, they might clear, but they were certainly against bulldozing.

"I love trees!" she said. "Didn't we steal some seedlings from that forestration project?" She turned to her daughter, and then explained: "Our place in Everett...all denuded of shrubs..."

She mentioned they had<sup>done</sup> seen what <sup>service</sup> were <sup>when they</sup> gone in once and there was only the foundations.

"Well, wouldn't you like to come in and see it?" I asked her eagerly.  
"Why, yes!" She summoned her very beautiful daughter (I wished Dennis had been there!) and telling her son they were going, they followed my lead up the trail, I explaining and chattering away with my usual cabin lingo.

"Do you live here alone?"  
"Oh, yes. I had no choice. I didn't realize, though that everybody would be moving out."  
"What do you mean?"  
"Oh...Irene..."  
"Oh, she moved a long time ago..." I let it go...

"Aren't there any bears?" she asked.  
I laughed. (Ms. Moore's hysterical story) "Why no! I haven't seen a one!"  
"But there are claw marks half way up on our trees!"  
"Well, maybe--once--" I said. "Case said a porcupine..."  
"Well, maybe...that..." We let it go. For...

Halfway up the trail, the girl cried, "Oh, mother! Look!" (Bless her!)

I led them in, at ease and proud. I found the woman very easy to talk to, and her light accent was explained by her mentioning her childhood in England. They raved. I was so pleased I missed what I was to find, later, was a usual reaction...

"Oh! I LOVE A-frames!" the girl cried, then "...You should have...a balcony out there...and a bay window...and a swimming pool..."

I told the mother about the Delps wanting to buy up all the surrounding lots to inhibit all the developing (exploitation?)  
"Way to go!" she said. "Do you live here all the time?"  
"Yes, I am now."

"Are you warm enough?" she pried.  
"Oh, yes, the stove heats fine." The electric heat was on, but they didn't seem to notice.

"And how do you do your washing?" And when I told about the demise of my portablwe washer and taking my washing to town solution, she persisted.  
"You don't have a washer and dryer!?" "Why, no..."  
"My mother," she said, "used to hang things outside!"  
I giggled. Yeah and sometimes things got frozen!  
She giggled. "Oh!" she cried, "my father's shirts used to be..." She demonstrated. "Stiff! Frozen!"  
I giggled, feeling at ease (she knew about the simpler ways of living) until...

"Well, one thing I want is a washer and dryer!" she cried. And then...

"But where are your draperies?" the mother asked.  
"I..err..haven't gotten them yet...found some material I like..."  
"Oh, I couldn't get along without draperies!" she cried.

"No carpeting?" as she looked at my linoleum. "oh, I see you have some in the bedroom".

But this time I bristled, refusing to let her "put me down" any more.  
"We built this for \$5400 and the lot was \$4000!" I put out proudly. "I heard they're selling now for..."

"But these mobile homes!" she almost screamed, interrupting me, "They weren't allowed when we first came in here!"

I nodded wearily. They're going in all over! And I told her about Breuner (Brauner I found out later).

"Well..." She seemed at a loss for words...

"Tin cans!" I said.

I continued my tour guide act, only indicating the loft and muttering "commercial artist" trying to escape the the misinterpretation that term arouses. But she pried. So I fed her my usual line for laymen and tried to ignore her evident continuing curiosity about the loft.

But then the girl seemed curious about it. "Why, go on up!" I said, not feeling apologetic about its still-in-construction state, only saying, "The bed's not made."

She was up there a very long time, silent. Only after they'd left and I went up did I cringe; my peepot and toilet paper standing there.

When I'd told mother about the real estate prowlers she had nodded so understandingly, I took it as rapport. That, and her seeming familiarity about codes made me chatter away quite openly from then on; about how we weren't supposed to really be in there yet--before inspections--about the game warden, and why I was going down to Delp's, and so on--a lot of this on the trail going back out when she'd said that she'd better go help her husband. She showed no interest in the Delps or my mention of the meeting.

I felt the visit had been a huge success. I had really enjoyed them and showing off the cabin. And felt real pleased, when, going back out, the girl paused and looked back at the cabin, "It's...so...[cute]" she put out.

I laughed. "Little witch's hut!" I said. "I feel like the witch o' the woods!" And I strode on down the street while they joined the rest of the family.



There was nobody at Delps. And the family was still there when I walked back. I expected to chat a wee bit more in passing them, but not so. I found myself ignored.

When we'd come back out of the trail, the guys had felled an alder and my tree lover lady had said, "Oh I hate those trees! Full of bugs!" She was now helping hubby by aimlessly tugging on a tree, and I heard the guys say something about burning them.

"Oh, don't burn them!" I cried out, kidding. "We'll buy them! For firewood!" And I chattered on about buying wood from Case. I was ignored.

"Well...see you later!" I called. No answer.



I went back into the cabin. Sunday is a non-world day, eh?



By now the day I'd planned to get so much done in was half gone. I gathered tools and went out to work in the woods, but bothered by a plane circling and much shooting going on. I'd just been told to call the State Patrol if I heard any more shooting, hadn't I? There was so much of it, I went, cursing, clear back into the cabin and tried to call Marty to see if she had heard it. No answer. And puzzled why, if the game warden lived around here, why he didn't hear the shooting?



I did what phoning around Sultan Estates I could to see if I could find out who those people were, but had no luck ontacting anybody. And I gave up trying to phone State Patrol, et al. Too complicated; they too nosey, despite anonymous calls claims, and I didn't have enough facts.

Instead I spent a nice evening doing my own private, domestic activities and enjoying.

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**Monday, Feb. 9.**

I was rather relieved to wake late and find a sudden change in the weather; a cold snap. first fog, then snow! Later, the sun came out. But it gave me a respite from all the clearing work I was getting a little weary of. I spent the day happily puttering inside, building better shelves, domestic chores and all.

Going out for the mail, I just gloried in the sight of those old, gnarled, moss covered trees with their dainty white blossoms in what had turned into fog. they were so beautiful! And I determined to try to get some pictures of them before the inevitable day when they'd come in and cut them down. How I would miss them!

Later I went clear out into the cul to marvel at a huge bank of white cloud moving south --the mass of arctic air they said was coming in? I noted, too, that when it snowed it showed only in the open places; under the cedars, none.

I spent the evening doing a lot of cooking, really enjoying my stove and the convenience of my "hang it all out" kitchen, I did more work on it, to the radio, which I discovered had stories and plays on..nice to listen to as I worked. And I really gloated over the news stories of the troubles and shenanigans the Highway Dept. was getting into since I left them, in disgust.

[Post hoc. Trying to shorten and finish this saga, some sum up inserted here.]

My days were beginning to take on a "usual" pattern: I slept either in the loft or downstairs, depending on mood and circumstances. I'd wake in the morning to radio set to news, and stay in bed, drinking coffee and writing up my journal while cabin warmed up--usually by the electric heaters--easier. Then I'd take my time eating and dressing and doing household chores. The mail, at that time, was coming about 10:30. Since there were no close neighbors, I'd often out to check in just my robe. What neighbors there were, Marty, for instance (2 lots intervening) had by then gone to work.

Then I'd get into my chores for the day, or make shopping, washing, business trips to Monroe or Sultan. There was no place else to go. In the evenings, about news time--then about 5--I'd have myself a drink while I fixed my dinner, which I'd eat to the news, then to music or plays while working on cabin projects. These sometimes kept me up quite late, for I was still finishing up the cabin. Then, unless something urgent, I'd wait till after 10 to call Dennis, for, at that time, the rates were cheaper then. Besides, Dennis and Abbie were often at work during the day. So that was becoming my basic routine.

Dennis and Abbie were in the throes of trying to get their own lives rolling. Dennis was about through with his University degree try, and they, hating Alki so, wanted to sell Ed's house and start their own dream of land someplace in eastern Washington, away from the rains. So there was a deadline pressure to get the cabin finished and approved before they left.

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**Tuesday, Feb. 10:** I woke and did my usuals before I discovered there was no water! The pipes were frozen! The radio reported a record cold snap. I checked. It was only 20°! I had to build a fire to be able to do the things to get ready to go to Monroe. The walls and floor of the cabin were cold! And a wind blowing outside--I'd have to tell Dennis we would need some insulation and have him check the insulation on the pipes..

Meantime, I called Bishop to check on all the dire news about the Highway Dept. He claimed all OK.

I went to Monroe and didn't get back until late..about 6? Before I'd left I'd left I'd crawled under and inspected the pipes Abbie had put insulation on. All OK...The wind had ripped my car aerial off...the deer was gone from the roadway...the railroad crossing was fixed. It was a beautiful day, cold, but the sun was shining.

I did a washing at the laundromat, went to the library and got some books on knitting and trees and a novel or two to read. I bought curtain material and groceries, irritated at the long lines at Safeway which made me think of what Bishop had said, "I understand that's the fastest growing area in the state."

It was dark when I left Monroe and I had to have my lights on on the way home and I had to lug all my stuff in by the light of the half moon. But I was pleased and happy with my purchases.

I called to thank Abbie for wrapping the pipes, but she said Dennis was engrossed in a football game and to call back, but I didn't.

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**Wednesday, Feb. 11:** I awoke, gloating, for I'd left the water trickling and it was ! not frozen! Then all the terrible troubles news on the radio, but I was snug and happy. Then it began to snow! I'd covered the car and it seemed to be all right. I was just thinking how strange it was that no one in Sultan Estates, not the Cases, the Easterleys, the McNabbs had ever called me to see if I OK when they knew I was alone..nad now...all this snow...when the phone rang!

It was Bishop. "I was just thinking about you," he said (it had snowed in Seattle, too) "wondering if you're OK? Tell me how it is up there!" I described. "OH, I envy you! I really do!"

I tell him about the cabin cost, how cheaply we got by. He yells at the guys in the office and tells them. "They can't believe it!"

We have a long talk.

Then, he's got a long weekend coming up. He will try to come up! Just has to see the cabin! Will call me Friday and let me know!

The phone began to crackle so we had to hang up.

I was all excited! In a tizzy! Guests! I wondered if I could get the curtains done...and the stove polished,...and...

Later, I swept the soft, light snow off my steps with my little "witch's broom". Fun. And tromped out in the snow to the mailbox. And got two letters! One from Carrie and one from Mike. who wanted me to pay the property taxes and the insurance--and he'd settle with me later. The snow turned into rain.

I kept the fire going and set to work on my stitching of curtains (all by hand). I ran into troubles and ended up working on them all afternoon until I was exhausted. But I was happy. It had turned out a great day.

In the evening I went to the loft and art desk and drew a birthday card for Steve. It was the first time I'd actually tried to do artwork again and I was delighted to find my hand didn't shake any more--one of the reasons I had taken early retirement.

**THURSDAY, FEB. 12,** I was dismayed to find, after all that struggle to get a card done for Steve, that it was a Holiday--no mail. I'd forgotten. A little bird sang madly on the porch, but it didn't cheer me much, for this day turned out as badly as the day before was nice. Rain, dismal and dark, and the forecast was for the same all weekend.

Fretting about if I should prepare for guests under those conditions, I called and got Judy Bishop. She seemed surprised to hear they were coming up and was very vague about it--Her..."Well...maybe...they'd call tomorrow..." left me up in the air, but I began a frantic housecleaning anyway.

Afternoon: I went down to the store "for few things" and spent quite a bit on possibly-guests? things. On the way down I had an "adventure".

I was alone on the road, had come to a long stretch where there were no houses. There was an old man crawling on all fours trying to climb out of the roadside drainage ditch which was half full of water.

I stopped (what else could I do although I was nervous about having to leave the car in the middle of the road.) "You need help?" I asked, feeling very "good samaritan".

"Help me! Help me!" he cried. So I tended to the car and walked back, wondering if he were drunk...or sick. I tried to heave him out of the ditch but he fell and almost pulled me in on top of him. He was drunk; he just reeked! And his face was all scarlet.

Well, I didn't know what to do. He kept crying "Help me! Help me! I can't reach my house!"

A dog appeared in the center of the road farther on where there were houses. It barked furiously. Then, luckily, a man and a woman were coming from where the dog was barking--an old couple.

When they got to us, the woman leaned over and cried, "Why, Lem! What are you doing down there!? He's supposed to be in the hospital," she said to me.

Well, they had a hell of a time getting him up and going, each supporting him. He was very drunk but aware. He kept turning to me and thanking me profusely. "There's one in every family," I said, sympathetically, to the woman. She didn't answer me. I waited as they struggled ahead. They were a scroungy trio--old, very old. It was then I noticed that the man helping was a "hunchback"--from osteoporosis? and very thin and frail--"the blind leading the blind"--a pathetic scene.

Home after my trip to the store, I put my overpriced goodies away—things that I could eat in case they didn't come like turkey breast to cook in electric wok pan. I cleaned the stove, getting the bright idea of putting kindling near stove to dry, and began to do my stitchery on curtains again, It was 9 p.m. before I got one finished—the door curtain. And I was proud of myself; all that stitching by hand!

Meantime, Dennis called. After we settled why I hadn't called back he began excited talk: they had real estate agents coming to the house like crazy! And he was getting the car fixed Saturday and they were going to show the house that day!

Later, I showered, shampooed and fell into bed happy; my house and I all ready for guests: the Bishops' first look at what we'd done!

**Friday, the 13th.** The wind blew in the night. I woke to steady rain and gloom. This put me in a dilemma: I not wanting people to come see the place at its worst, in gloom and rain. People always felt sorry for me and thought I nuts to live thus. So I wasn't too sure if I wanted them to come...and when there were flood warnings later I wondered if that would decide it, But I went ahead and got ready. Then I was all dressed up and had burned a lot of good wood, not sure when they were coming and wanting to create an "atmosphere".

The fire started to go out...the mail box was empty...Valentine's Day...the garbage that I had put in bags on the porch had been chewed into and was strewn all over; I had to gather it all up and take it out...in the rain. Time wore on. Noon. Nothing. I thought I'd go insane, waiting.

It was almost 1:30 when the phone rang. Bishop. "I hate to say this...but...". They couldn't come...delays...Cub Scouts...maybe Monday...if the sun shines..." It was a relief to just know, though.

I went to work on the alternate things I'd kept in abeyance. Loft: and began to work on the cabin pictures and filing family papers, at last having a place to keep them! I worked all afternoon. But I was beginning to hurt: my stomach was sour, and a piercing pain like bursitis in my shoulder.

By nightfall I felt tired, cross...and lonesome. I ate the food I'd fixed for them. I lugged a lot of stuff to loft so I could sleep up; there...a 3day Holiday weekend to get through. It began to rain again.

About 10p.m. I in loft, the cabin began to shudder and shake, as if someone shaking a kitten. Peculiar! I went on readin.

**SATURDAY, FEB. 14.** I tried to ignore the fact that it was Valentine's Day. I was too busy suffering all morning with that piercing pain in my shoulder, like a knife. I did strike me funny, though, when, spending most of the day looking for my little craft knife I wondered if the pain was was from being struck by Cupid's dart!? and I laughed even harder when, later, I found the knife...and the pain went away !

I spent a miserable day. The biggest event in the day was when the radio came out with the news that there had been a big earthquake about 10 the night before. It was felt all over the northwest and Canada—a5.5, centered around Mt. St Helen's!

The first bugs and moths of the season started appearing.

**SUNDAY, FEB. 15.** I woke to rain and pain again. A bad day: I puttered and nursed shoulder, got put off on try to talk to kids as they busy with Abbie's family there; a trip to store in rain; everyplace looked deserted until I home and raged at finding young people driving dune buggies all over the place as if it a race track while unsightly piles of wood and trash lay untouched.

**MONDAY, FEB. 16.** A Holiday now in the new 3-day weekend bunching of Holidays. That meant no mail. My arm still hurt and I hadn't heard a word from Bishop, and that hurt. The weather forecast was for more and more rain, which, later in the day, started such a torrential deluge I went down to check on the creek. It sure was "cresting" as they call it.

I no longer expected Bishop, but I dressed up anyway, just in case, and wandered around in cabin, alone, thinking wryly; so I'm going to spend 300 days a year alone here? Well, I used to spend 365 days in that horrid slum in Vancouver wishing I were alone!

By evening I gave up and went up to loft and finished cabin picture album, And then I went to bed early, downstairs, giving up on my loft sleeping tries. I was startled in the evening by howling, screaming animal noises outside. Seeing nothing, I decided it was just cats? February mating season?

**TUESDAY, FEB. 17.** This the day Dennis was supposed to be in Olympia. I woke with arm still too crippled and sore to work with and storm and flood and much havoc news on the radio. Maybe that the reason no guests? But it gave me an excuse to hold off calling the inspector. Mail brought the first property tax bill. I was afraid to look, but it was only about \$55.

I threw on some clothes and made an unhappy trip to Monroe for some little needs. People were unfriendly, the stocks were low, and I felt very ill. When I got home I made an effort to dig a ditch and get some gravel over the floody places near my car park. Then I came in and fell asleep. Later, I tried to call Dennis, but Abbie said he was asleep. It began to rain again.

**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 18.** I woke to a fairly nice day, but a big, bad storm coming threats on the radio and another earthquake—Central Washington—nobody seemed "shook up about".

Sigh. I began on the inspector call. After the usual bureaucratic runaround, "Oh that inspector has been transferred." Well, I'd tried.

Later, on trip to mailbox, I stood and read that inspection notice: "This building shall not be inhabited until...signed. A misdemeanor..." I sighed. I hated to feel so depressed when all the birds were singing so happily.

I went in and pattered with my not very successful tries to have potted herbs and plants in the house. Later, I wandered down to the creek and was pleased at how clear and clean it was running since Carrolls had and I cleaned it out. It used to be all a muddy mire, useless as home making land. And I was appalled at evidence of new storm debris where I'd had it all cleaned up—the way those "widow-makers" had impaled themselves into the ground! There was one right by the fire pit! I puzzled at the whooooo noise that seemed to come from the east and nearly drove me nuts when I had the radio off.

I went back in and made myself work on the curtains, though I screamed with pain every time I lifted my arms. I worked on them all afternoon until I was exhausted. Then I phoned Dennis. Abbie said he was sick in bed, asleep, headache, upset stomach. I went to bed myself and played invalid. The radio bleated on with news of storms and disasters on freeways in Seattle. It started to rain again.

**THURSDAY, FEB. 19.** Radio cam on telling about trees down and power off all over Seattle. I felt lucky where I was where all OK, even some sun out. My arm was somewhat better.

I called Abbie. They were OK; the power not off, and Dennis back to work. She said to go ahead and make the appointment; Dennis going to Colville Thursday and Friday.

I called and made the appointment for Tuesday. The gal suggested I check with "George" (the former inspector we liked better) before 8:30 the next day, (Friday). So I'd have to wait until after that to let Abbie know for sure. Hung up. The deed was done!

I worked on the curtains all afternoon. stiff, sore and bored. Took a nap continued on them until by 9 p.m that evening I had them all ironed and up!

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**FRIDAY, FEB. 20.** I woke to sunrise and bird song and my lame shoulder better and realized cause might be all that curtain stitchery?

I phoned for the inspector and got the usual runaround. And then, when I got him he was cross, claiming there was no record of a second inspection.

"Is your permit up? (posted)"

"Yes." "Signed?" "Yes." He got pleasanter as I checked to see if he knew how to get to the cabin. "OK!" he finally said.

I called Dennis and told him. He insisted we'd had the inspection. He sighed: he has to go to Yakima for a test the next week, which meant he'd lose a lot of work money. We agreed that with another new inspector we'd probably have more troubles. We chatted some more and hung up.

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**SATURDAY, FEB. 21.** The weather was better and there were more birds. As I was getting caught up, I just lazed through the day: changing from rain and pain and shut-in to slut in!

I lay in bed and studied and made notes from the tree book I'd gotten at the library and then, later, I went out and roamed around studying trees and discovering and learning things. I even tried to eat a salmonberry shoot as the book said the Indians did. Ugh. It tasted like grass.

They were starting to bloom and the cascara stump was sprouting. The sun came out and I enjoyed.

Late in the afternoon there was much shooting around. The man had told me to report. I tried to call Marty to see if she had heard it, but no answer. I gave up. I also gave up on knitting that evening finding that it made me tense and nervous and hurting again.

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**SUNDAY, FEB. 22.** After a morning of "the glums". triggered by that "Earth Manual" book I went out and worked long clearing out around the car and the cul. The blackberries were sprouting! The rest of the day I spent as usual and feeling better.

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**MONDAY, FEB 23.** The weather was a little stormy again, but signs of spring, the alders dropping catkins all over, and the sun breaking out now and then.

Feeling better and wanting to check out kinds of insulation before the inspector I went to Monroe. The Cases waved as I went by, which made me feel better after my long isolation. I did what were now my usual errands and took myself to lunch at the bakery deli, where I tried again to strike up encounters with people with no luck.

NOrr did I have much luck shopping insulation at Dunbar's. I had money but I found nothing to buy; it seemed odd after all the buying we'd done in there for the cabin.

A bit late getting home, and one of those showers starting I picked up a library book and fell asleep in the car!

Later, I'd cooked my dinner, and so on. and was tired, tired, tired when about 9 p.m. Dennis phoned. He intended to come up when inspector came. I blasted away at him about my disappointment in insulation shopping; how it was all plastic and very inflammable the man had said. Dennis asked me if there was anything I wanted him to bring. I lied and said "no" despite my long, long list. "I imagine you'll be in a hurry," I said. Well, he'd have to get back before dark.

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**TUESDAY, FEB. 24.** 'D' and inspector day got off to a bad start. The inspector was supposed to come "after eleven". I awoke late and in pain plus having a newly cut finger. It was rainy and cold and nasty, which disappointed me very much for I wanted Dennis to see spring in the woods and I'd planned to tour the woods with him with my new knowledge and questions about the woods from that book. I rushed around tensely, not even trying to "set the scene."

Dennis came about 10 a.m.—in the rain—with woes. Car troubles; the car shimmying and acting up and he worried about it. He'd taken the whole day off but he'd have to leave about 1:30, Abbie at work and Sarah home and the traffic and all.

We sat and talked nervously, we both nervous wrecks; the inspector jitters on top of the hurry and everything else. We exchanged (money) checks—so silly: I was paying him for this trip up but he said he owed me money, He had brought the rug.

"Want it down?" "Oh yeah.."It didn't take him two minutes. And I was pleased; I had a real living room!

We sat and waited and waited and waited. Dennis paced, one eye on the driveway, and I smoked and smoked. Finally, about 12:30, I called Snohomish County. No, the gal said, she didn't know when he'd be there..."afternoon". Well, Dennis had to go and I knew it. and worried about his car breaking down in the peak hour traffic. We'd gotten a lot said and figured out, but talk about nerve wracking...! "Well, I'll wait until 2," he said. conceding a another deadline.

"Want a beer?" "Oh...no." Then, later. "Oh sure." Time was running out. I'd gotten a piece of turkey to make him a fancy turkey sandwich. Dennis called the turkey "the Inspector". The toaster oven jammed. But I finally got him fed.

"Well, I can't wait any longer," Dennis said. "Sorry." I was twisting my hands and silently praying. "I hate to wait!" he said," but...gotta go!" "Hate to wait!" I said. "think about me sitting here fretting about both of you!"

He gave me a hug and I walked down the trail with him. That shimmy" he said, " I think it's the front wheel..." (Oh no!) He took it off. "Seems ok," he said. I'd given him turkey sandwiches and beer. "If I see that turkey down the road, I'll come back," he said. "Have a nice picnic on the freeway!" I called and watched him back out and go. The wheel didn't seem to wobble.

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I went back in the house—furious! "He'll come the minute you leave I'd said.Yep. A white car drove in as I started to clean up food. And then a red one; they'd met on the road. I watched them come down the trail. An old guy—good! Dennis and I had hoped we wouldn't get some smart aleck just fresh out of college. They were laughing and talking. I had to pee like crazy, but that noisy toilet flush right beside the now codes-demanding front door. I controlled it while they went under the house where the plumbing was to inspect the foundations. Modest, wasn't I?

One thing that worried me very much, was about the new codes for insulation since we'd begun; more and thicker.I barely had money to squeak through —the roof to go yet. To insulate the whole cabin would cost a mint. I was also worried about what they'd do to me for moving in...illegally...a fine? Dennis was more concerned about getting it all done while he had time to. "I'll sweat 'em about the insulation," I'd told him. "Afraid I'll get mad, though." e both agreed: Let's just get the monkeys off our back!S" Dennis said.

I stood on the porch and listend to them haggling about something below. "...unsigned permits" the man was saying. "You haven't had your framing inspection." "Oh,yes, we have!" Dennnis said,his eyes twinkling at me,and..."It's a little late for that, isn't it?" he kidded the guy. Later, as I nervously scrounged for papers he wanted and handed them to hhim,. "This what you wanted?" "Yes...mmm...wasn't written down. Those.... !!" he said. "Why don't they sign?" And he scribbled some notes.

He and Dennis went and prowled in the loft. "This a bedroom?" "No!" I said emphatically, knowing what that would mean (our permit wasn't for two bedrooms)...an artist's loft!" "Oh yes, I see...pictures up here..." "We spent six years putting in that traffic light on SR 2 for you!" "You?" "Oh yes! I many years with the state. Artist." "Oh?" I saw Dennis' eyes merry on me (she always has to bring that up) but I didn't care; I'd learned long ago that a mere woman had to pull some clout with men coworkers.

He consulted his notes. "Smoke alarm?" "There." ":Not a very good place for it." (Just what I'd thought, but...)

I explained that that's where the electricians had put it, and he let it go. I was checking over the corrections "needed" he'd written down. "What's this bit about stove inspection?" "Oh, you should have had one." "Listen!" I bristled, "I spent a whole day cooling my heels waiting for that fire guy in the building permit office and they said...not again?" "Oh, it shouldn't take long," he said, writing.

"And what's this bit about the wrong height on the porch railings?" I asked. Dennis and I had sweated so to follow the codes. "Mmmmm," he said and took out his tape measure. I followed them out onto the porch. "That's odd," he said, "how'd I get...this one checks...Let me scratch that one off," he said.

"And this bit about floor insulation...?" But he and Dennis were talking and it seemed to be OK? "And the stove?" I asked. "Well," he sort of winked at Dennis... "oh, just put some asbestos under it" and they both shrugged and laughed... "And 3 screws in the stovepipe." "Told ya!" I gloated at Dennis. "Toldya they said you had to do that!"

"The chimney? 2 feet from..." We really sweated that one," I put in. He shrugged and made another check on his paper. "Crawl space?" "Plenty!" I laughed. And he and Dennis went down to see.

He was about through. I'd asked him if he'd had any trouble finding the place? "Oh, no. He'd had to go up to Index...somebody building a house out on the river...(Oh, no! I thought, Another fool! They'd already had lawsuits about people being washed out and trying to collect from the government for the fool things they'd done.)

"How long you been with Snohomish County?" I had to get that one in. (For, actually, we'd worked with those guys and I'd found that somebody always knew somebody.) "Ten years." "Mmmmm/ Where'd Jackson (the one who was supposed to have come) go?" He kept on busily writing. "Oh, we traded." "I know," I said. "Where's he now?" "Why?" "Oh, just wondered..." "Marysville." "Oh? Transfer?" "No, we just trade every 2 years." "Training!" I laughed. "No no..." "Well that's what we used to call it," I said. What I was referring to was the bureaucratic silliness of moving a guy from one job to another before he had a chance to learn either. But...we said no more about it.

"Will you have to come back?" I asked as he made to head down the trail. "Oh yes!"

"Well, what do yo think?" I asked Dennis, after h e'd gone. "Oh...I can live with it (the things they wanted done) but, actually, I was very relieved. He was quite nice and he and Dennis sort of winked and shrugged things off. "They have to quibble a bit," I said. "That's their job" He nodded.

Dennis and I had found time to inspect a few trees, I trying to show off my new book knowledge and he arguing and correcting me..."No no, that big one by the trail is a black cottonwood" and so on.

Before he left he got very apologetic that they hadn't been able to come more of late...the car...and so on...They wouldn't be able to make it the coming week end but they'd come up the next one aand stay all week end! "Err..Fine!" I said. He left.

I went in and gloated over my new free Sears' cast-off rug. We had both been pleased how the color just fit in with everything and the size was just right. And I recalled, thankfully, that the inspector hadn't said anything about end wall insulation!

I called their place to see if Sarah all right in case Dennis was late. No answer, so I assumed OK. Then I thought about Dennis' plans: He'd stick with the Sears job until they sold the house and then...he had all kinds of plans for building his own house...someday... somewhere ... And his views about finishing up the cabin.

and then--  
They'd move away.  
I went and collapsed.

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**WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25.** I was still in collapse. The weather was overcast; my arm hurt; I didn't feel good; I had the blues. I thought of all the things the inspector wanted. My \$100 "extra" would have to go for floor insulation. The stove, the one thing we had finished and working, would have to be dismantled and stuff put under it. I would have to go into Everett again. I decided I had case of "inspectoritis".

But one thing: he hadn't said a thing about my being moved in! I'd really sweated that! As I went to work on cleaning and fixing the toaster oven my mood brightened, when, inspired by the new rug, I cleaned and worked on my very own living room! Mine! For the rest of my life! Not any landlord's!

**THURSDAY, FEB. 26.** I woke to birdsong and sunshine and my arm didn't hurt! This the day Dennis was to go to Yakima. He said He'd go on the bus; the car too much worry. As I got up my mood brightened further when I saw my living room. It really looked nice; beginning to look homey.

The day nice I went out to work in the driveway, that gravel—there was plenty of it to put on the path, but I found my arm acting up again. I couldn't do it. And the weather got gloomy. I gave up and went in and just lay around and read.

Late afternoon I went out and tried again. This time it was better. I alternated with rest spells of reading in car and moving gravel and fixing driveway so I could move my car farther in. I worked on the car plastic cover, and on the drainage ditch. I began to feel better—it nice out there, just me and the birds.

I went back in but it was too nice to stay in. I went out back and worked on sieving dirt for my little piece of lawn. It would be nice to have a sunning spot in back. I was busily working when there was a gunshot so loud and close I nearly jumped out of my skin. But...what could I do about it? I worked till darkness and weary muscles drove me in. It was nice to have the days longer and go into my pretty, clean, warm cabin and take a shower and shampoo.

And then I called Dennis. His trip was all right. He sounded excited about the insulation, which would make the cold floor warmer. He figured it would cost about \$85 and asked me if I had the money? I told about the \$100. he chided me about not having gotten the stove permit. I said meekly that I would.

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**FRIDAY, FEB. 27.** I was anxious to get on with my lawn work, but, kids coming, I decided I'd better let my sore muscles heal and get to other things. When I took the garbage out I just stood in awe: spring had come! The dew made rainbow jewels on the green, green grass; a million birds were singing their hearts out—all different—all through the trees—what music! The sun was creeping into crannies I'd never noticed before. And that fern I had more or less carelessly transplanted the evening before had a huge frond unfolding. (How's that? This...lyricism? triggered by "Stillmeadow" book by Gladys Tabor I'd been reading. if she can do it, I can!)

I spent quite a bit of time improving my hand made "Private Property" sign and put it upon a bit of cedar post by the path entry. The sun was so warm in the driveway, where it was open—out from under the shade of the cedar grove—I felt restless. All those signs of spring! Spring fever? I felt an overwhelming urge to take off—go someplace. Such a gorgeous day!

I went and got all dressed up. Where could I go? Or whom could I find to enjoy or share this rare day with me? I didn't know. I just set out.

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 The first day of the first spring in cabin 

The Cases? No. Dave and Dwayne were just leaving. They waved. I drove slowly down to the highway savoring it—spring. But I sighed as I observed the evidences of modern spring on my way: Spring now meant guys like the Cases working on their cars; motorcycles out all over the roads, real estate signs sprouting up all over and the power company stringing up new lines all over. And there was no nice music on my car radio; all talk shows and junky "music". Somehow the achingly beautiful day and the mountains so breathtakingly beautiful were spoiled.

I got to Sultan, where nothing and wandered around in their trashed park and got no answer calling McNabbs in Gold Bar. The only tourist trap market was market was too high-priced to stock up in. My arm and body began to hurt, hurt, hurt and I felt like crying. I went back to Sultan Estates. Where else was there to go?

And I drove all around in there, my excuse being to find the source of that whoowhoowhoo noise that bothered me so. I never found it. And I was depressed and shaken by the trash and ruin the area and Sultan Estates had become and nobody there home or friendly to me.

Home I found it so cold in the house and that Whooo still going on I just set out again and explored Old Pipe Line Road seeking it. Again never found it and a shattering experience in which I got panick-ridden lost burning up my expensive "gas shortage" gas on remote, bad roads and then being chased and crowded off the road by a couple of drunken toughs in a battered pickup with dogs who ended up pulling off and watching me from that mansion where they'd just had a murder? I'd read about in the paper.

Scared and chastened I went home and got drunk on sherry and made a long birthday call to my sister in California. From that time on I never enjoyed "adventuring around" in rural country roads in the area.

**SATURDAY, FEB. 28.** I woke to bright sun. I'd found myself newly disturbed in night. I didn't know whether it was result of my traumatic day, but it sounded like footsteps and loud bumpings around house during night. it turned out to be another one of those little birds in the house. This one shy and hiding versus the other noisy one I gave up looking for it. Signs of spring! birds in the house, moths bombarding as I read at night, a new nest on the porch rafters?—moss fallen on porch—the morning warbling I kept hearing?

Even though such a nice day I found it hard to get going. I lay in bed and wondered why Dave and Wayne Case seemed newly cool to me, as if avoiding me (the answer never occurring to me at the time, but obvious in rereads) I wondered where the bird was. I got newly annoyed at the wording of the inspector's notes: "No more covering of walls (etc.) until these violations are taken care of." Gad! Made us sound like deliberate criminals! I got out maps and looked up where I'd been the day before. I perused doctor books and got ideas about my arm...

I read my notes I'd made from Gladys Tabor's book—things she not like: "shaved" (bulldozed) ground. Neither do I! "Solitude I can stand; loneliness is different." Yeah. Looking down the street... "Spring brings the week-enders". Gee. I wished I were allowed to say things like that!

I finally got myself up and going and outside to work. The first thing I found was the sanitation permit (septic field Dennis worked so hard on and that inspector had gotten so shook up about, claiming we didn't have it and it wasn't signed.) It had blown under the house and was all mousenibbled! I just happened to see it. I was so excited I tried to call Dennis. No answer.

I spent the afternoon working outside. It was heaven! Like summer! I even got some sunburn and freckles starting taking rest breaks lying in lounge chair in the sun! and thanking my lucky stars I was where I was. Even my arm didn't hurt!

I worked on my "lawn". Nice, all that rich brown dirt finally leveled. I couldn't resist—got the seed and spread it. It felt so silky in my hands and I strewed it over the mosscovered log...a "pixie" place to sit someday...the sun...the big sword ferns all over...the blue, blue sky, my blue-trimmed windows echoing it, as I'd meant them to. I finished the planting. I even "rebuilt" the firepit. The sun poured in through the two crossed tree branches and made a shadow of a big "A" across where I'd planted.

Beyond hung my underwear washing I'd done by hand dancing crazily in the sun. I tried to take a picture. It was all so wonderful! (sorry.) The only flaw was Marty's damned dog yapping; my rage and yelling no effect on. Before going in I looked proudly on my day's work.

I tidied things up and went in and called Dennis. All was well.  
So ended February.

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MARCH 1981

**SUNDAY, MARCH 1.** March "came in like a lamb." Awake, I lay wondering what seemed to be missing I used to enjoy; and then realized now I was listening to mechanical noises—the heaters, the refrigerator—versus the nature noises I used to hear when I was camping. There was no evidence of the imprisoned bird. I don't know what happened to it.

In a noontime session out sunning by the car, there were people out on the street—Marty out training her dog—viciously; prosperous looking man and little girl prowling around that dingy, deserted trailer where Parkers had been. The owner? or new neighbors? I curious about my future surroundings, but no way of finding out.

I spent the afternoon gathering up more wood, about finishing it up. Came in to a vanilla flavored house (I'd spilled a bottle of vanilla.)

It was a pattered-away day.

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**MONDAY, MARCH 2,** Another nice day. I discovered a whole family of birds nesting in a rafter on the east porch. I enjoying watching them—the fledglings just hatched? When I went down for the mail the car was covered with pollen! and there was that mysterious whoo-whoop noise again.

The mail: I was puzzled to see two cars stop and put things into my box. But because there was the notice of a Sultan Estates Bingo party Friday night, I figured the other car must have been Marie's and was puzzled that she hadn't just phoned. My reaction was not pleasant; I hate bingo! and that was the night I'd be getting ready for the kids. And then I noticed it was to be a meeting—"something of utmost importance to all residents". Puzzling. I wondered if they'd invite Case, they not too friendly to him of late.

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After some financial tending inside, I picked up to go down to that filthy, dingy, steamy laundromat in Sultan. I reveled in the beauty of the day and scenery on the way and irked at the litter roadside that never used to be there.

Waiting for my wash, the springiness of the day lured me to go buy ice cream cone (for a ridiculous price!) at that dingy restaurant. And then, in lumber/hardware store all the lights flickered and went out. "Power's out," Mrs. Fatso/Owner said laconically and she and some local yokels just stood around, unconcerned, whereas I was intensely curious: "Why would the power go off on such a nice day?" I asked. And mentioned they were working on the lines up the road. "Yeah. So?" they ll just shrugged. "What anout your ;washing?" Mrs. Fatso remindesd me. "Oh!" I left.

In the laundry everybody was just standing around waiting. What puzzled me was t hat with all those businesses around no one seemed concerned or interested they just shrugged and waited. "Oh it'll be on soon." After about half an hour I asked if anyone had called to ask what the trouble was. Seemed odd to me power company hadn't alerted them. "Oh it'll be on soon." Well, Iim going to see if I can find out what happened,"

I said, and left them all lounging around in the dark, waiting.

In the resturant they greeted me with "The power's off!" "I know!" I said, "Why?" "Dunno." they just shrugged/

IN/n the market the lights were all on and nobody knew what I was talking abouuit..The electrical rig was still out there. I went and asked them. "Oh guy up the line..." he waved vaguely toward the mountains..." hit a power pole, snapped it off..hit two cars..We just got back..power be on in a minute..." "How ia he?" I asked. "Oh..totalled, I guess.) Such indifference!

I went back to the laundromat and gal let me put my sopping wet blankets through dryer again. Nobody seemed the least interested inthe accident story. Back at Fatso's she'd found a piece of chicken wire for me ( complete with feathers still on it!) Late now, I hurried home, city gal puzzling over rural attitudes.

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Later that evening I called Case. He had been invited to the meeting. We had a long chat but about nothing pertaining. Then I tried to call Lu to see if she knew what the "important news" might be. No answer.

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**TUESDAY, MARCH 3** I woke to pouring rain, which was too bad, if it was going to last, for Dennis wanted to work outside on the insulation. But I also woke to some glad bird trilling on the porch. Investigating, I found tiny birds had built nests in both porch rafters. And they seemed so tame—didn't startle when I appeared.., then others began on the other porch. They think we've built a bird apartment here? But what a nice way to be wakened!

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Readying to go to Monroe to stock up for the kids' coming, I was upset when I found I'd lost my plastic grocery carryalls—I must have left them someplace?—would be hard to lug groceries in paper sacks in the rain....There was no mail. I noted the blackberries were leafing...

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Getting ready, the thrum of a truck made me run to check. In the cul there was a big rig with flashing lights and four men in hard hats and safety jackets. I watched. Oh no! They were ditch diggers and they were going to dig right through my driveway where we were supposed to have put a culvert? I agonized as they were so long out there, the foreman digging around and looking things over. But no! He stopped them before they went through. At last! they went! but only after reporting something into their radio phone. Panicking for fear they were going to report us, I called Case about it. He reassured me; said he hadn't put in culverts either.

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Leaving I stopped to see what they had done. And sighed. That huge ditch wouldn't solve the drainage problems along the road for it ignored the natural run-off pattern and only created a big, stagnant pond. I'd have to get out there and "engineer" it myself, opening the ditch downslope where the water had been naturally going in the past.

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In Monroe, my shopping was not fun—just grim slogging around in the downpour. But one episode was funny. Curious about those birds, I had stopped at the library and did some research. I wanted to encourage them to stay around with their beautiful warbling. "To attract birds, try suet."

So, later, at Safeway market, I tapped on the butcher's window and asked him for "Suet?" "Sure!" he said and began to lop off about five pounds of the stuff. "No! No!" I cried, "not that much!" but he ignored me and, with a bit of a sly grin? just thrust the package at me and closed his window.

I trundled all over the store, then, trying to kid people and palm off "Some suet for the birds?" They all just looked at me as if they thought I was nuts. It was more of my beginning to learn that Monroe people were not much fun; it was very rare to run into someone funny and friendly. At the check-out stand I presented my dilemma to the gal there. "This suet..." She solved it for me: she wrapped a small part of it and kept the rest. "I'll get rid of it it...somehow," she said.

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I went home and, despite the downpour, and still in my best clothes, I took time to take the new rake I'd bought and rake gravel into the puddles in the driveway.

Then I struggled—about four trips—lugging all the stuff in, having to hurry before the rain burst all the paper sacks.

It was not a good day.

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**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4** I spent at home, primping and doing necessary chores to get ready to go to Everett and get the stove permit Thursday and the Sultan Estates meeting Friday and the kids' visit on the weekend. I only went outside twice, the weather so erratic—rain, wet, cold, sun, hail. I ended up building a fire.

One trip out, when the sun was shining, I went and worked on the water/ditch problem. It was fun, fooling around in that water and trying to make it flow off and drain. But I was very annoyed at my having to dig and clear and at careless developers building a cul-de-sac right where even my amateur investigating showed was in midst of a natural watershed course.

The other trip out was for the mail, which upset me very much: my electric bill was a shock. Granted, the coldest month of the year, but also there was a rate increase of 32%! the bill was a \$100! That and a very high phone bill because of all the phone calls about Chuck's funeral made me sigh: well, Dennis, there goes the paneling we wantd to buy.

My only people contact was a call from Marie, chiding me for not calling her about if I was coming to the meeting? I told her I was. We did not discuss anything. Something about the way they'd set up that meeting turned me off about it.

It was not a very good day.

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**THURSDAY, MARCH 5**, the day I had to go to Everett. Before I went I intended to call PUD and check about my bill. I woke about 7. the cabin was freezing cold and it was cold outside. The radio came on to say that "Today will be nice, but—you're not going to like this—rain all weekend." Depression assailed me. I wondered if I should call the kids and ask if they wanted to call of their visit? Only "my" birds singing around the house cheered me.

then

**The power went off!**

Why? No weather. I checked the fuse box—all ok. I got out a lamp, built a fire. It was too early to call the neighbors and see if their power off. Besides, Case, he'd just pooh pooh and say "Oh it'll come on!" I wasn't used to this indifference about having the power go off all the time. In the city one was either forewarned or could call and find out why.

I hopped back into bed and waited, freezing. (PUD charges us for this!?) I braved the cold and put another precious log on the fire. then...find there is no hot water! Are the pipes frozen? I hopped back into bed and shivered.... Just about to call PUD when the power came on...off...on.

I called Case. Woke him up. He was didn't know, didn't care. I called PUD in Monroe. Not again!? A guy hit a utility pole on highway down by Sultan store. (And I had to go out on that highway?) I just had to tell somebody. I called Marie.

We had a long talk, about PUD—my bill. "Why their's was only \$25!"... The radio came on going on about "the weird mist over Alki point (where the kids live) and "phenomena last night—aurora borealis"...and what to do in case of earthquake..." all I needed to brighten my day!

Which now <sup>hd</sup> me, late, flying around trying to catch up, only time to grab some leftover beans for breakfast. I was in no mood to go battle Snohmish County again! but i did—go into—

EVERETT

First I stopped at that big lighting fixture store, only place I could get those very expensive bulbs for my kitchen spotlights. I had a hell of a time. "Obsolete." I ended up paying \$30 for a substitute I didn't want

Next was to get a camera checked but crazed and lost with their unfamiliar one-way streets before I found a phone booth to call, I gave up on that, too, the place too far and I having no idea how to get there.

And then I got terribly lost and confused trying to find my way into that basement parking area of Snohomish County City Hall. Finally! But then upset at the 2 hour parking limit sign and my car "deiseling" as parked.

Then the elevator up to the building department to wait and wait and wait (vs. that parking sign) And then there was something new that took time: one had to sign in and state your reason for being there. The line, though short, took forever, and then, just before my turn, a drunk came in and began berating "All the goddamned bureaucrats!) Even my pulling weight with names of former cohorts I'd worked with there impressed no one.

I finally got the stove permit. \$7.

I then went and braved a visit to Al (Grieve, former co-worker, Seattle, now head of Public Works, Snohomish County) It seemed so strange, I, retired, going around in that familiar building and seeing people working on the same old jobs and not be a part of it—and not even be known!

This was brought home even more hurtfully to me when the gal in Al's office gave me the run-around, making me wait and then getting on the phone and pretending she couldn't find them. Finally, she asked me my name and sent it in, at which both Al and Dick Andrews appeared from "where they weren't"!

Al looked sleeker and fatter than when I'd last seen him and scurried back into his office with that "busy" excuse. But Dick, that nice young man from District 1 stayed and talked. We scuttlebutted and caught up on gossip about who was where now, et cetera.

"Lorna!" he said, "they didn't give you a chance there!" That made me feel good and so did the gal's sudden obsequiousness when Dick went back to work, saying he knew where my place was and he'd have to come up and see it sometime...They all say that...

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Then I went to the assessor's office to see who owned the land around the cabin. It was very crowded and the old gal who waited on me was very impatient with me. But I persisted, fumbling through all my papers, which, when presented, seemed to make her act nicer. I found out the woods to the north and west were all owned by the same man; that there wouldn't be another assessment until 1983; that the tax rate was lower because there'd been no new levies. And on their papers for our account there was a photo of Dennis' framing of the cabin! I left relieved and pleased.

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Then, having some time left on parking limit, I went to graphics, where two young men deigned to talk to me a bit. But they weren't interested in my tales and recalls and interest in the same old "land use" maps they were still coloring and fussing with. So I got the hint and sort of slithered out, parking time up.

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But, by this time, I was beginning to have fun. All those infinite rides up and down in the elevators, everyone was now beginning to greet "the lil ole lady in the plaid coat" as if I belonged. I was rather loathe to leave.

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The car was all right, not impounded this time. It was such a nice day and I was beginning to have "adventures" feeling, but couldn't think of anything to do but go back home. And that trip, after that trying day, I did not enjoy! I began to have troubles with the car; the throttle stuck and the engine roared. And on the causeway the heat gauge went way up and I could smell smoke, causing me such panic I didn't enjoy the nice day and scenery. I made it to Snohomish all right, wondering if it my car or all the deisel trucks ahead of and behind me smelling so.

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Still reluctant to go home, I stopped in Snohomish and prowled around in a hardware store, getting ideas for cabin. Then on to Monroe, where, still loathe to go home. Loitering, I was on way to bakery to get cookies for the meeting when Mrs. Delp came up to my car window and asked me if I were going to the meeting? We chatting, I got to tell all my stories—about the power out and going to County building, and all. "See you!" she said, friendly like and went.

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I went home, stopping at Case's and giving him a can of chicken soup as a joke, he still being ill. He said he wouldn't be able to make it to the meeting: too sick.

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At home, the power on, I got the heaters going and got some in. Then Abbie phoned and said they'd be up Saturday noon. Wow! A very full and busy weekend ahead of me; I set to work fixing the lights we'd need.

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What ensued was a tale that simply had to go down in the annals of the cabin and be retained—especially for anyone who is too small and has to do a quick do-it-yourself repair job all alone in a house built by tall people!

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Both those lights I had to fix were in very inaccessible places and just out of my reach, so I had to teeter precariously on the top NO!NO! step of the stepladder, hanging with one arm and twisting body to work(I could just hear my back going out of line again!) I couldn't see—my bad eyes and that dark corner. and, hurrying, so nervous my shaking hand could not aim



the screwdriver. I was "all thumbs" anyway, with my split finger ends affliction...painful! The screws kept falling down so I had to keep clambering down, my booted foot slippery from having to stand in the sink. Even more scary, the little insulation cap kept falling down into the water...if I not get it dry enough would it short when I turned the power on?

Lil ole lady electrician was nearly in hysterics: the corner of the shelf gouging my sore shoulder, unable to get the screws in, having to work by feel, unable to see. I don't know how long I worked, the clocks off, on and on. Finally done, more or less badly.

And then I had to tackle the stair light, where again the guys had put the fixture just out of my reach and I risked life and limb teetering precariously to get that bulb in.

All this time I kept thinking of what I'd heard on the radio that morning about "Space needs":

"Small people...and animals...seem to be more jittery about space needs than big (people or animals)". Dammit! I heard myself saying out loud, it's because we don't have as much earth space as you biggies! All those guys putting things up beyond my reach in their space frame!

Finally through, I turned the power and lights on in an agony of apprehension and felt real proud of myself (and exhausted!) when it all worked.

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**FRIDAY, MARCH 6.** I slept like a log that night and woke to find the sun shining.

Dennis called around ten and wanted to know if I could get the insulation delivered for him to work on. I spent the next couple of hours on that and other problems, everything going wrong. To phone I had to go to Case's. Yes, Dunbars delivered, but not on Saturday. My hints and hopes that maybe Case could take me down to get it only met with vague hems and haws. Progress report calls to Dennis did not help when he said their car was real bad, but they'd come anyway as they were all ready.

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ZI went home and worked on getting ready for both the meeting and my guests. Well after six Case still hadn't given me an answer, when he did call and said he would do it, bragging himself up as if the kindest person. I called Dennis and told him and he was very thankful I'd done all that leg work and said they'd be a bit later as Abbie decided to make a pie to bring.

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I got ready to go to the meeting., The wind was blowing a gale. And it seemed very odd to go out at night. I was surprisd to see how many lights there were on in Sultan Estates; it looked like a small city. I didn't get home until after ten.

### THE MEETING

It was dull and I was disgusted. There was no meeting, actually. All they did was play bingo. Nor was there any good talk, so I found out nothing and got no information. There were ony about fifteen people there and there was much feeling against those who didn't and wouldn't come. The Easterlys and the McNabbs were there. they both had marital spats when no one was looking. I begged out of finishing all that lettering I was doing on their wall display as I'd found my hands too shaky. My hopes there'd be the usual post meeting gab fest were dashed by everyone ganging up and going off to see Delp's cabin remodeling whooping it up about meeting every two weeks for bingo. "Such fun!" (Ugh.)

Everyne was very nice to me, even asking me if I wasn't scared to go home alone in that storm. but no one offered to see me safely home,nor did they ask me to go to Delps' with them. The only thing I foundout was that the three long,narrow lots next to Finesilvers (on 106th), not nearly as big as ours were for sale for \$11,000 each!

**SATURDAY, MARCH 7.** 8:45 A.M. I was furious! Over-crammed day ahead and then...I'd gotten up in night and found...no power! It must have been off an hour according to when the radio finally came on. Also it was raining. It seemed to me that it rained every time the kids came up. It all made me late—a bad start to the day.

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**SUNDAY, MARCH 8.** The kids left about 3:30 p.m. It was a good visit and we got a lot done.

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**Saturday** was kind of hellish. Rainy. Dave (Case) and I went and got the insulation and they were here when we got back. The little kids were bratty and Dennis raged at them. He and Abbie worked on the insulation— one nasty job—while took the kids and went on errands to get things they needed or had forgotten; all futile for unable to find them and we had to end up improvising. One thing they needed was goggles to protect their eyes from that "spun glass" insulation when they worked under the house. I couldn't find any, so Dave's suggestion—"use vaseline"—Dennis devised an eye mask out of Saran wrap with vaseline underneath. Abbie worked without protection!

And they'd forgotten the big stapler, so I ended up renting one. They got the insulation done and Dennis got what the guy wanted on the stove done.. That was a hellish job, too—having to dismantle the stove and put it all back together again. Then, after some skylight cleaning attempts Dennis and the kids went up in the woods and dragged down some hardwood (maple) for winter fuel.

The kids kept playing with and encouraging that big white dog they insisted was "Bear" (the pup that hung around when we had first inspected the lot). I didn't like that for the dog would hang around after they left, so I was relieved when the dog "got fresh" with Sarah and Dennis chased it off in a rage.

Dave had been very nice about taking me to get the insulation. He wouldn't take any money for it, but I "generously" left dollar bill on his car seat. And we were thankful for his (rather bragging) experience and advice about working with that insulation when we saw all the scary warnings about it; "Dangerous! spun glass", etc.

After the work was done and the stove back together so we could get the cold, cold house warm Dennis took a shower and Abbie washed her hair and I got dinner ready.

The evening was very quiet. Dennis and Abbie read and Dennis listened to a game on the ear phones I'd forgotten I had. The kids went to bed early and actually went to sleep fairly early. I did dishes.

Noah slept through, but Sarah had a problem in the night. And Dennis got up to chase a mouse. I was uncomfortable in my now broken down couch and was glad when morning came. But I did enjoy listening to them all snore and breathe; it made the house seem lived in!

Morning was kind of frantic: the kids wanted to make pancakes and they and Dennis filled up on them. So only Abbie and I ate the bacon and eggs I'd gotten. Later I made lunch and the sun came out and they all enjoyed the woods and the bird book.

They had to leave early to avoid the traffic. Dennis said they weren't having any luck selling the house, but he was all excited about the paneling "we" wanted to put in and getting the inspector over with. And Abbie was planning when we could have a picnic. They said they enjoyed their day in the woods, so I guess it turned out all right.

Before they left they had cleaned up all messes and the kids did not seem to have broken anything. But I was left with \$118 worth of new insulation under the house, plus the cost of the stapler rental.

I spent the rest of the day vacuuming and cleaning up.

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**MONDAY, MARCH 9.** I woke to sun again. I got ready and went to Monroe. The car was covered with pollen. The Whoooo noise again. But, this time I knew what it was: I'd taken the kids via Reiner road and found it was developers' machines. There were acres of ground cleared and denuded all over. There wouldn't be a tree left in a year! Frightening—the developers!

On the way to town there was the smell of wood smoke all over; people were out clearing and burning. It turned out to be a record-breaking warm spring day.

I went to Smith and Carlson's. Yes, they said, the way Dennis had put in the insulation was right, but suggested we put "visqueen" over it, but agreed we didn't need it when I groaned. (No way! I'd spent all I could afford on that!)

I wanted some bricks to put around the stove. No, he didn't have any: I'd have to go to Seattle. Going into Monroe I noticed a new stove store (stoves were getting to be all the rage). A guy was sunning himself on the porch. Asked, he said No, they were closed. (Again I noticed that everything in Monroe seemed to be closed on Mondays. Did they all take three day weekends?) They had plenty of brick, but I'd have to come back when they were open. When I told him they'd said I'd have to go to Seattle, he said, "Oh, Steve knows I have plenty of brick!" What a dumb town!

I went to the post office and hassled some more dumb people. My car cover I'd ordered not in yet. And they didn't know what I was talking about when I tried to straighten out the mix-up in mail delivery to me that Dave and I had gone clear out of our way to put in the right box. What a dumb town!

After a stop at the library it was such a nice day I wanted to sit in a park or something, but none, so I wandered around, found a new hamburger place and sat at table outside and "enjoyed" a view of the reformatory across the street. I tried to chat with people around me. Nope. I wandered around, bought a few things, and then, finding the tool rental place closed, too, nothing to do but give up and go home.

I stopped at Case's to see if they had any brick scraps, and was dismayed at the utter mess they were making of that place. They'd cut two trees down and were "bucking" them up. But I got such a cool reception that I didn't stay. It seems Dwayne and the boys were having a feud or something. It went on and, seeing Marty coming thought maybe I could talk to her, but she only got her mail and whizzed off on her motorcycle without a greeting. I was tired and sleepy and wanted to sit somewhere in the sun, but...nowhere. I finally ended up sitting in the car and reading and falling asleep.

I whiled away the evening with radio and cooking dandelion greens I'd seen in market and gotten as kind of a spring rite...curious; I'd never eaten them before. They were nasty. I felt depressed and missed the kids. My day in Monroe had depressed me with all I'd seen and encountered. I ended up the evening by reading an article on "How to control anger" and throwin it across the room.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 10.** I woke to sun and would have liked to have had the door open, but Case murdering those trees down there, the sound of the chain saw was too maddening. I fumed around and finally started calling the inspector, This went on all day long. I made about ten calls, all long distance, and got only tapes or busy signals.

Unable to get the inspector, I went outside to sit in the sun. It was nice—just me and birds and flies. But then the chain saw started again and I went in. The house was cold. It was warmer outside than in. I struggled with bank statement and letter to Mike and then wandered out to work on a few things outside.

By the car, I gave up working on cleaning up the septic field rocks the kids had scattered all over when Marty came home. I didn't feel like being watched. Then, seeking lost trowel, the mess beneath house discouraged me so I just went in.

In the evening I called Dennis and told him what I'd tried to do. He was pleased. And then a call to kid Case, who, though now pleasant, claimed he still sick and tried to pump me about the meeting. I evaded.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11.** I woke up to sun and feeling better. And then I began the long ordeal of trying to get the inspector again. It took three calls and much, much runaround and being passed from person to person. At last I got the inspector. "You ready for your final?" was all he said after I'd gone through a long, long explanation. "Yes." "Well, I'll try and get up there today...or tomorrow..." "Let's make it tomorrow," I said. "Fine!"

I then fooled around checking and fretting if things would pass inspection, and working to find some way to fill in the cracks around the stove pad.  
then I went down to the store.

I stopped at Sultan Hardware and asked them about T&G. They said the cedar kind was almost unavailable and very expensive.. I decided I'd have to try to talk Dennis out of it. Gpomp home, there was a big truck at Witherow's on our street. They were hauling off that pile of logs that had been cleared. It was nice to see someone doing things right.

Later, after having done some exercises and feeling spryer and less pressed for time, I put on grubbies and went and cleaned under the cabin. It was hard work, my knees nearly killing me until I got a bright idea and made some knee pads.



I started at the hardest corner and worked my way back, spreading "visqueen" over the ground as I went, hoping it would help keep the ground dampness from making the cabin cold. I tucked up the trailing insulation, being careful not to get it in my eyes. I filled in every hole I could find, Dennis and wondering how that mouse or whatever it was was getting into the house. I laughed; I even checked the ferns and stumps left from the clearing under there. Decided they were all dead despite their obvious attempts to survive.

I got awfully tired and began to keep bumping my head and losing tools, but it was kind of fun. Kind of nice under there; maybe I could have a party down there—make a "rec" room out of it! I worked until the light began to go and it started getting too dark to see. It was almost seven when I finished, and, as I crawled out, I was puzzled at the bright light...It was the moon! I wandered down to the car and looked at the moon and stars and prayed hard we'd pass inspection.

Then I went in and took a nap and woke feeling fine. It was so good to have it all cleaned and in order down there! I showered and shampooed and got ready for the inspector the next day.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 12. INSPECTOR DAY.** I uneasy and fidgety. Sun, but I fret if it will last? I wander and check my grass planting...have doubts it will grow...the bird suet getting black and no birds seem to like it...wonder if I should garbage it? Fuss, fuss, fuss around; change my clothes three times; alert to every sound of a car. I not know when he'd come: "After eight thirty" the gal had said.

About ten my gut leaps—a man in a uniform and with a clip board coming...! My man? No. Delivery of a present from my younger sister; a tiny calculator with clock and alarm on it. I try to work it, only set off the alarm and can't get it stopped. Finally. But the time creeps on...eleven...

#### INTERIM

12:05 It's done! It's done! And note the time! Right at noon! One month before my birthday! We're free! We're clear! A little cheating and lying on both sides perhaps and a wink here and there, but...

I saw the car drive up out there. It took him a long time to come in—with a cheery greeting. he was not as formidable as I'd feared, a beefy old guy with a tattoo on his arm...retired sailor?...glasses...easy going manner. I ushered him in and showed him, the calculator lying there...

where I'd been trying to work it. We played with it for awhile, he curious to figure it out. The sun came through the skylight and fell on us and all my papers laid out on the table. I suddenly felt at ease; somehow I had the feeling he wasn't going to be too quibbly.

"OK. Now let's see." He ran out and only peeked under the house. "OK!" (the insulation...after all my work to clean out under there, he didn't even go under!) "The stove permit?" I showed him. "OK! Sanitation permits?" he laughed. "OK!" He measured around the stove. "OK! Kind of chimney?" I showed him the papers on it. "OK! Where's your roof insulation?" "uh...under the roofing?" "Yeah." My heart simmered down as he nodded, "OK!" I stood and watched as he signed the papers. "I'm going to faint!" I cried. (I never believed it would happen!)

As we started out the door, "About that stair railing..." (Oh oh.) I didn't write that up. "Uh..." I explained about how I intended to use the rope barrier idea I'd seen in Sunset magazine. He nodded, shrugged.

"Oh, well, anybody fall...they'll fall on your bed!" We laughed.

Then he sat down on the path steps outside as if in no hurry and we chatted about my trouble trying to get them on the phone. He explained: "It's new; doesn't work."

"Oh. Do we have to keep all these permits posted?" I asked him.

"No. Nope! You're in!"

Getting up his elbow banged on the stair railing. "Oh oh," he cried, "I gotta write that up!" He laughed. We laughed.

"Got a nice place here!" We walked around to the woods side and I explained the layout of the land. He left then, briskly, after stopping to chat when I'd asked him about his retirement. He was real nice.

As he went down the path, "Now you can enjoy your woods! Maybe we can talk again sometime!" (???)

"Not on the phone!" I yelled. He turned back and laughed and said something about they were just real busy in this area—hard to cover... He went.

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I was so elated! I wanted to share! To tell somebody! But...nobody...Dennis and Abbie at work...no neighbors. (Case wouldn't care.) I started a frantic search for the notes on Dennis' working hours...found it..he home about two? Well, I could try...Otherwise two hours to wait to share? I tried some calls. No answer.

Then, dogs barking. I glimpsed a man riding around the cul on a bicycle. Oh! Case! Bet he saw the county car and was curious. I ran out, but missed him. I decided to walk down there, unable to hold my news in any longer.

I took my new calculator to show off and started down the street. I was only halfway when I was assailed by disgust: Not only was the street trashed and strewn with litter from drive-ins, but rowdy, loud music was blatting from all over, some from the street above where a new "tin can" trailer home had moved in onto bulldozed mud.

At Case's Gary and Dave were (illegally—no fire permit) burning a huge pile of murdered trees—the waste of which annoyed me; enough wood there to keep me warm all winter!

"That music!" I yelled down at them and waved my calculator..."See?" They showed no interest nor did they invite me down. Finally Dave clambered up.

"What's wrong with the music? We've got ours on over there..." Sure enough. I realized then that there were three different kinds of music, so called, blatting away from all sides at about 80 decibels. I made my little pitch about noise pollution (that State training I'd had). A mistake.

For Dave said, "Why, I figure anyone's got a right to make as much noise as they like!" just as there was a volley of shots nearby. They laughed. "Somebody's having fun with a rifle!" they said. Then two "Star Wars" garbed guys roared by on motorcycles. Dave and Gary waved to them.

Obviously I was a bore to Dave and Gary. I left, loathe to give up a chance to chat about my exciting news on such a nice spring day. I walked back, deflated and depressed. The whole place had become an unpoliced gangland... I would have to learn to stay away from those people; I couldn't stand them.

I went back home and, disconsolate, sat at the table and fussed with all those papers and sipped a little at some wine, waiting till time to call Dennis. Then I realized he'd be involved...kids...school, and maybe I'd better wait till three. Sorry I tried the wine—it was doing no good...I wandered out back...

The warm, warm sun was flooding the one sunny place out there. I couldn't resist; I dragged a lounge chair out and just lay and let the sun soak into me. Then I noticed (wild) bleeding hearts were sprouting in the midst of my hard try for grass—that was not sprouting—and thought wryly how appropriate just when my heart was bleeding about all those goons moving in down there. But I closed my eyes and thanked Gods—that-be fervently for what I had and listened to the birds—new ones I hadn't heard before.

..... Must..call..Dennis..at...three.. whoops..drifting off to sleep...But I couldn't rouse; I felt as if a great weight had slid off me.....Something touched me lightly on the head and woke me...from the sky? for I could see nothing..Where was I? Oh..call Dennis...I went in.

It was exactly three P.M.

I got Dennis. "What a beautiful day!" he said. And.."I like my new hours! The kids aren't home yet...all quiet..nobody on the beach...how's it going?"  
"We got it!" I crowed.

"We did!!!" I can't believe it! Time for you...wish I was there to have a glass of wine! To celebrate! Have some wine!" "I am!" I said. I told him about the calculator. "He signed it just as the clock said noon!" "How perfect! And so glad you got a housewarming present! You deserve it! Wish we were there to crack champagne..." "Across the bow?" I giggled.

"Congratulations!"

"Well, congratulations to you too!"

"Thank you!" he said. Well, thank you!"

I blathered on telling him all the details, he interrupting me to exclaim "I can't believe it! It's...hard to get used to!" We went on and on; I even got into the bad things—told him about the grim things, Cases and the trees cut and the motorcycles and all. "Well, you've got your woods! Go and enjoy!" "Oh, I will! I will!"

I told him about the T&G."Well, I'll just have to start looking." It was hard to hang up. "Oh, thank you for calling me! I...wondered!...You've made my day! Thank you, Lorna!"

Somehow I got the impression it was the first time he's ever called me by my name?

I went to write up my report on it, using a clear plastic pen, which the sun hit and made a rainbow over my writings for a moment...then gone..(like happiness.)

The sun was lowering by then. I had permission to drink. I started to the car to get the jug stored there..That dumb suet hanging up in the tree where Noah had put it for me..the next day garbage day. I got a stool and climbed up feeling silly and gleeful...and free. What a dumb thing to do! But now I could do dumb jobs like that; it was my woods—no more inspectors prowling around—I could do any dumb thing I pleased! It took me a long time to get the spoiled fat down; Noah had done a good job.

Then I just stood and looked. The sky was so blue, and there were catkins in the tree tops where the leaves starting and then—the moon! in a clear blue sky! I winked at it, picked up my tools, turned and went back toward the cabin where the setting sun winked at me through the trees.

I went in, wanting to call the older people in Sultan Estates who'd stood by me and tell them and thank them, but the only ones I was able to reach were Marie and Case. (We made it!)

Then, the sun setting, I sat at my "toy piano" and played "Vespers."

Later, when they home I called Mike and Marilyn, wanting to make it short, for I was tired from such an exciting day, but they insisted on putting the kids on and then asked me if I'd mind if they sent Steve up to spend the summer with me.

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**FRIDAY, MARCH 13.** Friday the 13 th! After our most special day! How lucky can you get? (Superstition Friday, the 13th is unlucky.) I woke very late, and I spent the whole day just lazing around, sleeping, reading, playing the "piano"; just letting it all sink in. Sort of a letdown? For I even had a bit of a crying spell in the afternoon. It was a do-thing day to let my poor legs, sore from that underneath cabin work heal. A lazy day, just thinking about things, one of which was anger at...

Case He had led me to believe all this time that he had been "finaled" (injection) I finally asked him point blank. No, he hadn't. In fact, I realized (he never told me) that he hadn't even met the preliminary requirements. I knew from things he told me that he still had them to do yet. And here he was starting a new house to try to profit from. It was all very disillusioning.

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**SATURDAY, MARCH 14.** I woke late to overcast gloom, both the weather and my mood.

About noon I was alarmed to see about three people prowling around looking at those first two lots to the north of the cul. Almost weeping I went out to butt in with a (Save Our Street!) try. There was a car on the street but the people were all crashing around in the trees. I went back in and came out later.

This time there was a real estate woman and a very scruffy looking young couple. I engaged the young woman in talk. "Thinking of buying?" "Yeah! Want the trees!" "What for?" "To keep!" From then on we were friends. She had the wrong plat plan and couldn't find the stakes. So I offered to go and get my newer one. They followed me in. And just raved about the cabin, which made me feel good. "Just what we want!" they cried. We talked long. "I think we would make good neighbors." she said, "We like the same things."

I told her to keep the plat copy, and I was feeling quite elated; even though they were sccruffy and sort of defiantly "Hippie" types and obviously very poor-tree lovers! "I think we can get a \$1200 Farm Loan," she'd said. My elation was dashed when, on the way out, he dropped a cig butt mid trail. (Trashers! and tree-lovers don't risk forest fires!)...and they had small children with them.

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I dashed to the store next, too much in a hurry to stop to talk to Case who was standing outside looking and gone when I came back.

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I went in and set to work tackling cleaning out all my cabin papers, a long deferred job. It took me all afternoon and evening, but I got it all cleaned out and filed and neat at last. Was a hell of a lot of four years of crmpled papers tossed aside. But I was proud when I got it all done: it all turned out more or less as I'd figured it. ("You've come a long way, Baby!") I congratulated myself. Now, I thought, I'll have to keep track on who's buying what tracts—who will be moving in that I'll have to put up with for the rest of my life!

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Late afternoon, I took a break from all that paperwork and went outside and did some more clean up and fussing around. I tried out my dirt strainer idea, but it didn't work very welll and I lamented that my grass planting didn't seem to be doing too well—and that someone (Noah?) had rolled my creekside sitting log into the creek. The creek was low and muddy and had formed steep banks on either side. The skunk cabbage and bleeding hearts were sprouting and the ferns had tender new fronds appearing.

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I went in and had my "cocktail, dinner cook, radio" session. Later I switched the radio from their silly game shows to symphony and turned it up loud and went and stood on the porch and looked down at Marty's "security" lights down there, thinking, enjoying. Did I hear someone call my name? as radio announced "Leonora's Symphony" and when the applause came I bowed and said, "thank you! thank you!" glad "someone" had appreciated all my work!

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**SUNDAY, MARCH 15.** I woke to...a rainy, drizzly day and a neat house all ready for guests.

I tended my necessary chores for the day, hoping I'd get through and have a chance to re-do those maps of the Sultan Estates area, so carelessly platted. There was much potential trouble in real estate sharpies conning buyers into lots with unknown property lines. When, later, I got out and battled long stored dried up pens and tools to start work with, I wished Marie wasn't so snippy; I would have liked to call her and ask her for info on this mixed up corner we'd bought into .

It was five P.M. before I got to pull out my art desk and tools for the first time in the cabin, and eight P.M. before I finished. But I got it all done!

That evening, building a fire, I chanced on the lost insulation directions Dennis had wanted: they were in the woodpile by the stove! And the radio said there had been an earthquake the night before! A 3.2 in the North Cascades. I had sort of wondered...something...

**MONDAY, MARCH 16...**the day I'd have to go to town for supplies. I was getting to be like pioneers of old—once a week—market day! Puzzling at my good mood I realized it was because I'd been getting things accomplished and things were starting to shape up. I'd gotten some of the big, nasty jobs done and I'd soon be able to get with some of the more fun things i'd been waiting to do.

Monroe: two main things I wanted to do; check lumber store about T&G for Dennis to try to find a printer to do my maps. Maybe, shown to those snooty Sultan Estates board members, I might get some recognition as an artist and dispel the old drunk recluse label they seemed to have foisted on me.

On the way down the street, leaving, I was looking for marking stakes. There was some man working on the lot where ththose dingy Parkers had rented that dingy trailer. What now? He seemed as curious about me as I was about him.

I enjoyed the rural trip down to Monroe. All the spring blossoms were coming out—daffodils, quince. but I got angered at provinciality again when fuming in the now very expensive gas fumes waiting endlessly at the bank drive in window, I asked the gal why they let people take so long? (In the city there's a sign limiting transaction time.) She shrugged. "Oh, that's just the way people are!"

And again, at the post office, I experienced difference between rural and city when trying to kid the old crank in there. I told him about how the radio had said they wanted our opinion on the stamp price hike. "Well, I didn't ask yours!" he snarled. And didn't seem to k now about it or give me any information.

When I went to Dunbar's Lumber Company I turned on all my charm, know-how and flattery in getting estimates about T&G. I had them all kowtowing to me, offering me discount for cash, free delivery, inside trade secrets and so on. I left delighted; the T&G possible!

I went on then, exploring Monroe, delighted at the ease of shopping only one Main street—where a dandelion grew midstreet in the asphalt! And the characters I ran into in the myriad second-hand stores I snooped around in tickled me.

I was Also delighted to find a small printing press in a fancily renovated old hous. I went in eager to talk shop with the bearded young man in there, surprised to find such a sophisticated setup in Monroe. But I went out furious! He wouldn't even deign to speak to me! (Busy! Get out! was the implication.) I got out.

The trip home with the breathtaking view of the mountains restored my joy in being where there was so much beauty and not back in the city again.

In evening family phone calls, only one thing pertained to cabin. Mike rather alarmed me saying that he was seeing a lawyer to look into their position as owners of the cabin and property, the implication being that they really weren't interested in investing in property so far away. Later, when I talked to Dennis, he seemed to think it a good idea; it might straighten out the rather mixed up deal we had gotten ourselves into. But it wasn't a serious issue between us all.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 18.** When I went to the store I ran into Lou McNabb. We didn't talk long, for Marv was waiting for her, but she didn't know anything about the Sultan Estates bingo game party, either. When I told her about Willys' trailer, she said a couple had wanted to buy it from him—wanted to keep a pony in there! (Against covenant rules.) But she didn't say whether they would buy or not.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19.** I decided to face the grim task and call Marie and find out about the bingo party meeting. "No, there wouldn't be a bingo party. Nobody here!" she said. We talked long. she was alternately nice and snotty. I tried to get some information out of her... "Yes, that was Willys' lot." She didn't know if it was sold or not. Nor did she know about the pony. Willys wants the place cleaned up.

When I told about the real estate woman not knowing the property lines, she got snippy: "You tell 'em!" she said. She didn't understand at all about my request for more info on the platting here, but she did say we'd have to get together and fix that big map of Sultan Estates I'd begun to bring up to date. And she snapped at me that it didn't make any difference to her who lived in Sultan Estates or near me.

"I don't know what you mean!" she snapped at me about the platting. and the perc tests.. "What do you care about that for?" She probed at me about Lou and the Cases. I was annoyed. I'd already told her about Case and his son, Dave, and his friend being there. She finally brushed me off.

She was making bread! she said. I was annoyed at her for not asking me down or agreeing to my stopping by sometime and we could get together on those ownerships. Hell with her!



Later I went out and worked on clearing the brush around the firepit, and started a fire. And then got alarmed at the huge cloud of smoke billowing through the woods. Scared—the fire too big?—I ran away from it and then turned to see a phenomna hard to describe. It looked as if the whole world was filled with a great star! The sun was shining through the billowing smoke column from behind a tree—some kind of light refraction, I suppose, but I was...awed!

**FRIDAY, MARCH 20.** This the first day of spring? Sems as if and I celebrate as if, for I wake to sun, and, despite the droning of chainsaws, I step out onto the porch in a glorious, balmy 50° and marvel at the new leaves popped, still pristine and unbugged. I decide to enjoy the day, whatever. the new grass plot; exciting to think I'll have grass there sojeday! Planning things: the T&G Dennis wanted to put up; I note loft flooring is T&G; so that's how it's look? the lumber store man's suggestion to leave it the natural color—maybe a good idea? light color might brighten things up in the dark cabin?

I went to the store and got some flexible screening to tack on the door to try to keep the myriad bugs out. On the way back I made an inspection tour of Sultan Estates, and I was hurt, when, seeing one of the younger members of the board's name on a mailbox and he out working I stopped to chat with him, but he scooted into the house at my approach.

I went home and consoled myself with working on the fern bed around the (now) "front" steps. At least, there, I was among st "fronds"! We had all stuck ferns in there carelessly and I worked to settle them in better, hoping they'd fill in around that bare septic tank top. I knew Dennis wouldn't approve of my raking out all that leaf humus around there, but I found it tended to blow all over in the wind. Oh well, perhaps a "humerous" remark would placate him?

Later I talked to Dennis and we shared raves about spring in the woods. He seemed delighted to hear from me and that we could go ahead and order the lumber. "Really!?" he said. Order for a Friday when he could get up again he said. But he didn't know when it would be; he was having troubles with the car.

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**SATURDAY, MARCH 21.** I woke to a warm, warm day and a blue, blue sky. At least it was warm out in the cul where I worked trying to figure out which way the drainage flowed into that county roadside ditch so I could deflect it and get rid of the constant mosquito breeding pool there.

Inside I worked on hanging that screening on the other door, and again signs of spring: the first big bumblebee trapped inside a sky light and wasps home seeking around the porches. The elusive bee finally committed suicide trying to argue with the skylight. It was nice to be able to have both doors open and the heaters off!

At dusk, I dragged the deck lounge and mouldy old pad onto the porch and lay happily in old dirty rags listening to the birds having family squabbles until mosquitoes drove me in.

That night I lugged as much stuff up to the loft as if I were going camping and tried sleeping up there, going to sleep with the sound of gentle rain falling on the roof so close over my head, ending a wearying, but extremely enjoyable day in spring in my cabin in the woods...at last!

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**SUNDAY, MARCH 22.** I awoke from my first night in the loft and lay and absorbed a feeling of unreality, of strangeness, newness. I studied my display of highway drawings on the wall. I did all those drawings? Seemed unreal. All that detail! All those years bent over a drawing desk sweating them out...and nobody gives a damn about them.....

Looking down on the living room from the loft...it seemed so high...

I created that? but, all in all, I decided I liked a retreat to the loft. It was kind of like a vacation trip...getting away from that "cave" bed. Oh yes, I said I liked my snug alcove, but I was finding I was getting tired of that feeling so vulnerable sleeping in what had become the public entrance. I'd tried so hard to avoid that in my two years of designing the cabin. It was a bit of heartbreak that, practically, the cabin got turned around and the front, the show-off side, the street side entrance that I'd designed so laboriously, nobody ever sees. What is seen is what was planned as the rear, the utility side. I'd discovered, too that the downstairs could be rather depressing, cavelike. The loft has a feeling of being more spacious even though a very tiny room and full of my clutter. I continued my tour, rather startled at the changes I'd made...as if some stranger had come in and fixed the place up. I strolled out to the cul in robe and slippers, relishing the privacy and sense of ownership.

Later: Sound of a chain saw below made me sneak down trail and look. The Lloyds were there, attacking the trees of that old homestead orchard on their lot, #32. That upset me so much and the fact that my house was a mess made me avoid encounter with them. I went and bundled up on porch and tried to read, but miserable with cold and the sound of that chain saw.

Later, when they were gone, I went down to see what they had done. Angry? No. I cried. I loved that lot—some of the old mossy fruit trees already in bloom. Besides, it was my buffer zone. They had slashed down the screening brush and in expertly tried to fell two alders that only got hung up and made a great ugly mess amongst the fruit trees. I sighed. They'd go off and leave it like that for months. (They did. It was many, many, many months...)

I may not have been angry but the birds sure were. They were screaming and scolding and whirling. One even dive-bombed me! (I didn't ruin your nests!) I stood crying for that was my "wild life sanctuary"...all the singing birds I loved and the grouse family in there. I was sorry I'd given that sketch I'd made of it with the grouse to Mike and Marylyn, for it meant nothing to them and everything to me, especially now that it would be all gone.

Why, I wondered, if those people weren't going to use that lot, didn't they just leave it like it was instead of coming in and just messing it up and leaving it? And I thought of how if they cleared and bulldozed those two lots I'd have for my view Marty's and all the other ugly little houses and be exposed to all their goings on...bulldozers..!

A later walk down the street next day showed me nobody around and new fencing and dog houses at Marty's meaning her dogs would be left outside and yipping all day... The ancient cherry tree beside the cul was in bloom, only augmenting the ache and fear: Would they cut it down, too? Some disillusioning things were beginning to surface about my retirement Eden...

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**TUESDAY, MARCH 24,** I went to Monroe. I stopped at the Senior Center, but it was so dull I just left. Then I succumbed to the blandishments of a nice older couple in a shop where I had an errand and bought myself somehand made moccasins at "half price" "for my birthday".

Evening I enjoyed the good food I'd bought and the "Japanese print" effect of moths trying to get in the skylight behind my plants there. I read until midnight and then, just for the sheer impish hell of it I ran out half naked through the pouring rain to retrieve something from the car—just for the sheer freedom of being able to—the privacy of it...

Echoes of my encounters in Monroe kept coming back to me. I found people there weren't the least bit interested in my "know how" and highway experiences. In fact, they rather startled me with their angry reactions—like my telling the woman bitching about taxes what, to me, was one of my funnier stories about the use of taxes: the coliform (shit) count in the creeks as preliminary to highway improvements. The woman nearly snapped my head off. "What's that got to do with what we're talking about?"

The apathy at the Senior Center where I'd hoped to find socialization and some fun, but there were only old people sitting around like zombies. And the shutoff of easy communication by telephone by having to pay long distance rate to call a mere eight miles and their claim that a private line for me was impossible—these things I was not used to..

In fact I got so bored and lonesome and frustrated about the dearth of social contact possibilities I wrote for an offer of "How Singles Can Meet People".

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**FRIDAY MARCH 27.** I worked out in the cul trying to get the water out of that county ditch and fill in that dip at the end of my driveway. There was a frog in that pond there!

Wishing I could fill in that dip with some of that sewer rock, I was annoyed that I didn't have any kids around to throw them in for me—an excellent kid job! One I the kind I used to be able to motivate kids into doing,. But no; things had changed. Instead, I was busy chasing two boys with bebe guns prowling behind Marty's and bothering the dogs.

I wandered down to the creek and next thing I knew I was happily cleaning it out some more, realizing how much I'd already engineered on it and how I'd learned better ways and tricks of how to do it.—like how not to lose your boots mired in the mud, for instance! I went in and changed my rubber boots for moccasins and bulit a fire in the stove. City gal! You've come along way!

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**SATURDAY, MARCH 28** I made a call to Marie offering my services in organizing the Sultan Estates group better. My idea was that I could help by going on with my map and info about current owners, that being more in my line of work than bingo, which I confessed I didn't care for.

She bristled at this. "See! We go to all that work and nobody...Where are you getting your information?"

"Oh, I drive around and look at the lots and the names on the mail boxes to get the owners."

"Owners!" she cried. "there are only 72!"

"Out of 101 lots?" I asked.

"Well, some of them have several lots." We talked long but nothing was decided. She brushed me off with a "Well, we'll work on it.." and went to answer a summons from her husband to come and help him.

**SUNDAY MARCH 29** was another drear day. But the working people were home on Sunday, so I decided I'd contact the people I knew in Sultan Estates and work on my offer to help them with my specialized professional skills, all I had to offer.

I started by phoning, but I was unable to get any answers. And Marty and Ralph, my closest neighbors, were too busy coming and going, loading wood or something for me to catch them. By mid-afternoon, frustrated, I simply got the car out and went to see if I could find anyone home.

I went first to Charley Finesilver's, he the current president of the board. There, afraid of the two big, black guard dogs, I just waited in the car until, finally, Charlie came out. I told him my idea about what I could do and that I'd talked to Marie about it without much encouragement. He was shivering there in the rain.

"Well, I'll talk to Marie about it," he said. "Why don't you come to the next board meeting?"

"Because I'm not a member of the board," I said. Just then, the Delps, other members of the board drove up. I called a greeting and waved. They all went into the house and I left, miffed, that nobody had asked me in.

I drove to Marie's and she asked me in. I was there for about an hour. Her deaf husband was moving wood and was in a few times replenishing the fire.

This time I was frank with her, saying I was lonely and would like to help to have something to do.

"Well, if you don't like it up here..." she began. And then she showed me all the artsy-craftsy things she did and asked me why I didn't do those things. Or why didn't I go to the Senior Center?

She bristled and disputed me when I said I found it dull. Then she told me she was driving their pickup van and would be glad to pick me up "at my doorstep" [sic] and take me down there anytime.

"Oh, I have my own car," I bristled, unwilling to be put in the helpless ancient class yet.

Again I pleaded I had skills that might be useful to the club. "Charlie invited me to the board meeting," I said. I could tell she didn't like that.

"Mmm...well...do have a typewriter?" (Grrrr.) I began to make going motions. The door to the basement was open. I started toward it, curious to see the rest of the house and what her husband was doing down there with all that thumping.

She slammed the door shut. "Do you want some dried bananas?" she asked me.

"Oh..." "Well, do you want some or not!? I'm not going to give them to you if you aren't going to eat them!" "OK."

She put a few in a sandwich bag and ushered me to the door. "We'll keep in touch," she said—the same thing Charlie had told me.

I left, and in a rage, drove clear down to the store and got a bottle of sherry.

When back, I tried and tried to call Marty on the phone, but such a constant busy signal I walked down and asked her if their phone was all right? "Oh, no problem.! Ralph's on the line now." And then she told me they were selling the house and moving back to town.

I tried from then on all evening to use the phone. Nothing but a busy signal. I simply could not get an outside line, or the phone would ring but...nothing. I tried everything, calling operator, emergency, my own number, all tricks I'd learned in the past I was frantic. What if I'd needed a doctor? About ten my phone went dead. It was ten thirty before the line was clear. I gave up calling Dennis and Abbie as I'd meant to do.

**MONDAY, MARCH 30** I woke to our 9th day of pouring rain. With the excuse of checking about my phone and telling about Marty and Ralph moving I called Marie as soon as I dared. But she was already gone on her bus job Orville answered and, for a "deaf" man he sure was chatty! Asked "How was I doing up there?" and certainly showed more concern than Marie did. He said because of the rain he might have to replant his vegetable garden again: that some springs he had to replant three times!

I found my car completely soaked inside and just gave up for the day and spent it inside sewing and finishing up my chair cushions and listening to the news on the radio about Reagan being shot (at).

That evening I tried again and got Dennis on the phone. We family chit-chatted and kidded about Reagan. "I would have used a heavier gun!" Dennis quipped. He said that they'd had an offer on the house, and, if they could swing it they might be out and gone by June. Which made me groan inwardly in self pity: what would I do without them? He also said he thought he could get the car fixed the next week and might be able to come up.

### Car Troubles and "Helpers"

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**TUESDAY, MARCH 31.** And another rainy day to cope with. As I went down the path to get the mail, I laughed: two bracken fern sprout fronds beside the path looked like two little fists shaking at the sky. Yeah!

For, by early afternoon, after painstaking preparation to go on a needed supplies replenish trip to Monroe, I found **the car wouldn't start**. I raged, ranted, wept, cursed, tried everything. Nope. I tried for an hour. Gave up. I tried to call Case. No answer. Car troubles, Dennis? there goes the paneling, I struggled through the long, wet day, marooned, on short rations. Evening I struggled with a difficult letter to Mike about Steve coming up.

The next day would be "All Fools' Day" and the anniversary (third?) of my retirement from my job to go spend happy days in...the...woods.

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### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

#### My retirement anniversary date

I woke to despair. Not only about my car, but it raining hard again. If nothing else if I could just get the car dried out. Hoping it was just a passing rain, I listened to the news. Rain, rain, rain, and more rain. I just wished I had a big, manly shoulder to cry on.

What to do? Where could I get help?

I called Case. No answer. I thought, with anger, how I'd heard that, in other places, they had mailman alerts for elderly shut ins: you could put a note in the mailbox, or, if things looked odd, they'd come in and check on you. Not here!

I'd have to do something.

I sighed and got dressed, good clothes, all primped, ready for anything. Then I walked down the street to see if there was any possibility of help. There was not a soul in any of the three house and Cases' looked deserted, all the cars gone.

It didn't help my mood to see the weird kid Ron used to play with wandering around with a bebe gun, nor to find everything just lakes of water, nor to get my mittened hands soaked and cold trying to arrange plastic over the car. I seethed and paced and raged, trying to think of someone I could call, even to just laugh or cry with.

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Just before noon, there was a break and the sun came out. It looked like a scene from Dante's Inferno down the street, steam rising from the houses and off the street. A more promising weather report made me decide to try to start the car and just go. It started, but I couldn't get it to keep running. I went back in in hysterics.

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Then, an idea! My AAA card! Paid into for years and never used it. I wondered if...would they come? I ferreted out the local Monroe agent's number and called. A man answered but was very reluctant to come. Finally, grudgingly, agreed.

I loked the door and stood and waited by the car for him, ready to go when he got the car started.

When he came he was all upset. "Got an intercom call. Can I use your phone? I'll have to unlock the door," I said and we raced in, I expecting the usual raves over the cabin. No. He never even noticed. He on phone, "Yeah...yeah...yeah.. up here anyway. Got sn emergency call," he said and we raced back out again. "Gotta go".

He did deign to take a cursory look at the car. "Got bad, bad troubles," he said. But he must have turned it around and said something about I could get down to Sultan, though he ended up saying "I wouldn't drive it if I were you. No charge." as I handed him my card and he scribbled something and left. I was furious! He was insolent, rude, reluctant. I wanted to call AAA and complain, report him. But..the car...I had to do something...!

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Our street was all downhill. I started down the street, not liking the way the car acted at all. At the stop sign by Cases' it just quit. Still a bit downhill, I put it in neutral and just managed to coast into the driveway of the club where it quit rolling. At least I was off the roadway.

So. There I was. I sat there.

Presently a red pickup came barreling up from Pipe Line road, first car I'd seen all morning. "Hey!" I waved feebly. They went on, but stopped and came back. Two handsome bearded young guys with a police dog. By that time I'd realized what the trouble was—that goddamned throttle stuck again. So I told them that. "Raise the hood." "No, No. It's a long, complex job. But one guy put his friend at the wheel and reached his hand in. "There," he said. "I'm sure you can make it to Sultan and back."

And he told me just what to do and expect. "Gee! thanks!" I said, as I felt my knees starting to buckle under me, ".If I had any money...I'd give it to you." "We wouldn't take it if you did," he said.

"And...you live here?" he asked. "Oh, up there! Do you?" afraid they might be those gun totin,' music playing slob friends of Dave Cases'.

:No, no. We live down below...got property own there...you know where that mess of junk is?" (Not on Sultan Estates) "Yeah." Well, they made the guy get out and take his trash. Sure raised the value of my property!"

They were real nice guys and the very first car I'd seen on Woods Lake road. Just after they left six cars went by and I had to ease out of their way.,

I go on, not, I assure you, calm and serene. I make it to Sultan. The post office closed till two I leave the car there and start to wander around Sultan just to kill time. I feel weak and wobbly...decide..been a long time...I'd go to that restaurant and have a martini. The door is locked. Sign says, "closed for repairs "

I wander. Find a little grocery store. Buy cigs and one can of beer. No, she doesn't have a sack. I stick the can of beer in my pocket, go back to my car. Huge black storm clouds. It starts to rain. I go into the post office, write a humorous post card to Mike and Marylyn about the day's troubles, but assure all is "all right" . I go across to the liquor store. A sale. I stock up. Huge black clouds and pelting rain: reminds me of that frightening hail storm I got caught in once just here. I decide to go to that riverside park just across the bridge and drink my beer and wait out the storm.

I get to the park. It's deserted. and, Oh no! nothing but a potholed lake! and a sign: "Warning. subject to flash floods due to dam spillway." I park at bottom of ramp to avoid it all. I sit and drink my beer. Suddenly the storm is over and the sun breaks into one of those glorious April days. I find I am sitting under a huge old cherry tree in full bloom. Oh, the blossoms smell so good and the birds sing. I opt to stay awhile. People start coming in and marvel over the cherry tree.

I sit and plan what I'll do: "Pay day" and "celebration". I'll buy myself a steak and stop at hardware and buy some plastic to cover car (my mail order car cover seems to never be coming.) and. Oh. there are some big rocks..just what I need to hold the plastic down. I sneak and steal four thinking how this is the place I stole that wood to make that toilet seat for my camping. It is getting late; the traffic on the highway has cleared. I decide I'd better go. .

**The car won't start.** All that horrid smoke.  
The throttle is stuck again.

The park is now deserted. I have to pee. I go into that vile public restroom. They have taken all the doors off "for safety". There is graffiti all over the walls: "Jews! S.A.! We jews own America!" There is a padlock on the toilet paper roll. I piss and push the button and duck (Next door is the sewage treatment pond!)

I gotta get my car out of this park.

There is nobody around. I just sit there, trying to think what to do. then a handsome bearded young man in a red car comes in. I open car door and look distressed. He immediately backs and drives off. I am alone in park.

Finally, two old construction type bums drove in in an old car. "My car!" I wail at them. "Well, gun it!" they said. They sat and watched, disgusted as I made distress faces at the uproar car made. Then they just drove off.

*Disaster in the  
park & wouldn't  
start in hell with  
it (doing over)*

(370)

I I was alone in that dingy park—a perfect crime patsy. I had to get that car out of there. Where could I get help?

Yes, I did think of the State Patrol, but was afraid of them just towing the car off. (Later affirmed) Yes, I thought of going up on the highway

and just flagging a car down. But one didn't do that anymore. Besides—robbery—I had money in my purse. A phone booth. There was none in the park. Where was the nearest service station? Wasn't there a Shell station in that little Sultan "mall"?

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So. I just went hiking up the highway toward the little mall. (Never had done that before! Was thankful for the shoulder pedestrian walks we highway people had put in.) It was a long walk. I got, panting, to the mall. Oh no! Just an unattended self-service pump.

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I went puffing into the "Candy Cane" restaurant there and stood inside looking distressed. Young teen age girls the help there, and just two old ancient couples customers. Nobody paid me any mind. Finally, young "sulky Sue" wandered over, her eyes dull. I told her my dilemma. "Yeah? So?" she shrugged. She didn't even offer to let me use their phone. "Well, thanks for nothing!" I blurted out, and rushed out, letting the door slam.

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No phone booths anywhere. Where in hell could I get help? Oh. An orange painted rig was gassing up. I went up to it, looking for the highway decal. None, but..."What's your problem, ma'm?" said the younger looking tough eyeing the older one, as I told, and then, hitching up his belt he asked to other facetiously, "Think we could take her in tow?" I fled.

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To the hardware store. I'd decided to phone the Chevron station across the bridge in Sultan. I was sure nice old "Fatso" would let me use her phone; we'd bought so much from them. She wasn't there. "Old Stingy Nuts" her husband was idly gabbing with some local yokel. I was ignored and ignored as they went on yakking. When I finally asked him if I could use their phone and started toward their office where the phone was, he barred me, "Out there!" and pushed the phone through a cubby hole. "Phone book?" One pushed at me. I looked up "Chevron". None close listed.

1981

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"There is a Chevron in Sultan, isn't there?" "Oh yes." They conferred.

"Yeah. Ron's" They went on talking.

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But something told me to try Case first. I did. And nearly fainted when Dwayne answered. "Where ya been?" I cried and wildly told my troubles. "Gotta get my car out of that park!"

Well...err..Dave's not here...well...uh...err..Oh, I'll be down." He sounded so reluctant I said, "Well. let me try that service station first. Sure hate to ask you to do this...what kind of steak do you like...?"

"I don't eat steak,"he said.

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I called Chevron. Guy polite, but cagey. "Well...uh...don't know if I can do anything aboutyour problem...oh, besides, my wife took my car. Maybe...your neighbor's your best bet..."

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I called Case back, looking at the big sign over that deserted mall: "Have a nice day!" it said. "I'll be right down," Dwayne said. I told him I'd be at the park. I bought a roll of plastic from "Stingy Nuts" hurriedly, feeling I was being gypped. But I was in a hurry. I heard them laugh as I went out.

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I flew back to "Candy Cane" and told "Sulky Sue" to give me two packs of  
cigs, one eye watching for Dwayne's car on the highway. I raced out the door,  
plowing down a family in my way. The plastic was slippery and began to  
unroll; my purse was heavy. I tromped as fast as I could back to the park, for  
I saw Case's car go in there.

He was monkeying with the hood of my car. "Hey! Dwayne! I'm here!" I showed  
him Mike's diagram of what was wrong.  
"Oh yes! Now I understand what's the matter! Let me show you!" I repressed a  
yowl; Mike had already shown me. He got the car running. "You go ahead. I'll  
follow. And try to keep it at forty m.p.h."  
"Can I stop at the store?" "Oh sure!"  
He was suddenly so amiable versus his former reluctance that I dared let go. "I  
need toilet paper!" I needed lots of things. I was really out.

But in the store I tensed up and fretted again, for, he waiting out there and  
there were long, long lines of people at each check out counter. But he was  
still relaxed and friendly when I came out. I set out ahead of him as per  
orders, but it was hard to keep my attention on the car problems distracted by  
the sudden April beauty. I wondered if I should ask him in for coffee when we  
got back., I didn't want to, for I was exhausted and had many things to do.  
Besides I'd forgotten to get coffee. So I was relieved when he just pulled into  
his own house.  
He seemed suddenly alive and excited. "Wouldn't I come in and have some  
potato soup? He'd just made some?" "No, no", I said I've got a lot of stuff to  
lug in and do."

His sudden elation might have been from prospects of he and Dave getting a  
chance to tinker with my car? for, sometime in all this he said if the car was  
going to keep doing that that he and Dave would put in a manual choke; that  
those automatics were...trouble. he said he'd get Dave to come up early the  
next morning because the car had to be cold when they worked on it...if he  
comes home? did he mutter? "I'll send him up first thing."

I left feeling very heartened. I didn't care what they did to the car, just  
relieved to know it seemed to be a minor thing compared to the dire problems  
the AAA man had warned about.

I rushed home and lugged all my stuff in and then rushed out with the plastic  
and rocks to cover the car before the next shower. I worked frantically, still  
all dressed up, anxious to get in and collapse. Leaving, I gave the car a good  
kick. You brat! I said.

Dwayne's offer about fixing the car left me very confused. I didn't know just  
what they had in mind, only that they would "fix it when they could" and that  
it would only cost me "Oh..five..ten dollars." In fact, all that.."help?", I did  
not feel my car problems solved, for my experience with Dwayne and Dave had  
taught me they were unreliable about dates and promises and there would be  
worrisome waits if and when they did show up.

And they didn't.

For, more troubles ahead. Housebound. There began a spell of bad weather with  
predictionis of "Lots of rain in April." The next day it rained so hard I was  
housebound and they couldn't have worked on the car anyway. I spent time  
inside working on finances and shoeing out another trapped bird and discovering  
better listening on the radio, and I thought, a happy solution to my stressful,  
distressing experiences of the day before.

"Something called a " Reassurance Program"..a daily phone call for older  
people alone without contact and needing help! Phone numbers to call.  
Whee! I got on the phone. It was a long and expensive call. I was passed from  
person to person, I shaking and nearly voiceless with the humiliation of having  
to beg for help. Finally, the woman said, someone "would call me next week  
and if I didn't answer they'd get ahold of a neighbor (Ha! I thought.) or send a  
(medical) aid car to pick me up". Somehow that wasn't what I had in mind!

But I was cheered when my financial review showed me that living in the  
cabin even with the building costs was cheaper than any previous housing  
arrangements I'd had since I'd been alone. That cheered em, even if "help" and  
the endless rain didn't.

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A couple of days of housebound in cold rain, no car, I got curious and called Case. He was very charming and chatty, would be up to work on car IF the sun came out,..not to drive it. No no, he wasn't forcing DAVE to fix it; he wanted to. They still thought they'd put in a manual. (I wondered what Mike would think of that!?) "Come down for coffee any time!"..

Dave came and got the car just after noon. I was glad I hadn't tried it for it wouldn't start again. He said they were going to disconnect the automatic until they could get a kit. I cringed listening to them gunning my car, able to hear them length of street away. Then here they came racing my lil blue car and left in their pickup. "You can drive now. Be back and finish tomorrow."

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I went to the store. Car drove like a dream! Bought a big easter basket I could use to tote stuff up and down stairs in, but couldn't get home in time to escape deluge and hail storm from big nasty black cloud, Didn't even have time to cover car. My groceries were soaked. The sun came out when I got inside, making me laugh, a bit wryly, at whimsicality of April.

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I was able to work some outside and roamed the half acre marveling at the sudden burgeoning growth; the skunk cabbage, bleeding hearts, ferns were fairly bursting out of the ground. Leaves and berry blossoms forming, the creek running fast and clear and sandy bottomed after my clean out of it. Even my planted grass had an adolescent beard green fuzz.

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That evening I phoned Mike, then Dennis, then Dwayne.

• #1 son said about the car: "We-ell. I'd go the whole bit—new carburetor—\$70-\$80...And we'll send Steve up for one and a half weeks in August (Gulp). That was my rich son.

• #2 son, the poor one, said about the car: "Oh fine! He'd be getting his in the next week and they'd be up on the week end! Get that lumber!"

• Dwayne said, when I told him I'd gotten different opinions about the car, "Your son and Dave and I should get together!" and I got bored when he started to explain again about automatic chokes. "OH, we'll fix it...someday," he said. "Your car's ok for now."

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Saturday and the days following were nightmares. Me, this April baby, went as stormy and wild as the April weather. Maybe it was all the April birthdays that triggered my rash of phone calls Saturday night after glooming around in the gloom totting up all the "promises" of that week.

The "Reassurance Program". Oh we'll call you this week. They didn't.

Case: "Oh Dave will be up tomorrow and fix the car for you...sometime before fall we'll get that part in for you." Dave hadn't come.

A lonesome, bad call to Carrie, whom I missed so. Going for mail I found Mr. Lloyd there, giving me only a cool greeting. Sound of chain saw later, and checking I shocked: he'd cut down the cherry tree in full bloom.

Imprisoned dogs howled, Marty's door opened and then closed again at sight of me. Motorcycles sped by.

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I clambered down, risking life and limb on that muddy slope and picked a blossom sprig from murdered tree and pressed it into my diary.

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Then I called Dennis. I was crying. "You know? that old cherry tree? in full bloom?" I told. He sympathized. then told me, "By the way, we won't be up come spring vacation (two weeks from then, when he'd planned to do the paneling, giving me two weeks to get the lumber.) We'll be up next week end. Kind of short notice but...":

"Oh Dennis!" I wailed, "All this rain! and I don't know what you want!" He began to give me a list of lumber and I tried to write it down.

"I'll call you Wednesday."

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'The next day, Sunday, was a dark, miserable, gloomy day. I sat around and gloomed with the day wondering why Dennis switched on me....Oh,. My birthday that week end. Suddenly there was a cloudburst and thunder and the ground white with hail. (April, my "beautiful" month!) It went on all day like that; bright sun and then several more sudden hail storms till it was piled white an inch deep around the cabin foundations. I got through the day somehow.

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**MONDAY, APRIL 6.** It was still rainy and stormy but I'd have to try to go to town. My try was greeted by Witherow's big dog invading, a dead shrew on the path, and—the car wouldn't start.

I called Case. He all blithe and unconcerned: "No problem! Just pump it! blah blah blah..sometime we'll fix it! No problems! Plenty of neighbors to help!"

The sun came out and the car started. In town I just sat in the car at the library and relished being away from the cabin for a while and newly understanding why lonely old people just go and sit in public places...poor things! In library I studied up on...carburetors! Then, as a "birthday treat" I took myself to "Monroe's Finest Restaurant", It was a horrible, dingy, "mafioso" type place, dirty and full of toughs.

I wandered around town watching them struggle with flooded sewers, etc. In Safeway smarty teen age boys claiming "smoking pot" blew "pot" in my face, stole an apple and ran. when I yelled at them and tried to tell the manager, he just shrugged. "We'll watch 'em." Nor did anyone think it funny when I, telling about "Pot smoke blown in my face" quipped, "I'm as high as your prices!"

**NEXT DAY** was no better. I had the blues. The "Reassurance" gal called me but all it was was that I had to contact two neighbors "willing to pick up the body" [sic] if I needed help. This discovered after very long talk.

**EVENING** Dennis called. They got the car fixed and they'd be up Saturday morning. He had to work the next week. They wouldn't bring anything but the cake. "You gals can go to the store after we get up there."

"Do you want me to strip the walls?" I asked. They were still hung with tools.

"Uh. Yeah." And then he blew all my figuring about the lumber, changing measurements and wanting insulation (a better job than we'd planned) I wailed and pled money lack, etc. We ended up differing...not a very good call.

And then it began to snow outside—the nice wet kind that could turn into ice by morning. But by ten o'clock it had turned into....rain.

**NEXT MORNING** I woke to radio blating about how ski areas delighted at 8-9" of new snow! and outside traces of snow on the ground and snow on my car. This upset me very much for this was to be the last finish up job and Dennis finally able to make it; I'd wanted it to be fun! and for them to see spring in the woods!

I got ready and went to Monroe to order the lumber. I went straight to Dunbar's and was in there till 2 P.M. It was fun, despite Dennis's trying to discourage me from showing them my drawings. I did. They were impressed! and they had a new sharp seeming young architect on their staff and he moved in admiringly as I showed my drawings. "Yes! yes!" they flew around waiting on me. "We'll have it there tomorrow!" The bill was \$150. I wrote them a check. (so there, Dennis!)

Laundromat and food shop after, amazed to see the parking lot a flooded lake! A snack in little bakery, eavesdropping on some very un-Monroe like well-dressed business men whom I took to be some kind of "planning commission" or something. They were discussing what they were going to do with Monroe. "I told Safeway Tradewell and IGA wanta move in" one was saying and they began to bicker and fight.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 10.**

It was 3 o'clock before a nice young man came with the wood. In a huge truck with a dump winch. (So that's how they do it?) He helped me take the plastic off the ground, revealing a dry spot. (How clever of me!) The wood was all encased in a huge plastic bag. "Oh that comes with it," he said and drove off. I just had time to cover the holes with it when the first big plops of rain started..

Inside the phone rang. It was Abbie telling me they'd leave about 9 the next morning. I was glad she'd told me for I usually did not expect them till noon. Meantime, the kitchen faucet ceased to work. I tried to fix it, but couldn't. And it began to rain without let up till I thought I'd scream!

**SATURDAY, APRIL 11.** I wake to weather report of "No change. More of same. Rain all weekend, maybe thunder." It rains. It rains. It rains. Sunday is my birthday, a day I've always considered "magical" and "lucky?? It creeps toward 11 o'clock and they still haven't come. Besides the agony of waiting, I am burning up all my best wood and getting worried if they have had car trouble...again!

They finally did arrive...in a drizzling rain..and heavily burdened.

The building/birthday visit

It was a happy birthday, but in my 66 years I don't think I've ever had a more melodramatic one: heaven and hell in one weekend. We were nearly out of our minds with work, cabin fever, rush and repressed tempers.

Dennis did get one wall done, but under the most trying circumstances. They had brought me a little (7 foot) apple tree nursling. I was touched. It was to replace, give me my own fruit tree, after my lament about the invaders destroying the ancient cherry tree. Because of the foul weather, we just left it unplanted for the time being. Somehow that day I'd gotten a bottle of apple wine ("champagne") which I decided to use for a tree planting ceremony if the weather ever broke.

They had brought their (huge) color TV. Dennis put it up in the loft for the kids to watch. The reception was lousy and the kids didn't watch it. When I asked them why, they said there was nothing good to watch on Saturday, which puzzled me as to why they had brought it then?

They also brought their very pregnant cat. (More of that story later!)

Dennis worked frantically on the paneling, the rain complicating his sawing problems. Abbie and Noah went off for a long time in th car. Sarah and I just tried to keep out of the way of Dennis' working.

It was after 4 before Dennis had enough done so that I could crawl around on hands and knees trying to battle all the sawdust and get the table back where we could eat on it, the kids fussing all the time about when were we going to have the party? It was 6 before we finally ate dinner. As we started our party one hell of a thunder and lightning storm began and then the sun broke out.

"Let's all go plant the tree!" we said and we all dashed out and did a "ritual ceremony" with the bottle of "champagne", drinking to the tree and pouring libations on it and everybody fighting to use the only camera (mine.)to take pictures. There went the only bottle of wine we had—on the tree!"

We went back in. My dinner was good, and they ate and ate and ate. And then they started bringing out my birthday presents. A huge box!?!? It was that wire craft hanging lamp of theirs I'd so long admired. I was touched. That,aloney, would have been enough, but there was a 5 pound package of wild bird seed and a big box of Chocolates (Whitman's yet!) and a book on growing herbs (though I'd found out I couldn't grow anything here) and a birthday cake."Sheet" cake. Whether Abbie made it I didn't know. I was very touched. The kids put a "jillion" candles on the cake.

We got through the night. Abbie put the cat out and forgot to let it backin. Result: lost cat and very unhappy children!

**THE NEXT DAY** I saw them off...oh...before noon? We had discussed Dennis' and Abbie's plans. They rather scared me:Dennis had said he was going to take a week off "soon" and go to Spokane and find them a house and move. (The house dealthey thought they'd set up with friends over there had fallen through; their "partners" couldn't get a loan). It made me, personally, sad: I'd be without them, alone, on my own...and no more help et al...

I walked them down the trail. The sun broke out.. after 21 days of hell and storm and freezing weather and...name it."Well"Dennis said, "Maybe I'll be up next weekend to finish the other wall." Abbie gave him one of "those" looks. "But it's Easter! "Well.err.." both Dennis and I demurred. "Uh..if..other plans..I'll understand..."Well ,I don't know when I'll be up again,"Dennis said. "What about the cat?" I asked. "Oh, she'll show up." But the kids were wailing about going home without her.

As I waved them off I began to pick up storm debris inthe driveway. A tiny scrap of paper, face down. "Peace and happiness" it read.(from the fortune cookies) Hey! Hey! I waved and shouted , but they didn't hear me.

They drove off.



**MONDAY, APRIL 13.** Now no longer mattering, I woke to bright sun and to symptoms of a lousy cold, and to plugged up bathroom washbowl and still broken kitchen faucet Dennis hadn't had time to fix.

Working down at the car, drying things out, noticed my car still had Mt. St. Helen's eruption ash on it, I wondered if that, perhaps, contributed to my carburetor troubles? At the time, in Vancouver, they'd had so much trouble with police cars stalling from ash in carburetors...(Hate that word!)

The missing cat: I noticed women and girls strolling around the cul-de-sac and started to approach them to ask if they'd seen the cat, but, at sight of me, they faced about and retreated down the road. Puzzling.

Preparing for a trip to town, a crash! someone felling more trees, and way down the street a "million" cars parked around Case's. I parked my car and got out. There were piles of lumber all over and a busy Dwayne in the bottom of a hole he'd dug. Kidding him about the noise, all I got was "Oh, we're getting rid of them alders and them weeds. Delp wants us to clear the alders out of his lot. Will let us have the wood, fifty/fifty. Good deal." I waited to ask about the cat and listened to him tell plans of new house he was thinking about building, and for the tree to fall, but they were busy and I felt unwelcome. I left, hating them—tree haters!

In Sultan the old Babe in the liquor store was telling me all her troubles; "Gonna move the store up by the ("mall") grocery store—last flood—we've had it. "Why, Sultan will be wiped out," I said. She nodded. "Nothing but "antique shoppes" and tourist trade," I added. "Yep", she nodded.

I spent the evening on the telephone. One call was to Finesilvers' "about the cat" Got his wife. ASKED her if a meeting. She sounded so utterly puzzled, I gave up. Got Lou McNabb and had a long talk. She said she's heard they'd hired a young couple for caretakers for Sultan Estates.

I fell into bed. About 6 P.M. the cat returned! I called Abbie. "Want a cat?" "Dennis will be up to get her Friday!" she said. I closed the cat and me up in the house. (What in hell does one do with an about-to-produce cat?)

**TUESDAY, APRIL 14.** I woke to sun, useless to me now, for I was a prisoner of a goddamned cat! She wanted out; she wanted in. Oh, I got so annoyed with her! I tried to take her out on a rope leash, not daring risking losing her again. That didn't work and she acted so strangely I was afraid she'd have kittens and make a mess if left in house. It was such a nice day, though, that I finally left her in the house and walked down to Case's, where they busy putting in foundations. But I got tired of their disputing everything I said and, reluctantly, went back.

Sarah called about the cat; be up Friday. She put Dennis on and he said yes, he intended to work—that maybe only Sarah and her cousins might come, said he was bringing a new faucet. Later I called and asked him what I'd do if she had her kittens? "Oh, take her to a vet; they'd pay."

**NEXT DAY** I alone with the cat. Inever saw anything so useless. All she did was walk around and be a cat! Panicked me in the afternoon—hid out on me. Couldn't find her—afraid I'd find her dead. Finally came out from under my bed. I spent a gloomy, restless day imprisoned with that cat. She just sat on the loft steps and glared at me all evening.

**NEXT DAY** I woke to rain and friend cat. She'd kept leaping onto me from the stair landing all night. More attempts to escort her out on leash and/or feed her not work either. Sarah phoned and said they'd be up to get her cat if it didn't rain. I finally risked leaving cat and went to store where I picked up some cat food. That she liked! Evening she driving me nuts again I walked her on rope in moonlight but she went under house I got mad and yanked her out and back in where she suddenly got up on my bed and squatted—the kittens!? I yelled and raged and stuck a small rug under her. Too late. Liquid mess all over my bed. Other ideas not working I finally fixed a bed and water for her in the storage closet and locked her up. I hate cats!

**FRIDAY, APRIL ...GOOD FRIDAY** And so it was: a beautiful April day at last, birds singing, sun streaming in, weather forecast good, Easter weekend, the full moon the night before, anniversary of Julie's birthday...I felt rather superstitious...good omens? Even the cat problem better? She'd found a hole Dennis hadn't covered in the closet and got loose and leaped on and pestered me all night, but she did use the paper I put by the door to solve her problems. It wouldn't be long before they'd come and take her! Whew! I began to anticipate their arrival, usually around noon.

Surprise! Dennis and Sarah only, arrived very early...before nine. Dennis said Abbie had gone with her sister to take the kids kite flying. Dennis and I sat and had coffee and talked. His plans: to take some time off work at Sears and go to Spokane and look into things there. "I gotta change! Change! My change time is coming!" he said, pacing..

Then he set to work and finished the paneling, putting two little shelves into the wall, one of clear plastic left from the windows. Clever! He took time out when he got a bad sliver in his hand and several calls to Abbie about picking her up someplace or something. Sarah helped me wash windows and then she and I went to town and got some more insulation for Dennis hadn't had any money to pick any up on his way up.

There was a strange car in the drive when we got back. Turned out to be from the assessor's office a ga—nice. Short visit and good news and she left. She took ten percent off our taxes for "unfinished", she said! So all was well until...the cat escaped again!

Sarah was sore distraught. And so was I. If they went off and left me with that cat again....! I spent a long time with Sarah, searching the woods and trying to distract her from her grief: "See the frog!...Did you ever curl dandelion stems?" At the very last I lure her down to the cul and, sure enough, the flash of a furry tail. Sarah made a flying football tackle...and got the cat! Whether it was then I insisted on putting the cat in the bathroom, where she made a mess, or what, but Dennis and I had time to roam the woods with a beer and take a last gloat before they left...with cat!

That evening I dashed to the store, marveling at the full moon and the sunset-tinged mountains on one side and the huge setting sun like "the eye of God" on the other all under a cloudless sky. Home. Ate. Chatted with Mike on phone, fell into bed...catless! And did not wake until 6 A.M.! Catless!

**NEXT DAY** I slept in until noon and then I wandered out in my robe and found it a most beautiful day, so beautiful I had to call Dennis and tell them what they were missing. I'd gotten the idea they were going to spend Easter with me, but seems they had other plans.

I spent the day just wandering around, half naked, in my robe, lying in the sun, being lazy, just recovering from the "week of the cat". and reviewing and thinking about what Dennis and I had discussed about the fate of the cabin and sale of Ed's house and family finances and changes pertinent to.

I thoroughly enjoyed that nice day in the woods and regretted that people had other things to do and couldn't share it with me. Seemed a waste. I nibbled on cold chicken and my box of birthday chocolates and read a novel, and called and talked to my old auntie. Then finally washed my hair in preparation to go to the Senior Center Buffet dinner for Easter

The next day was Easter...a turning point?

**SUNDAY, APRIL 19. EASTER.** Dawn woke me from nightmares about...cats. But I got back to sleep.

(Easter. My first Easter in the cabin. Adjusting to the new life building of the cabin had brought me. My dead daughter's birthday, but I tried not to think of that. Easter. New beginnings.)

I started primping for the Senior Center dinner, it nice to have the faucet fixed by Dennis. The weather was good enough so that I could dig out a skirt outfit to wear...been awhile! I now living in pants and grubbies. The wrinkles wouldn't iron out, but, ...oh well, matched my face. I felt a little uneasy going out socially; I had been so long cooped up in that cabin.

I hurried: a buffet. At eleven. I didn't want to miss all that good food!

**8 MONDAY, APRIL 20.** I woke very late, expecting to feel a wreck. Not so. I felt great! I spent the day angry, trouble shooting; letter about mail order never received. I called Marie and told her off about the Senior Center--blasted at her--first time I ever fought her. Notes say something about we women phone troubles with women on the line until I finally said, "OK, I'll call the phone company!" And I did (Whatever that was all about??) I was embroiled all day in trying to find out what was going on in Sultan Estates: who did what? why didn't we have meetings? get together? how come I was never informed of anything? not included? I only got a lot of snarly flak.

**TUESDAY.** Woke to miserable day; miserable me; upset about my fight with Marie and clash with Sultan Estates' so-called board members. But I forced myself to gather wash and go down to the Center for lunch and sign up for that class Lois was trying to browbeat me into.

There, again, despite Marie telling me it was only my imagination, I wandered alone and felt shunned by that motley bunch of human cast-offs; senile institutionalized-like cripples, etc.

Marie appeared, briefly, squeezed my arm, hissed, "I'd introduce you, but I have to go!" and flew out.

The lunch was so terrible that, after struggling with it in a people-withdrawn-from-me corner, I trashed it when no one looking. I was about to slip out when Lois pounced on me, her recruit, and hastily explained that the teacher was late and invited me to sit down for a smoke (i.e. wait)

After quite a wait, a little, informally dressed, youngish man strolled in. "We've got one!" Lois cried, and I was shoed into their conference room along with five, overdressed, assertive middle-aged business women.

It seems this was a psychology teacher from the College in Edmonds and they were going to try a crash course of his called "human relations".

That class and that teacher were to become a turning point and vital in my adjustment to my retirement situation, but, since an experience not pertaining to the building of the cabin nor the description of local atmosphere this record aims at will be deleted from this report.

**CABIN WISE, THE REST OF THAT WEEK** I spent, finally, unpacking all my stuff. Dennis said he had to be on his way and I wanted them to see what I'd meant the cabin to look like before they left. First I tackled the tools that had been hanging on the wall, for convenience. A sad job. I'd have to leave out for Dennis last minute use and his selection of the ones he wanted, but I stashed them momentarily.

I started unpacking all my gewgaws and gimcracks--finally! I thought it would take me all day, but I was through by nine-thirty and in loft and blocked off by all the junk on the stairs when the phone rang, and it was Dennis.

I listened, confused. "Well, I thought I'd let you know...I didn't go (east) this week...no money..thought I'd set it up with Godfrey, but didn't work out...but there are some job opportunities over there...woods, planting trees, Indian reservation...I thought I'd look into. abbie's got a job here at school nearby so she won't need the car...can walk to work.. so this next week...I mean...I'm going down to Sears and pick up my check...and go to Colville next week. "

And then he confused me more: "I've decided I'm a turtle!" he said. "What?" "I've got some turtle blood in me!" "You insulting me?" I tittered. "no, no, but I'm so slow getting wth everything!" We began to laugh.

"Saw some 'log oil'...wanta buy...paint outside of a-frames...preservative..." "Uh..when will you be up?" "Oh...Wednesday...We'll call you this weekend..." We hung up. He sounded as rattled as I felt.

I sat in the black gloom of the weather. The big move! May, When our most beautiful weather --they'd be gone. I set to work like a fiend "to keep from thinking", my emotions all tangled...dragging out my "good things' after so long et al...

By five I had it all done, just as the sun broke out for the first time that day. I surveyed the results of what I hoped was my last move . It looked nice.

**THE NEXT DAY** I woke to sun streaming across the floor. Well! More like it! Peek! at all my work of the day before, my new home. It looked nice, but all those things hung up and displayed: it looked like a museum. Maybe I could charge for guided tours?

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## SENIOR CENTER EASTER DINNER

At the Senior Center I was rather taken aback: there were very few cars, and, when I went in, very few people. The only people I knew were Lois French and her husband, she the "hostess". She ran up to me, "My! haven't seen you for awhile! Wouldn't you like to sign up for our 'human relationships' classes?" and started to pressure me, pencil and form in hand. "Err...um m..." I said I'd be back in Tuesday.

So then I wandered in that half deserted, huge, barny room, not sure what to do—the procedures. Every place I went,, smiling and all dressed up, areas of vacuum seemed to form around me till I felt like "Ms. Invisible" or, like the discovery of penicillin, a sterile area around me. I finally went and sat by myself.

Then, noting the heaped plates everybody was getting, I, too, stood in the food line,. First time around I chose and wolfed down salads and greens I'd had none of for so long. Next time...I held out my plate...all that good, home cooked farm food! The battle-axe of a woman in the kitchen glared at me. "Well, whadda ya want?"

I gestured..."Like they..."I begged. "Turkey and ham? One or the other!" she glared at me, and put teeny,tiny pieces on my plate—grudgingly.

I snuck off to a lonesome corner, where, despite my "charm" efforts, table mates didn't seem to know I was there. After another rebuff at the dessert table...(blueberry pie! our local specialty!, but not for me? I gathered) I just sat and watched.

The place was all decorated up to a fare-thee-well; plastic flowers, cutsey bunnies—utter country corny. Suddenly I gulped and almost choked on the food I'd been "allowed": a broad beamed motherly type came prancing out in pink flannel bunny suit! complete with ears and a cottontail behind and plastic flowers behind one ear.all this in cruel daylight...and she wagged herself up to the "stage" and led a "wash board band" in (very good) toe-tingling music. I tried to applaud. "Sing along!"she'd said. But nobody sang. Everyone was just wolfing food and continued to do so...utterly ignoring her... I began to edge toward the door,and finally just slipped out.

"Human relationships"!I thought a bit bitterly.

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It was only about 2 P.M. I went home. (What else to do?) I hated to leave the "warm valley" and go into the chill of the trees, and I felt like a goddamned snob! THOSE HICKS!...Home, I still all dressed up.

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I went down and opned the car to dry it out. Marty and Ralph next door neighbors there. We worked vis-a-vis. No greeting.

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I noted the oil I had spread on that non-drain puddle pool there (County neglected) had worked. Dead mosquito larvae floated on the surface. Inoted that the old homestead apple trees were in full bloom. My lil apple tree. I stopped and tied it up straighter, noting with a thrill, the leaf buds popping. Then I went to where I'd planted my grass,hopefully. Not a sign of it.

I went in and hassled finances. Too bad. Dennis had said that week he'd taken off to go to Spokane was wasted;he couldn't afford to go, no money. I thought of all the lavish presents they'd given ,me for my birthday I really didn't need, and debated about financing their trip, but one look and I didn't have the money, either. I wrote a long-owed letter to my old auntie, Dode, in Honolulu...and then...

**EVENING** I roamed,disconsolately, in woods some more, and, willy nilly, thought about Julie and her birthday...unpleasant thoughts...remembering. And then I just cracked up. I got on thwe phone and called her two brothers—Dennis about 8, Mike after 10. And I got utterly maudlin. Dennis was sad and emipathetic; Mike his usual "cool" and sounding so sleepy I didn't press matters when the phone was suddenly cut off.

I'd been upset, too, by getting a card from M and M while Dennis was here, "Ready to travel again?" "Sounds like they want you to come down," Dennis said. I fou8nd myself fighting that one. Hell! Travel again!? I'd been traveling all my life, it seemed. I'd finally, finally gotten a place I could call home and spread out all my boxes of "treasures", toold, mementoes...a home! At last! My so long yearned for loft/studiio...not live out of boxes and suitcases any more! And they ask me to travel again?

I gave up and fell into bed. It had been a very trying day—emotionally.

**APRIL, con't.** The day I went into Monroe to check up on T&G for Dennis, I'd gotten all dressed up but got soaked in the rain, going out about ten for the mail, which brought me a jolt! a problem:

A form notice from Sultan Estates. Ooch! "Decision to sell the club property" it went on and on, complex, garbled, and signed only with the typed words: "The Board. Community Club meeting May 17th. It was a very formal and stiff letter, not at all like Irene Brown's friendly "Let's have fun!" meeting notices. I was stunned. We hadn't even finished our house and they were already disbanding and selling out the community club that had lured me to dare venture to live "alone" in the woods.

I didn't have time to hassle it then. I went on to Monroe, getting delayed on the way down, having to detour around crews repairing flooded roads. I was appalled at Woods creek, swollen, brown and ugly. I'd had no idea or warning of floods.

I went straight to the Senior Center where I was accosted by a painted old ding bat woman complaining about her difficulties in trying to call me on the phone. I explained to her about the phone troubles I'd been having.

Then I saw Marie Easterley, to my knowledge a member of the board and I accosted her. She looked and acted utterly baffled and blank when I told her about the letter and notice I'd ust gotten.

"Did you write that letter?" I asked her. "Uh...no. What's it say?" I told her. "Oh, I guess Finesilver (currently president of the board) did," she said and broke away leaving me utterly baffled.

I went e and hassled those paneling figures till I was rumdum. Then I called Dennis. He seemed to think his best was T&G. I asked him about how long it would take. "Oh, about four days." "Yikes!" I said, "you got that much time?" "Oh sure, got lots of time." I felt confused.

"No, not the next week end. They were going to have a garage sale and get rid of stuff there."

Then he went on to say he wouldn't know about his job at Sears until Tuesday and that he'd been cleaning out Ed's garage that he'd been using as a workshop and found lots more cabin bills. I groaned. "--and your little plastic model of the cabin." "Hmmm," I said. I was hurt. I'd worked so hard on that thing—all to scale, etc. and it...trashed? Wwe agreed to talk TuesDAY night.

**ON ONE OF MY STREET WALKS..**Case out in the street by Lot #1. He began to talk loud and fast. "Did you know this lot is for sale?" he asked. "And I did the surveying and perc tests!" etc. Then I recalled that real estate gal and those two "interested buyers?" "They didn't know where the corner was!" I said. "It's an odd shaped lot." "NO, no! It goes straight back! I did it myself!" I wanted to ask him about the Breuener real estate guy rumored prowling around but I gave up. Some people you can't argue with.

I asked him if he had plans for his new house? "Oh no no! Don't need plans". "But you have to have plans to get approval." "No no." I gave up.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29.** There was, at this time, via Senior Center some attempt being made to find me a "phone pal" in my area, someone who could help me in case of emergencies. My day was set up for me when this woman called and said she'd been assigned to me and invited me to lunch at her house, in Startup....wherever that was. I rushed around getting ready and cleaning house, for I planned to bring her back and show her where I lived, she being confused about it.

I was late and frantic by the time I set out to...??? somewhere...towards the mountains. It didn't help to find the steets and roads a mess of swirling dust where the county was only half finished with "clean up" jobs, I not having a filter on my car. Worried me.

On our street before I left I'd stoppedtoot talk to a man working at that dingy trailer down the street where the Parkers had absconded. Ccurious, and still in the process of trying to get acquainted with people in Sultan Estates, I took tme in my rush to stop and talk to him. The owner, as far as I knew was a man named "Willys". "Are you Mr. Willys?" I asked fending off his two St. Bernard dogs, one still a pup.(More dogs! Grrrr!)

"No. He'd rented the place and was cleaning it up pendingthe arrival of his family. He ws quite friendly and explained that he was here to work on rehabilitation in the Monroe Reformatory and was renting the place for the duration of the job. A friendly, nice guy.

I went on, out into the wild and insistent traffic on the highway. I was nervous enough, besides being late and my car worries and trying to evade macho speeder guys wanting to pass me on that no pass stretch of highway when..

.a **huge bee** flew in the window and landed **right on my crotch!**

I nearly stripped gears as, brakes screeching, I made a dangerous wild dash into a Sultan side stret hoping the bee wouldn't sting me before I could stop. It didn't. And I did...stop. I got the bee out. Whew!

I gulped my way back into the traffic and, after a few more narrow squeaks dodging men-in-a-hurry found myself in a little town called Startup.

My adventures there, though a very funny story, do not pertain to cabin tale except that's where I got the ivy that grows south side of cabin foundation, a gift from Regina (What a name!) "Porny Lorny" had a hard time saying it without giggling. All my frantic search for her place ended to find only a deaf old crone who didn't drive and was delighted to have me drive her all over the countryside when she was supposed to be helping me! My day was far gone by the time I got rid of her. ( Later, she became such a whiney pest that we had to call off that "help" idea,)

I was anxious to get ahold of Case and get that filter in, but I could find him nowhere. When I got back I started out on a prowl around S.E. wanting to tell people about the new dogs, the county road cleaning, etc. Easterleys. Nobody. But at the end of the first cul-de-sac those people working out in their yard—the Petersons. We talked of the noise we had to put up with and they shocked me with tales of deer poaching across the road under the power lines at night.

"Oh, they do it with headlights! Freeze them and then shoot 'em!" Jim said. I'd never heard of such a thing!

"And we've caught 'em skinning deer right in our own back yard!" his wife added. She said she'd relay my message to Marie and I went on home.

This time I caught Case. He claimed he'd been there all the time, but revealed no more than that. "Want me to fix that filter?"

"Yeah!"

He did.

I went home,, put on grubbies and devised some planter boxes for the ivy . Than I called Abbie. Dennis not there, she said, out negotiating with Godfrey about their job hunting trip plans to eastern Washington. He thought he'd stop by on their way to do that work...maybe in a couple of weeks.

I hung up and collapsed. it had been a busy day! and seemed that I'd talked to a million people!

**THURSDAY, APRIL 30.** I woke to sunshine and incessant barking of the new pup left alone down the street. The day the first one with the promise of spring, I spent at home trying to start spring chores...tried to plant some ferns over the bare spot on septic tank Dennis had said would fill in with plants. It hadn't. And not enough dirt to plant.. I just tossed some grass seed in. and rushed a few other little jobs, the weather too capricious to settle to big jobs.

So ended April.

Things were very much up in the air, unsettled.

# Unfinished drafts

The following pages were included in the cabin story three folder but not finished like the rest. They continue into June 1981 and the are a few up to 1986.

Dennis Chambreau, October 2017



May 1981

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SO I SPENT THAT LAST DAY OF APRIL JUST PUTTERING AND LAZING AROUND BEDEVILED BY APRIL SHOWERSTHWARTING THE PROMISE-OF-SPRING TASKS.

May

FRIDAY, MAY 1-----I SET OFF FOR MONROE ON ERRANDS AFTER BATTLING TRYING TO ADJUST ME AND HABITS TO THE DAYLIGHT SAVING CHANGE. BEFORE I LEFT, THAT WOMAN FROM THE CENTER CALLED AND WANTED TO KNOW HOW I CAME OUT UP AT STARTUP? WE LAUGHED ABOUT THAT AND SHE SAID SHE'D BE UP TO SEE ME AND INTERVIEW ME SOME MORE AT MY HOUSE SOON.

call

Monroe

MY DAY IN MONROE TURNED OUT TO BE RATHER PRODUCTIVE AND INTERESTING. I STOPPED AT JEWELERS AND HAD MOTHERS (SYNTHETIC) PEARLS EVALUATED AND GOT THEM READY TO SEND OFF TO CARRIE, BOUGHT A BIG SKETCH PAD AND A PUSH DRILL TO HELP ME IN LITTLE CARPENTRY JOBS, ATE A SNACK AND SHOPPED AND CHATTED WITH PEOPLE IN MONROE'S SCRUNGY LITTLE LITTLE SHOPPING "MALL". AND THEN I PROWLED AROUND IN DUNBAR LUMBER COMPANY, GETTING INFO AND IDEAS ABOUT T&G LUMBER AND IDEAS OF WAYS TO FINISH UP THOSE BATHROOM WALLS SOMEHOW, SOMETHING TEMPORARY THAT I COULD DO. I TOLD THE WOMAN THAT I'D EITHER CALL OR COME IN WHEN WE READY TO ORDER THE T & G.

THE SUN CAME OUT AND THE AREA WAS SO PRETTY AND BUCOLIC. GREEN..GREEN..GREEN AND COWS AND HORSES ON MY DRIVE HOME AND MY WOODS LOOKED SO PRETTY WITH THE VINE-MAPLES STARTING TO PUT OUT LEAVES THAT I WAS VERY HAPPY TO BE WHERE I WAS AND NOT IN SOME CEMENTED CITY.

Abbeville

PAULA

THAT EVENING I CALLED MY SISTER IN LAW IN SEATTLE AND CHATTED. SHE SAID THEY MIGHT BE UP ON THE WEEK END: SHE'D LET ME KNOW. I WENT TO BED HAPPY AND ALL INSPIRED TO GET UP AND CLEAN AND FIX UP HOUSE. TWO PROMISES OF GUESTS I COULD SHOW THE PLACE OFF TO!

Call to Paula

SATURDAY, MAY 2--I BEGAN: A GREAT RUSHED, FRANTIC TACKLING OF HOUSECLEANING AND FINISHING UP ALL I COULD POSSIBLY DO TO GET MY DREAM HOUSE READY TO SHOW OFF. AGAIN I WAS TORMENTED BY THE CAPRICES OF THE WEATHER. IMPROVING THE APPROACH IN, NAILING UP A LITTLE WOODEN BRIDGE ACROSS THE SWALE IN THE PATH AND SWEEPING THE WHOLE CUL OF ALL THE MESS THE COUNTY GUYS HAD LEFT I HAD TO DO IN A SUDDEN RAIN SQUALL.

house clean

I WORKED ALL MORNING PUTTING UP ALL WE HAD LEFT OF THAT INSULATION IN PREPARATION FOR THE PANELING. THIS I WANTED TO GET DONE BEFORE I TACKLED THE FLOORS THAT HAD, NEVER, REALLY, BEEN CLEANED BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING CONSTRUCTION. MY HANDS STUNG FROM THAT FIBERGLAS BYTIME I FINISHED. AND IT WAS MADDENING TRYING TO SEE, THE TEASE OF SUN/SHOWER MADE ALTERNATE NIGHT AND DAY SO THAT I HAD TO KEEP TURNING LIGHTS ON AND OFF.

THAT DONE, I GOT OUT THE VACUUM TO GOBBLE UP, BESIDES DIRT, THE CARPET OF DEAD MOTHS. THEN I CLEANED AND "DECORED" THE LIVING ROOM, AS MUCH AS I COULD IN ITS UNFINISHED STATE. NEXT I DID THE FLOORS. WHEW! IT WAS FIVE P.M. BY THEN.

I SAGGED INTO A SEAT AND SURVEYED MY WORK. WELL, THE FLOORS DIDNT LOOK ALL THAT GREAT AFTER ALL THAT WORK. THAT CHEAP LINOLEUM PITTED AND POCK MARKED ALREADY...BUT..BUT..MY OWN DREAM HOUSE LIVING ROOM AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!

MMMMM..THEN, INSTEAD OF THE REST I NEEDED, I WAS OFF AGAIN, MESSING THINGS ALL UP AGAIN. I BEGAN TO "BETTER" MY MAKESHIFT "BROOM CLOSET" WITH THINGS I'D PICKED UP IN MONROE TO DO SO..USING THE NEW LITTLE DRILL AND SO ON.

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IT WAS NIGH DUSK BY THE TIME I WAS FINISHED AND I ACHED ALL OVER, BUT THE SUN HAD COME OUT AND BLUE SKY. I WANTED TO BE OUTSIDE, IN IT. BUT AFRAID I MIGHT MISS A CALL FROM PAULA, WHOM I HADN'T HEARD FROM? I TRIED SOMETHING NEW: I LEFT ALL THE DOORS OPEN, RADIO ON, AND NEXT THING I KNEW I HAD BUILT A BONFIRE AND WAS BURNING UP A LOT OF THAT TRASH UNDER CABIN. MMMM..I WONDER..I WONDER...I RAN AND DUG OUT THAT GRILL I'D USED IN MY CAMPING DAYS AND SOME BACON AND TRIED OUT SOMETHING. IT WORKED BEAUTIFULLY! THE BACON SIZZLED AND REPLENISHED THE FIRE WITH ITS DRIPPINGS. I SAT AND LISTENED TO THE RADIO MUSIC SOFTLY PLAYING FROM IN CABIN, AND SMOKED A CIGARETTE, WONDERING WHY PEOPLE OBJECT SO TO MY SMOKING, YET WE ALL ENJOY THAT BONFIRE SMOKE SO? I SAT AND WATCHED THE BONFIRE SMOKE DRIFT OFF THROUGH THE WOODS, WHERE ALL WAS QUIET AND GOT IDEAS FOR A BONFIRE DINNER FOR GUESTS..WE COULD ROAST WEIENRNS! OR....

Bonfire

THE RADIO ANNOUNCED SEVEN O'CLOCK. IT WAS GETTING DARKER AND DARKER IN WOODS. I GOT UP AND WENT IN. THE CABIN DIDN'T LOOK EXACTLY..CLEAN..AFTER ALL MY WORK, BUT DARKLY GLOSSY WOOD AND WARM,DARK GLOWING COLORS..INVITING..COZY....

I ATE. AND THEN CALLED PAULA. "I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW AT TEN AND LET YOU KNOW!" SHE SAID.

Call to Paula

I FELL INTO BED, EXHAUSTED AND HURTING ALL OVER, BUT PLEASED!..AND HAPPY!

SUNDAY, MAY 3-- BY ELEVEN A.M. I HADN'T HEARD FROM PAULA. I CALLED HER. THEY COULDN'T MAKE IT.

Call to Paula

IT TOOK ME A FEW HOURS TO RECOVER...AND FORGIVE. A SUDDEN DEATH..CLOSE. THEY HAD TO GO TO A FUNERAL. WEARILY I BEGAN TO PAY BILLS AND PUTTER IN CLEAN HOUSE, AS A STORM GATHERED AND POUNDED OUTSIDE. IT WAS A VERY SAD DAY, AS I CLEANED OUT AND CAME ACROSS MOMENTOES IN THE GLOOM.

disappoint about guests

ABOUT TEN O'CLOCK THAT NIGHT, I WAS GOING THROUGH OLD TELEPHONE NUMBERS WHEN THE PHONE RANG. IT WAS DENNIS. "HEAR THAT?" HE ASKED AS THE PHONE SNAPPED AND CRACKLED IN THE STORM. YEAH. JUST THOUGHT I'D CALL YOU: I'M GOING BACK TO WORK FOR SEARS NEXT WEEK..GODFREY ALREADY (GONE?)..SO I'LL GO OVER THERE NEXT WEEK AND MAYBE STOP BY AND DO SOME WORK AND STAY OVERNIGHT AND GO ON.I'LL LET YOU KNOW MONDAY OR TUESDAY NOT SURE YET.." HE SIGHED."AM TIRED. WE HAD A GARAGE SALE TODAY..SOLD ALL ED'S (HIS FATHER'S) OLD SHEET MUSIC..AND..A LOT OF OLD STUFF..GUESS I'LL GO TO BED." "ME, TOO" I SAID. WE HUNG UP. RAIN. RAIN. RAIN ON THE ROOF---LIKE----WEEPING?

Dennis calls

MONDAY, MAY 4--MORNING NOT ONE TO CHEER. RAINY. AND THE SCRAMBLINGS OF SOME LITTLE "BEASTIE"? KEPT ME AWAKE IN NIGHT. AND MAIL BROUGHT ME A PHONE BILL SO HUGE I VOWED I'D HAVE TO CUT DOWN ON MY CALLS TO FARAWAY FRIENDS AND FAMILY IN THIS ADJUSTMENT PERIOD OF ALONE IN WOODS?

BUT, BY TIME I GATHERED MY WASHING AND SET OUT TO DO IT IN THAT DINGY LAUNDMAT NEAR SULTAN THE SUN HAD COME OUT AND THE WILDLY DIVERSE SCENERY OF STORM CLOUDS, SUN AND SNOW ON MOUNTAINS WAS AWESOME. STOPPING AT THE SORT OF OLD "GENERAL STORE" AT FOOT OF HILL I SUCCUMBED TO SOME NEW PLACE MATS I DIDN'T REALLY NEED, BUT THEY SO APROPOS WITH THEIR WOODS PLANTS DESIGNS NAD LEGENDS..PART OF MY FIXING UP MY NEW HOUSE! I CHECKED OUT THE NEW LIQUOR STORE THERE, MOVED FROM THE FLOOD

Sultan

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PROBLEMS IN SULTAN. AND THEN...I RAN INTO ONE OF THOSE GROTESQUE OLD WOMEN CHARACTERS FROM THE CENTER, THE ONE WITH THE BIZARRE HAIRDO AND NAME, MNEATHA (SIC)..INDIAN SHE CLAIMED IT WAS. SHE SMELLED OF LIQUOR AND HELD ME CAPTIVE BY HANGING ONTO MY GROCERY CART AS SHE HISSED LOCAL GOSSIP INTO MY EAR.

Home

RID OF HER AND HOME AGAIN, I CONTINUED TO GET BRIGHT IDEAS FOR FIXING UP MY HOUSE. I PUT UP A CLOTHES BAR UNDER THE STAIRS. THEN, IRONING TO DO, I GOT THE BRIGHT IDEA OF SETTING UP THAT HEAVY OLD IRONING BOARD ON THE EAST PORCH WHERE THEY'D PUT IN THAT OUTDOOR OUTLET. IT WAS FUN! WORKED BEAUTIFULLY! THE SUN WAS SHINING AND LITTLE BIRDS SKIPPING AROUND UNDER THE PORCH, A BETTER LIGHT THAN I'D HAVE IN DARK CABIN, AND THE PRETTY WOODS TO LOOK AT. I ENJOYED IRONING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE!

(gr)

LATER, AS I ATE MY DINNER, AS USUAL, TO THAT NICE, DINNER HOUR MUSIC ON RADIO, <sup>program</sup> I CONTINUED MY KNITTING OF PILLOW COVERS, THO MY HANDS WERE SORE AND STIFF FROM A CRAFT I WAS A SHEER AMATEUR AT. WAS FUN. I ENJOYED FIXING UP MY LITTLE PLACE, AND I WASN'T LONESOME, AS EVERYONE SAID I'D BE, FOR THINGS LIKE...RAUCOUS SCREECHING AND SQUAWKING TOOK ME OUT TO SEE YET MORE UNAFRAID-OF-ME BIRDS..A KIND I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE CARRYING ON WHATEVER BIRDS CARRY ON ABOUT IN THE "FRONT" WOODS.

Call Marge

MAYBE THAT IS WHAT MADE ME BREAK MY TELEPHONE VOW, LATER, AND CALL A NATURE LOVING FORMER OLD GAL FRIEND AND LILT ABOUT THE JOYS OF LIVING IN THE WOODS?

aside

[[ Aside: If i seem to digress from cabin story, I am merely following directions from a UW prof on "How to". This a rough draft from gleaning bales of scribbled notes, some of which I don't want to lose. I HOPE to live long enough to--edit.OK?]]

Sr. Center Class

TUESDAY, MAY 5-- CLASS AT CENTER DAY. I ANNOYED AT HUMAN BEHAVIOR. OUR "HUMAN BEHAVIOR" CLASS HOURS HAD BEEN CHANGED FROM AFTERNOON TO MORNING..AT GREAT INCONVENIENCE TO THE TEACHER, WHO HAD TO COME IN FROM EVERETT, AND TO (ME!) BECAUSE IT INTERFERED WITH THEIR BINGO GAMES!(THAT WAS A FACTOR, LATER IN THAT COLLEGE CREDIT COURSE BEING DISCONTINUED. THE BINGO GAMES WENT ON. HOWEVER)...THAT MORNING I HAD TO FLY AROUND FASTER AND EARLIER TO GET THERE AND THEN BE LEFT WITH THE WHOLE AFTERNOON "ALL DRESSED UP" AND NOTHING TO DO IN DULL MONROE. MY MOOD WAS IMPATIENT THAT MORNING IN SPITE OF THE FINE, WARM SPRING DAY, PROMISED, COME AT LAST.

Monroe

I WAS LATE LEAVING. <sup>S.E. visitor</sup> (ANOTHER STORY)...THIS TIME I ATE BEFORE I LEFT, NOT LIKING THE INSTITUTIONAL-LIKE FEEDING OF INDIGENTS AT THE CENTER, I'D DECIDED. THE DAY IN MONROE TURNED OUT TO BE VERY FUN AND VERY MELODRMATIC, REALLY.

THE CLASS WAS EXCITING, I THE STAR PUPIL: THE ONLY ONE THERE THAT HAD TAKEN A PSYCHOLOGY COURSE BEFORE. MILDRED, MY NEW FRIEND FROM LAST TIME HAD BROUGHT A TAPE RECORDER AND IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I EVER MADE A SPEECH BEING TAPED. IT BOTHERED ME AT FIRST, BUT I SOON FORGOT MY SELF (ONSCIOUSNESS AS THE DISCUSSION GOT HOT AND HEAVY.

THE TEACHER WAS LATE, AND, DURING THE WAIT, I GOT TO BE GOOD FRIENDS WITH TWO OF THE SHARPEST, BEST DRESSED GALS IN THE CLASS. JUST MUTUAL RAPPOROT. THEY SEEMING TO BE "CAREER GALS" AND, I GATHERED PART OF THE STAFF AT THE CENTER. WHEN I LEFT THEY SEIZED UPON AND DELAYED ME SO THAT I WAS QUITE FLATTERED. THEY INSISTEDD THEY WANTED TO COME UP AND SEE MY CABIN. THEIR NAMES WERE BETTY AND PEGGY.

I LEFT THE CENTER FEELING LIKE EVERYBODY'S PET AND WENT OUT INTO OUR FIRST WARM, SPRING DAY AND HAD A SUCCESSFUL AND FUN SHOPPING SPREE IN MONROE.

new friends Betty + Peggy class

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Call  
to  
Arnie

THAT NIGHT I BROKE MY TELEPHONE VOW AGAIN AND CALLED AND TALKED LONG AND FUN TO ARNIE, ONE OF MY FORMER HIGHWAY BOSSES, WHO HAD HELPED AND CHAMPIONED ME IN MY "CAREER GALDAYS" STRUGGLES. HE AND HIS WIFE THE REMAINING FAST FRIENDS FROM THOSE DAYS. WAS FUN TO EXCHANGE THE LATEST SCUTTLEBUTT.

S.E.

SPEAKING OF SCUTTLEBUTT, I SURE COLLECTED A LOT THAT DAY, INCLUDING A REMARK ANENT MY COMPLAINTS ABOUT SULTAN ESTATES.. "OH THOSE THINGS NEVER WORK".. FROM SOMEONE WHO WAS IN A POSITION TO KNOW.

Table

ISPENT THE EVENING PUTTING TOGETHER A CARDBOARD FAKE, WOOD "LAZY SUSAN" TYPE "INSTANT FURNITURE" TYPE THING I" I"D FOUND IN MONROE. I THOUGHT IT"D BE GOOD FOR A RADIO TABLE I DIDN" T HAVE. AN % AND IT SERVED THE PURPOSE VERY WELL, THO THAT THE KIND OF THING PEOPLE GET SO ANNOYED WITH ME FOR: WHY DON" T I BUY MYSELF SOME REAL FURNITURE? BECAUSE BEING THE INDIGENT, GYPSY GENIUS I"VE BEEN ALL MY LIFE, I FIND THESE THINGS..INGENIOUS! THEY ALSO SAVE ME MONEY I"D RATHER USE FOR OTHER THINGS. SO THERE!

Climate

WED. MAY 6--THIS THE DAY THE GAL FROM THE CENTER WAS GOING TO COME INTERVIEW ME. THIS ONE" S NAME WAS <sup>Lee?</sup> BOYER, THE FIRST OF MANY TO COME, THO I DID NOT KNOW THAT AT THE TIME.

THE WEATHER THIS DAY WAS AS DISMAL AS THE DAY BEFORE WAS SPECIAL. I WAS JUST WONDERING IF IT HADN" T BEEN AN AWFULLY LONG WINTER? WHEN THE RADIO SAID: "NEXT MONTH WILL BE JUNE AND THE YEAR HALF OVER, AND WE HAVEN" T HAD ANY SPRING YET! MY FIRST SPRING WAITING TO SHOW OFF MY NEW HOUSE AT ITS BEST. I FELT VERY SORRY FOR MYSELF.

Sen.  
Center  
Help  
Call  
visit

I DISMALED AROUND, WAITING FOR THE PHONE TO RING, NOT EVEN DARING TO GO OUT FOR THE MAIL... AFRAID OF MISSING CALL. WELL, I WASTED ALL DAY "BEING HELPED" BY SENIOR CENTER "HELPERS". I HAD CLEANED HOUSE, GOT OUT PAPERS, BUILT FIRE, FIXED SNACK. NOTHING. FINALLY A CALL.. LEE? BOYER.. SOMEBODY WOULD BE THERE "IN AN HOUR". I NEARLY WORE OUT PATH WATCHING, CHECKING EVERY CAR THAT APPEARED.

IT WAS ALMOST TWO P.M. BEFORE A HIPPIE TYPE, SCRAWNY LIL WOMAN DROVE UP IN A BEAT UP OLD JALOPY. NOT AT ALL WHAT I"D EXPECTED! SHE WASS RATTLED, CONFUSED, DAZED. KEPT DROPPING HER PAPERS AND PORTFOLIO ON TRAIL COMING IN. ISPENT AN HOUR OR SO WITHHER TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IN HELL SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT. SUDDENLY SHE FLED. WHEW! I WAS A WRECK! OH NO! SHE"D LEFT HER STRANGE LITTLE PEAKED CAP. WHAT TO DO?

Visitors  
Cap  
Call

I CALLED EVERETT., AS FAR AS I COULD FIGURE OUT THEIR HEADQUARRTERS? A DULL, FLAT DEAD SOUNDING OLD WOMAN" S VOICE ANSWERED. "TELL LEE? SHE LEFT HER CAP," I SAID. "HER CAT?" "NO NO! HER CAP! TELL HER I"LL LEAVE IT DOWN AT THE STORE ON THE HIGHWAY AND SHE CAN PICK IT UP THERE..." "HUNH"? I WENT ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE HIGHWAY STORE, HAVING NO OTHER REASON TO GO AND FLOUNDERED THROUGH ANOTHER MESS OF "HUNH?S" LATER, HOME:PHONE. "THANKS FOR RETURNING MY CAP.. THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A LONG WALK.." UH, NEVER MIND, I SAID. AND I GAVE UP ON THAT! DAY.

THURSDAY, MAY 7--WOKE TO A GREY MORNING AND PUZZLING AGAIN OVER THOSE "BEASTIE" NOISES IN NIGHT.. A MOUSE? OR BIRD ON ROOF? I NOTED, WITH MIXED FEELINGS THAT THE NEW INSULATION INSULATED ME FROM NATURE NOISES I USED TO BE ABLE TO HEAR IN CABIN: MISS THEM, BUT GAINING THE COMFORTS OF APARTMENT HOUSE LIVING AGAIN?

UPS  
Order  
car  
cover

MORNING BROUGHT ME TWO THINGS: FIRST THE SOUND OF AN UNSEEN TRUCK TURNED OUT TO BE THE UPS VAN WITH MY MY ALMOST FORGOTTEN ORDER OF A PLASTIC COVER FOR THE CAR.

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HOW LONG HAD IT BEEN? 1½ MONTHS! AND, WHEN I OPENED IT, IT NOT ALL THAT GREAT. A FLIMSY PLASTIC THING. I VOWED I'D NEVER TRY MAIL ORDER AGAIN.

P.U.D. calls

SECOND WAS A CALL FROM P.U.D...THE ELECTRIC COMPANY HERE. I'D BEEN HASSLING THEM, AGAIN, FOR HOW LONG? EVER SINCE I'D GOTTEN THAT FIRST BILL OF \$88, WHICH SEEMED A BIT ORHORBITANT TO ME, THE SHORT TIME I'D BEEN IN CABIN. "YES", SHE SAID, I COULD MAKE IT IT TWO PAYMENTS AS I'D REQUESTED, AND THEN SHE WENT INTO A LONG CONVOLUTED EXPLANATION ABOUT A DIFFERENT "BUDGET" WAY I COULD PAY. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND: ONLY THAT MY BILL HAD BEEN SO LARGE BECAUSE THEY BILL BI-MONTHLY INSTEAD OF MONTHLY AS I'D BEEN USED TO IN OTHERPLACES. I AGREED TO WHATEVER IT WAS SHE SUGGESTED AND HUNG UP FEELING RATHER CONNED.

Woods walk

ABOUT NOON I WENT OUT TO GLEAN SOME WOOD, IT COLD IN CABIN. AND REALIZED IT HAD BEEN SO COLD, I HADN'T EVEN BEEN OUT TO SEE THE FIRST SPRING IN MY WOODS I'D LOOKED FORWARD TO SO. SO I WANDERED DOWN TO THE CREEK. AND WAS VERY SURPRISED AT THE SIGNS OF SPRING THERE: GIANT! SKUNK CABBAGE ALL OVER CREEK AREA AND BLEEDING HEARTS IN BLOOM ALL OVER. I WENT BACK IN AND BUILT A FIRE AND FINISHED A LETTER TO MIKE.

outside work pruning

THEN, I BEGAN ON WHAT I WAS TO LOOK BACK ON, LATER, AS A LEARNING? SESSION. FIRST: TIRED OF TRYING TO OUTGUESS OR WAIT ON THE COME-AND-GO SUN, I REALIZED THAT, IN THIS CLIMATE, IN THE WOODS, ONE REALLY DOESN'T HAVE TO HAVE SUN TO WORK OUTSIDE. JUST AN ABSENCE OF RAIN. SO I WENT OUTSIDE AND STARTED PRUNING. MY FIRST INTENTION WAS TO TRIM BACK THE VINE MAPLE FROM THE UTILITY WIRES WHILE THEY WERE STILL SMALL AND LEAFLESS. FOUND I COULD DO IT BY HOOKING THEM WITH THE NEW HOOKED CULTIVATOR TOOL I'D BOUGHT AND PULLING THEM DOWN WITHIN REACH, AND THAT LACK OF SUN AN ADVANTAGE: ELSE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IN MY EYES. WELL, DO OTHERS, LIKE I, GET CARRIED AWAY WHEN START PRUNING? I KEPT GOING AFTER BIGGER AND BIGGER BRANCHES UNTIL I WINCED, AS ONE BRANCH BROKE, THINKING OF WHAT DENNIS WOULD SAY TO ME! I MANAGED TO OPEN UP A HOLE AROUND THE LITTLE APPLE TREE AND END OF THE TRAIL THERE, SO THAT IT A LITTLE BRIGHTER THERE. I WAS GETTING TIRED OF COMING INTO THAT CHILL, DANK TRAIL. I EVEN MANAGED TO SNAG DOW SOME "WIDOWMAKERS" I HADN'T NOTICED WERE HANGING OVER TRAIL. IT WAS FUN! I LOVE TO PRUNE!

Street fire

Cabin Sloat

I STOOD AND LOOKED AROUND. A BIG BONFIRE DOWN THE STREET. WITHEROW FINALLY BURNING THAT CLEARING LOG MESS. SEEMED AS IF JUST BEFORE AN ESTATES MEETING EVERYONE STARTING TO CLEAN UP? I LOOKED BACK TOWARD THE CABIN AND GLOATED: SMOKE LAZILY CURLING UP FROM CHIMNEY: THE GRASS SEED WAS FINALLY SPROUTING, IN FACT I'D HAVE TO CUT THAT GRASS SOMEDAY BEFORE DENNIS CAME TO SEE IT: THE APPLE TREE WAS DOING NICELY: THE THIMBLEBERRY BLOSSOMS WERE AS HUGE AS WHITE ANEMONES..NOT SO GOOD THE BLACKBERRIES TAKING OVER RIGHT UP TO THE HOUSE, BUT, ALL IN ALL, I GLOATED, PLEASED. IT ALL LOOKED AS I HAD IMAGINED IT WOULD LOOK FOR SO LONG.

Work inside

Mouse in house!

THEN, AN INTERIM OF RAIN AND BILL PAYING IN LOFT. I CAME DOWNSTAIRS..AND LET OUT A SHRIEK! A MOUSE ON MY BEDROOM FLOOR! SO THERE WAS A BEASTIE IN MY HOUSE? I OPEN DOOR, GRAB FLY SWATTER AND TRY TO SHOO IT OUT. IT WON'T MOVE..IS PAWING AT ITS MOUTH. I BEGIN TO MINDLESSLY WHACK AT IT, TRYING TO SCOOT IT TOWARD DOOR. IT MOVES, BUT TOWARD CLOSET. I HAATE BEATING IT, BUT I SEEM TO BE HYSTERICAL. I FEEL WORSE WHEN IT ACTS HURT. I FINALLY GET IT OUT ON PORCH WHERE IT ROLLS OVER AND LOOKS ALMOST DEAD. ONLY THEN DO I THINK OF THAT MOUSE POISON I PUT OUT? WITH A SHUDDER I FLICK IT OFF PORCH INTO THE RAIN AND MUD, WHERE IT LIES MOTIONLESS. UGH! I FEEL SO MEAN! MOUSE MURDER. (FORGIVE ME, GOD!) IT WAS A VERY PRETTY LITTLE BROWN AND

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WHITE MOUSE, TOO. BUT THEY"VE GOT TO STAY OUTSIDE. THIS IS MY! HOUSE! (LATER, WHEN I TOLD DENNIS ABOUT IT, HE SAID, "DID YOU EVER THINK THAT YOU! ARE IN THEIR! HOUSE?") I GO TO THE SINK. ARE THOSE TOOTH MARKS ON THE MARGARINE I LEFT OUT THERE? SIGH.

Pat-

LATER: A CAT STROLLING DOWN TRAIL. I OPEN DOOR, YELL SCAT! IT RUNS. THE MOUSE IS GONE?? MMM. IF THE MOUSE ATE THE POISON AND THE CAT ATE THE MOUSE..AM I RID OF BOTH OF THEM? NO? DIDN" T IT SAY "NOT HARMFUL TO PETS"? OH WELL, I DON" T HAVE TO PICK UP THE DEAD MOUSE. NOW HOW DID THAT CAT KNOW THAT MOUSE WAS THERE?

Pat,

I SETTLED TO MY EVENING ROUTINE: ATE DINNER, DID THE DISHES, GOT GARBAGE READY TO PUT OUT, CLEANED MY PLANT SHELF, THEN SAT DOWN WITH A GLASS OF SHERRY TO LISTEN TO NEWS AND THAT SOOTHING, EDUCATIONAL CLASSICAL MUSIC HOUR ON NPR AND KNITTED.

Knitting  
is  
for  
knit-wits!

KNITTING. I STARTED TO LAUGH, AS I DID IT. HELL, I" M NO KNITTER. IDON" T KNOW A DAMNED THING ABOUT IT. AND WHAT A SILLY PASTIME, JUST TWISTING THREAdS that ONE YANK AND WHOOPS..ALL IS LOST. BUT I FIND IT IS SOMETHING TO DO WITH ONE" S HANDS WHILE ONE IS LISTENING AND "THINKING". ONE FEELS ONE" S FACE PUT ON WRY, "SUBMISSIVE" EXPRESSIONS (YES, YES I" M LISTENING..BUT..INSIDE) WELL, ALL THAT ARM TWITCHING DOES WORK OFF "NERFUSSNESS". AND...I" LLL HAVE PILLOWS COVERED MY! WAY....

Call to  
M & M  
D & A

BY THE TIME I" D DONE ALL THAT "THINKING" AND LISTENED TO A FEW PLAYS THAT STIRRED UP THOUGHTS, I GOT A LITTLE MAUDLIN AND FORGOT ALL ABOUT MY VOWS AT PERUSING MY PHONE BILL. (THIS HAS GOT! TO STOP! THIS STILL CLINGING TO WHAT I LEFT VIA PHONE.) I CALLED MIKE AND MARYLYN, THEN DENNIS AND ABBIE.

WE TALKED OF FAMILY THINGS AND LAUGHED AND JOKED AND YES, DENNIS IS! GOING TO COLVILLE NEXT! WEEK END AND YES! HE DOES! WANT TO FINISH UP THE CABIN WORK AND WHAT WAS! I TALKING ABOUT? OH..THEY" D FORGOTTEN ALL THOSE THINGS..AND SO ON. THEY WERE FUN TALKS. BUT, AFTER I HUNG UP I REALIZED I WAS COMMITTED TO HAVING STEVE COME UP AND STAY WITH ME IN THE SUMMER AND GOING DOWN TO SEATTLE FOR MOTHERS" DAY WEEK END.

NOW, HOW DID THAT! HAPPEN? I WONDERED, AS I PUT THE SHERRY BOTTLE AWAY.

Take  
pic  
of cabin

FRIDAY, MAY 8---I WOKE TO FIND THE STREET SIDE OF HOUSE BATHED IN SHUNSHINE. SINCE THE FIRST TIME I" D SEEN THAT\_\_ SEASONAL MOVE OF SUN?\_\_ I DASHED OUT BEFORE EVEN DRESSING AND TRIED TO TAKE A PICTURE OF CABIN, HOPING I" D CATCH THE GREEN VELVET OF THE MOSSY TREES. THE BIRD CALL\_\_ ONE A NEW ONE I" D NOT HEARD BEFORE\_\_ OF COUSE, IMPOSSIBLE TO CATCH, BUT I ENJOYED THE BREAK OF SPRING SO MUCH THAT THE IDEA OF LEAVING IT ALL TO GO DOWN INTO THE TRAFFIC AND CROWDS AND NOISE OF THE CITY THAT WEEK END DID NOT APPEAL AT ALL. I WANTED TO STAY AND PLANT THINGS AND WORK IN MY WOODS! AND ANOTHER REASON FOR NOT WANTING TO LEAVE: MY FRIEND FROM YAKIMA WAS SUPPOSED TO COME ON SUNDAY, AND I HAD NO WAY OF LETTING HER KNOW I WOULD BE GONE.

Muse  
date

Spring  
in  
woods

IT WAS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL SPRING DAY, AT LAST, THAT I SPENT IT CUTTING THE GRASS PLOT BY HAND AND JUST LYING THERE IN THE SUN, ENJOYING, AND JUST LAZING AROUND, ONLY GOING OUT FOR A DASH TO THESTORE AFTER I CLEANED OUT THE CAR TO PREPARE IT FOR THE COMING TRIP OUT AGAIN. A VERY ENJOYABLE DAY, ALONE IN MY WOODS IN SPRING, AT LAST! AND WONDERING WHERE I" D BE WHEN MY LITTLE APPLE TREE GOT AS ANCIENT AS THOSE BELOW. SOMETHING EVERLASTING FEELING ABOUT PLANTING A FRUIT TREE.

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*Dogs!*  
SAT. MAY 9, -- WOKE LATE AND IN A BAD MOOD: NOT AT ALL HAPPY ABOUT THAT GRUESOME TRIP IN TRAFFIC INTO SEATTLE. HAVING IT RAINING DIDN'T HELP. AND THEN, FURIOUS, CAUGHT THE ST. BERNARD AND TAN DOG RUNNING OUT OF MY TRAIL AND THEIR MUDDY FOOTPRINTS ALL OVER PORCH AND MY LITTLE "WITCH'S BROOM" LYING BROKEN IN TRAIL. IF THOSE DOGS WERE GOING TO START RAIDING AND VANDALIZING, I FIGURED IT WAS TIME TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

*Call Finesilver*  
I PACED AND PACED AND THEN, THO IT EARLY, THE ONLY TIME HE'S HERE ON WEEK ENDS, RISKED A CALL TO FINESILVER, CHAIRMAN OR WHATEVER OF THE BOARD, TO SEE IF ANYONE HAD RELAYED MY MESSAGES TO HIM ABOUT NEW RENTERS, WHICH WAS AGAINST THE COVENANT, WITH DOGS THAT MIGHT BE A PROBLEM. EVIDENTLY NOT. AND THO HE WAS GRIMLY POLITE HE WAS NOT HAPPY ABOUT MY WAKING HIM UP. HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT OR EVEN WHERE THAT RENTAL PLACE WAS. AND THEN HE GAVE ME A LONG LECTURE ABOUT WHAT I WAS SUPPOSED TO DO ABOUT IT. IT WAS MY! PROBLEM, STRICTLY BETWEEN ENIGHBORS. NOW YOU GO TALK TO THEM, NOT NASTY, BUT NICE. ON AND OON AND ON HE WENT. BUT DON'T WE HAVE A COVENANT? RULES? YES, BUT IF A CALL AND THEY GET THEIR DOGS HAULED OFOF, THEY WILL BE MAD AT YOU! NOW YOU! GO TALK TO THEM! BUT WILL ANYBODY BADK ME UP? WHY NO: IT'S YOUR! PROBLEM. WE ALL HAVE TO BE NICE NEIGHBORS HERE AND LEARN TO GET ALONG, HE SAID. WELL, THAT'S WHAT I MEAN!@ I SAID. WE ARE A COMMUNITY. NO WE'RE NOT, HE SAID. BUT DON'T YOU SEE MY POINT? I PERSISTED. I GOTTA LIVWITH THESE PEOPLE, AND IF I START REPORTING ON THEM..WELL..I THOUGHT.. EVERYBODY TELLS ME TO CALL YOU..CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD? NO, PRESIDENT OF IT.. WELLL...BUT THE BOARD..LET THEM KNOW..THE RULES. WELL, WE'RE GOING TO BRING IT UP AT THE MEETING. THAT'S ALL HE'D KEEP SAYING, OVER AND OVER NAD REPEATING THAT WHAT I'D HAVE TO DO IS GO TALK TO THEM, ETC. ETC. ETC. WELL, SORRY I WKE YOU UP. OH THAT'S ALL RIGHT.

I HUNG UP AND PACED, FURIOUS, CONFUSED. THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG ABOUT THAT CONVERSATION, BUT I COULDN'T PUT MY FINGER ON IT. AND I COULDN'T TAKE TIME TO GO DOWN AND TALK TO THOSE PEOPLE. FOR ONE THING, I WASN'T DRESSED UP ENOUGH TO IMPRESS? NEW PEOPLE. I WOULD BE <sup>gone</sup> THE NEXT DAY, BUT TO HAVE A DISTURBING FIGHT JUST BEFORE I HIT THAT NERVEWRACKING FREEWAY DRIVING WOULD NOT HLEP. BESIDES I HAD A LOT TO DO TO GET READY. I SIMPLY DIDN'T HAVE TIME.

*Call Dennis @ Mother's Day*  
I DECIDED TO CALL DENNIS. AND DID. I TOLD HIM MY PLANS, THAT I WOULD BE THERE FOR MOTHERS" DAY..MAYBE LATE..THE GAS STAION NOT OPEN TILL NINE..AND WELL, YOU KNOW ME..I NEVER GET STARTED TILL ABOUT NOON. COULD I STAY ALL NIGHT? SO I WOULDN'T HAVE TO DRIVE BACK THAT CONVOLUTED ROUTE IN THE DARK. YEAH, HE SAID. THO I KNEW IT WOULD BE A HARDSHIP..THEY NOT HAVING ENOUGH ROOM. I TOLD HIM ABOUT THE DOGS. WELL, MAYBE THEY! WILL CHASE MARAUDERS OFF YOUR PLACE! HUNH? NO WAY! I SAID.

I DECIDED, THEN, SINCE I WOULD BE GONE TWO DAYS, MAYBE I COULD GET THE BALL ROLLING BY TALKING TO SULTAN ESTATE PEOPLE ON THE PHONE, EVEN THO WE'D BEEN HAVING PHONE TROUBLE AND THERE WAS A TELEPHONE REPAIR VAN OUTT THERE.

*Attempt to call S.E.*  
AFTER SEVERAL MADDENING FRSTRATING ATTEMPTS TO GET THROUGH ON PHONE, I CALLED OPERATOR. WELL MAYBE SOME THING WRONG WITH YOUR PHONE. WE MAY HAVE TO REPLACE SOMETHING. CALL THE REAPIR DEPARTMENT. I CAN'T! I SAID .I'M GOING TO BE GONE! CONNECT ME!. I HAD NO FURTHER TROUBLE.

*Marty*  
EXCEPT THAT I COULDN'T CONTACT ANYONE IN SULTAN ESTATES. THE ONLY PERSON I COULD GET WAS MARTY, "NEXT" DOOR. YES, SHE'D NOTICED THE ST. BENARDS BUT THEY HADN'T ANY ANY TROUBLE WITH THEM THERE. THEY GETTING RID OF ONE OF THEIR DOGS AND

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HINTS THAT THEY MIGHT BE MOVING..WERE "LOOKING AROUND". NO, THEY NOT GOING TO THE MEETING. I WAS SORRY, FOR MARTY ONE OF THE FEW PRIME MOVERS AT MEETINGS. I GOT AHOLD OF MARVIN, THE CARETAKER AND TALKED LONG TO HIM. NO SATISFACTION THERE. THEY NOT MUCH TO DO WITH BOARD DOINGS.

Call Marvin

I GOT SO MAD AND FRSTRATED THEN, THAT I JUST GOT IN THE CAR AND STARTED DRIVINNG ALL OVER SULTAN ESTATES, NOT ABLE TO FIND ANYBODY HOME. USING ADVICE OF OUR "HUMAN REALTIONS" CLASS TEACHER, I COMPOSED A NOTE TO THE OWNERS OF THE ST. BENARD:" YOUR DOG INVADED MY PROPERTY AND DESTROYED SOMETHING I RATHER VALUE. I WILL BE GONE TWO DAYS. COULD WE DISCUSS THIS LATER? " AND I WROTE MY NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER.AND LEFT IT IN THEIR MAIL BOX.

Town of S.E.

BY THIS TIME CASE WAS HOME, SO I TOOK TIME TO GO IN TO TALK TO HIM. HE WAS MOODY AND UNCOMMUNICATIVE, EYES ON TV. HE SUGGESTED POISON MEAT MIGHT BE A SOLUTION TO DOGS. I TOLD HIM I WAS SO MAD I HAD AN IDEA NOT TO PAY MY DUES, BUT THEN THEY'D KICK ME OUT. THEY CAN'T! HE SAID. YOU OWN THE PROPERTY! HUNH? YOU OWN IT! HE SAID. WE CHATTED A LITTLE BIT. HE HINTED AT PERSONAL FAMILY TROUBLES. BUT,. WHEN I SAID I'D ALMOST CALLED HIM ABOUT THE BOARD, DOG SITUATION, HE OPENED UP A BIT. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO SBOUT THIS CLUB SITUATION? I BEGGED. I QUIT, HE SAID. QUIT MY POSITION ON THE BOARD. WHY? OH.. I DIDN'T LIKE WHAT THEY WERE DOING. AND HE GAVE INTIMATIONS OF CHICANERY, WHICH STARTED ME OFF ON "CLOSED MEETINGNS". FINESILVER! I SNOTTED. OH THEY APPOINTED HIM AFTER I QUIT. APPOINTED? OR ELECTED? I ASKED.(SUPPOSED TO BE ELECTED.) NO ANSWER.

Talk to Case -

I LEFT AND WENT HOME AND BEGAN A FURIOUS PREPAPRATION FOR MY TRIP. I SPENT A LONG TIME TRYING TO DEVISE WAYS TO BARRICADE THE PATH AND PORCHES AGAINST DOGS.NOT MUCH USE: PUT A TANGLE OF CHICKEN WIRE ACROSS PATH, LAWN CHAIRS OVER PORCH ENTRANCES. BY SEVEN I WAS ALL PRIMPED AND CAR AS PACKED AS I COULD. AND EXHAUSTED!

Home-trip prep -

#### THE MOTHERS" DAY TRIP TO SEATTLE

AFTER ALL THAT FRET, I MADE IT ALL RIGHT. ILEFT ABOUT 9:30, IN A POURING RAIN, WHICH LASTED ALL WEEK END AND INTO MONDAY. I HAD NO PROBLEM, EITHER FINDING MY WAY THROUGH ALL THAT MAZE FROM MONROE TO ALKI POINT, OR WITH THE CAR. IN FACT, SUNDAY WAS ONE OF THE NICEST VISITS I'D EVER HAD WITH THE KIDS WHILE THEY WERE AT ALKI POINT.

Trip to Seattle

MONDAY WAS DIFFERENT. THEY ALL LEFT. DENNIS SET OFF FOR COLVILLE IN THAT TROUBLE-SOME CAR,WHICH WORRIED ME VERY MUCH..IF HE'D MAKE IT. THE KIDS <sup>early</sup> SENT TO SCHOOL. ABBIE WENT OFF TO HER JOB AT THE SCHOOL. ALL WAS A FRANTIC, EARLY FLURRY OF ACTIVITY AND LEAVETAKINGS, IN WHICH, GOING OUT TO START LAODING MY CAR, ICAME BACK TO FIND MYSELF LOCKED OUT. SOME MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT LOCKING THE DOORS WITH ABBIE, I GUESS. AFTER A LONG, FUTIL ATTEMPT TO GET IN, COLD, HUNGRY, WET, MAD I FINALLY WENT UP TO THE SHOPPING DITRICT ON HILL., SHOPPPED AN ART STORE UP THERE, TOOK MYSELF TO BREAKFAST AND SET OFF HOME.

Seattle

I GOT HOME AROUND NOON, ON A STILL DISMAL DAY. EVERYTHING WAS AS I'D LEFT IT EXCEPT THERE WERE SIGNS DOGS HAD BEEN ON THE PORCH. MONROE LOOKED DARK, DANK AND DINGY AFTER THE BIG CITY.

Home

I SPENT THE DAY SLAMMING MYSELF BACK INTO MY INTERRUPTED NICHE.

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Call to Abbie  
THAT EVENING: DISASTER STRUCK. Calling Abbie TO SEE IF DENNIS MADE IT. (HE DID) AND MENTIONING BEING LOCKED OUT, ABBIE AND I GOT INTO ANOTHER----MISUNDERSTANDING? MADE ME UNHAPPY.

Marge calls.  
I fell  
AFTER THAT, I WAS SITTING AT TABLE WHEN THE PHONE RANG. JUMPING UP TO ANSWER IT AND MAKING MY WAY THROUGH THAT NARROW PASSAGE BETWEEN STOVE AND STAIRWAY, SOMEHOW I TRIPPED, THOSE BRICKS THERE? AND TRYING TO AVOID HITTING THE STOVEPIPE I TOOK A NASTY FALL AND HEARD SOMETHING GO CRACK! IN MY ANKLE. I LIMPED TO THE PHONE. IT WAS MY FRIEND, MARGE. SHE WAS IN SEATTLE AND MIGHT..SHE WASN'T SURE..BE ABLE TO COME UP THE NEXT DAY, AND HOW DID ONE GET TO MY PLACE? EXCITED ABOUTSEEING HER, I BEGAN THE LONG, COMPLEX DIRECTIONS FOR GETTING TO MY PLACE. WE TALKED LONG AND ALL THE TIME MY ANKLE HURT LIKE HELL, SO THAT THE MINUTE WE HUNG UP, THINGS STILL NOT QUITE SETTLED, I HAD TO ATTEND TO MY FOOT THE BEST I COULD.

hurt foot  
THE BEST THING TO DO WITH INCOMING GUESTS THE FIRST TIME WAS TO GO AND MEET THEM. BUT HOW BAD WAS MY ANKLE? WOULD I BE ABLE TO DRIVE? AND THEN I REALIZED I HAD ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IN THE HOUSE BY WAY OF FOOD OR DRINK FOR A GUEST, AND THAT I HAD THAT FOOL CLASS THE NEXT DAY AND I HAD NO WAY OF REACHING MARGE!

I FELL INTO BED AND TRIED TO SLEEP, HOPING MY ANKLE WOULD BE BETTER? BUT IT HURT SO I COULDN'T SLEEP. I PUT HEAT ON IT NOT KNOWING WHETHER GOOD OR BAD? LATER, ON TWO TRIPS TO BATHROOM, IT SEEMED BETTER. I GRABBED THE "PLUMBER'S HELPER" TO USE FOR A CANE AND FELL INTO BED PUTTING OFF DECISION UNTIL I SAW WHAT THE MORROW WOULD BRING.

Trouble.  
TUESDAY, MAY 12----IT BROUGHT BETTER WEATHER, FOR ONE THING. AND I MANAGED TO SHOWER AND BANDAGE MY FOOT AND HOBBLE AROUND WITH THE CANE MY DAUGHTER HAD GIVEN ME SIX YEARS AGO AS A JOKE WHEN I TURNED SIXTY. THEN A LITTLE SERIES OF TROUBLES STARTED: BIRDS OR MICE HAD GOTTEN INTO BIRD SEED ON PORCH AND MESSED ALL OVER: TELEPHONE MAN CALLED AND WANTED TO COME WORK ON PHONE, SO I DIDN'T KNOW IF MARGE WOULD BE ABLE TO CALL: THEN NEWS ON RADIO SAID ONE OF ACCESS HIGHWAYS <sup>from Seattle</sup> IN ALL BLOCKED.

Marge visit  
BUT IT ALL WORKED OUT. MARGE CALLEDD EARLIER THAN I'D EXPECTED AND I MANAGED TO DRIVE DOWN AND MEET HER IN MONROE. RAN INTO MARGE DELP FROM SULTAN ESTATES WHO CHEERED ME UP BY BEING VERY FRIENDLY. I THOUGHT THEY WERE ALL MAD AT ME. YES, SHE WAS GOING TO THE MEETING. MARGE AND I ATE IN MONROE AND CAME OUT TO MY PLACE, WHERE WE HAD A WONDERFUL VISIT. SHE JUST LOVED THE PLACE, WHICH MADE ME FEEL GOOD. SHE LEFT EARLY AFTERNOON AND I MISSED HER, <sup>after</sup>

Tel. in an-  
THE TELEPHONE MAN HAD COME WHILE SHE WAS HERE AND THERE WAS A WIRE LOOSE! I HAD A GOOD DINNER AND NAP AND ALL WAS WELL UNTIL LATE IN EVENING WHEN FOOT FLARED UP WITH EXCRUCIATING PAIN AND LOOKED TERRIBLE! I BEDDED DOWNWONDERING HOW IN WORLD I WAS GOING TO FIND A DOCTOR.

WED. MAY 13-----THO MY FOOT BETTER? I SPENT ALL\*MORNING ON THE WOES OF IT: WHAT BEING INCAPACITATED WOULD MEAN, NOT ONLY PHYSICALLY BUT FINANCIALLY AND ALL. I SCRAMBLED THRU DOC BOOKS AND TELEPHONE BOOK SOLUTION SEEKING. DESPARATE.

Sr. Center gal talk-  
NIGH NOON THE PHONE RANG AND IT WAS LEE, MY SR. CENTER HELPER CONTACT. I TOLD HER MY WOES AMIDST NICE CHAT AND JOKES. SHE SAID TO CALL BETTY KRUG AND START LOOKING FOR A DOCTOR. UNABLE TO GET BETTY, I LEFT A CALL AND SPENT NEXT THREE HOURS IN INSANTTY-PRODUCING HOBBLE OUT TO MATL BOX, BATTLING A BANK BALANCE

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THAT WOULDN'T: RAGING THRU BALES OF MEDICAL INSURANCE GOBBELDY GOOK PAPERS: AND WHAT OTHER LITTLE CHORES I COULD ACCOMPLISH..IF! LIKE GETTING MOTHER'S PEARLS READY TO SEND TO GRANDAUGHTER, CARRIE.

*Wait*  
THEN AN EMPTY, ENDLESS AFTERNOON WAITING FOR THE PHONE TO RING, LEANING ON THE PORCH RAILING CONTEMPLATING THE SIGNS OF SPRING AND THOUGHTS OF THAT LITTLE, TINY LEE PERSON DIGGING HER OWN SEPTIC TANK FIELD ALL BY HERSELF. AND CONTEMPLATING MY ANKLE MORE THAN "MY NAVEL"?

*Betty calls*  
IT WAS ALMOST FIVE BEFORE BETTY CALLED. SHE WAS VERY NICE AND CHATTY AND ENCOURAGING. I KNOW YOUR'E A VERY INDEPENDENT GAL, BUT YOU CALL ME ANY TIME YOU NEED HELP! SHE SAID. I AM! I AM! I LAUGHED. I THINK I CAN HELP YOU WITH MEDICAL PAPERS AND FORMS. NOW YOU GO SEE A DOCTOR! I PROMISE! I LAUGHED. FOR SHE WAS FUN TO TALK TO.

*lol*  
I SPENT THE EVENING, AS SUSUAL, SOAKING MY FOOT, EATING DINNER, KNITTING WHILE LISTENING TO RADIO AND THINKING ABOUT HOW STUNNED AND SHOCKED I WAS THAT DENNIS AND ABBIE HAD LET ALL ED'S LIFETIME OF IRREPLACEABLE MUSICAL CREATIONS GO IN A "GARAGE SALE". "WE GOT TEN CENTS APIECE FOR THOSE RECORDINGS!" THEY CROWED. OOOH, I SAID, WELL.. NEVER MIND." ALL THOSE YEARS I'D TRIED TO HANG ON TO ALL THAT STUFF, TO, AT LEAST, PRESERVE HIS TALENT! FOR HIS GRANDKIDS: THE ONLY PROOF OF. "YOU SOLD A HERITAGE!" I CRIED. AND GAVE UP ON TRYING TO TELL THE STORY OF HOW WE "TALENTED PRODIGIES" FEEL ABOUT BEING PLAIGARIZED AND EXPLOITED, AND "SOLD FOR TEN CENTS" COMES OUR DYING TIME.

BUT I SLEPT VERY WELL AND HAD NICE DREAMS.

*Doc. Appt.*  
THURS. MAY 14--WAKE TO DISMAL RAIN. HURT FOOT SO MUCH BETTER I ALMOST DON'T CALL DOCTOR, BUT FINALLY DO. I PICK ONE AT RANDOM FROM BOOK, A DR. DONKER (SILLY NAME!) AND FEND OFF APPOINTMENT TILL THE NEXT AFTERNOON, SO AS TO GET SOME PRIMPING AND PAPER WORK DONE. CALL AND LEAVE MESSAGE FOR BETTY TO CALL ME, SHE UNAVAILABLE. AND THEN I BEGIN ON THOSE CHORES: STRUGGLE OUT FOR MAIL IN MUD AND DELUGE: ANOTHER BATTLE OUT THE TRAIL WITH THE CLUMSY, BROKEN, BAGGED GARBAGE. I WORK ON FORMS AND PAPERS I'LL NEED, WASH OUT A BLOUSE TO WEAR, GET GROOMING DONE.

*Betty calls*  
IT IS AFTER TWO B EFORE BETTY CALLS AND THE SUN HAS COME OUT AND ALL SEEMS SO WELL THAT I WONDER IF I CAN DARE TO MANAGE A TRIP TO SULTAN TO STORE FOR NEEDED FOOD AND TO MAIL THE PEARLS. DECIDE TO: GET READY. THERE IS A CALP OF THUNDER, BUT I GO.

*Sultan*  
ON WAY I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT DOG IS NOW ON A LONG CHAIN. IT SETTLED WITHOUT MY GETTING INTO A FIGHT? THE MAILING OF THE PEARLS TURNED OUT TO BE A VERY MELODRMATIC ERRAND. I GOT CAUGHT IN A FRIGHTENING SUDDEN ELECTRICAL STORM, THUNDER ROLLING. BUT I GOT THEM IN THE MAIL.

← *insert #1.* →

I HAD A WEEPY, SENTIMENTAL EVENING AS THE LIGHTS FLICKERED AND THE STORM GROWLED AWAY IN THE DISTANCE.

FRIDAY, MAY 15--DAY OF DOCTOR APPOINTMENT. WOKE TO WEATHER STILL UNSETTLED AND THREATENING. AFTER A BIT OF FUTURE FRETTEING, I SIGHED AND BEGAN TO GET READY TO GO, FOOLED BY SIGNS OF SPRING..A BIT O" SUN..BIRDSONG..MOUSE TURDS ALL OVER..TO DRESS FOR IT. MAIL BROUGHT MORE INSURANCE FORMS THAT SIDE-TRACKED ME INTO ANOTHER LONG PAPER HASSLE.

*Pearls to my Granddaughter*  
WWE KNOW HOW I HAVE SWEATED THIS CARRIE THING. YEARS.  
AND IT TOOK ME A VERY LONG TIME TO WRAP THOSE PEARLS.  
SO. CAME OUT FOR A MOMENT LIKE THAT AND, AS SAID,  
I'D DECIDED TO RUN DOWN TO SULTAN AND MAIL THEM.

THEN CRASH! CRACK! THE VOICE OF GOD AS I GRABBED  
MY PURSE READY TO LEAVE. SHOULD I? DID I DARE?  
RISK GETTING CAUGHT OUT IN CAR IN ELECTRICAL  
STORM? I DARED. MAYBE I COULD BEAT IT? HOME?...  
I WENT OUT.. FEELING LITHE AND GOOD, SO HAPPY @  
HOW GOOD MY FOOT IS.. AND CAR STARTED RIGHT UP.

THE SKY WAS WILD! TO EAST, AND MTS. JUST MOUNTAIN  
FOGS, ETC..NOT TOO BAD, BUT MY GAWD! TO WEST THE  
BIGGEST NASTIEST BLACK CLOUD I EVER SAW ADVANCING.  
JUST ONE BIG BLACK BALL. AND THE STRANGEST SHAPE!  
LIKE GIGANTIC PAWS CREEPING ACROSS THE LAND.  
SCARY. BUT I MADE IT TO THE LITTLE PO ALL RIGHT.  
AND KIDDED THE LONE MAN IN THERE

@ WHAT WAS COMING. I THE ONLY CUSTOMER..  
I TOLD HIM WHAT I WANTED AND HE HAD ALL  
THESE SERVICES TO OFFER. HE SAID INSURED  
WOULD FURNISH ME A REPLY, TOO. BUT,  
FEELING LIKE A FOOL (THE SITUATION)  
WILL IT BE RECEIVED BY JUST ANYBODY?  
OH YES. BUT I WANT JUST THIS ONE PERSON  
TO GET IT. THEN... YOU WANT "RESTRICTED DELIVERY"  
HE SAID. NEVER HEARD OF THAT. JUST THIS PERSON  
CAN GET IT. I THINK IT RATHER ENJOYED IT. UNUSUAL.  
AND IT WAS A PRETTY EXCITING LOOKING PACKAGE BY  
THE TIME HE STAMPED IT ALL OVER.. WITH "RESTRICTED  
DELIVERY" AND INSURED FOR \$50, ETC. ETC. ETC.  
AND I FELT SMUGH AND GLEEFUL. BETTER THAN "CERTIFIED"  
FOR WHOEVER CAME TO DOOR, HE EXPLAINED TO ME, COULD  
NOT HAVE IT. ONLY CARRIE, HE SAID. (THAT'LL MAKE  
EM MADDER THAN EVER! HA HA.) POINTED OUT HOW  
UNREASONABLE THEY ARE BEING?... ANYWAY. IT WAS  
FUN. BET THAT WILL BE A WELL TALKED ABOUT  
PACKAGE! COST ME THREE DOLLARS, BUT I DIDN'T CARE  
SO, THAT DONE. MY "ARROW INTO THE AIR"....  
IT WAS A DRAMATIC MOMENT TO ME....

*Thurs. May 14, 1981*  
*Visit #1*

Flowers - May 14 (3)

2:15 pm

~~on the phone with Betty - she says she's  
 + met the ... I should  
 Kirt! that thing is come ... up ...  
 in 2 years, I should work! However - as I  
 that: ... + I hope  
 my foot won't hurt you then that! ...  
 Hey! Did you get ... + ... Well anyway  
 - all that Phone - Betty - read my mind?  
 + I look up + ... So - I'm ...  
 here trying to ... to get store +  
 mail ... - What! ... - Oh  
 oh - Mr. Thunder. Shut. (I thanked you, God -  
 Now Stop that!) -~~

BACK. LIGHTS ARE VERY DIM, HERE. AWHILE AGO THEY  
 WERE FLICKERING...MEN..DAM FOOLS DOWN THERE WORKING  
 ON ELECTRICITY ON POLES... SULAT SULTAN WASY...

OK. ON ...  
 THEREUPON ... ON WAY OUT ... IS ON  
 LONG CHAIN ... WELL, THINGS CAN BE SETTLED  
 WITHOUT VICIOUS WORDS, CHARLIE?

Flowers May 14 1964

THE PEARLS..PASSED ON...WITH THE VOICE OF GOD!  
SPEAKING? ..OR JULIE?...

OUT.BAKERY THERE. THAT CLOUD LOOKED STILL MORE  
OMINOUS. DECIDED I'D TREAT MYSELF... ANKLE ET  
AL... JUST..FUN. THAT CUTE LIL BAKERY ..BUCOLIC?  
I MEAN.. BIG FAT SMOOT H SKINNED BLONDE..OH...  
I'LL HAVE UMM ONE OF THOSE.. (DIDN'T WANT...BUT  
SOMEONE HAD OR SOMEWHERE "CREAM PUFF" MENATIONED)  
AND.. OH. IT ALL LOOKED SO GOOD! AND "HOME MADE".  
ONE OF THOSE FRENCH ROLLS.. ALL CRUSTY AND BROWN.  
AND I LAUGHED. OVER THE DOOR INTO BAKERY WHERE I  
COULD SEE THE SKINNY LITTLE BAKER TAKING THINGS  
OUT OF HIS OVEN WAS A SIGN..."GALLOPING GORDON,  
CHIEF BAKER". I MEAN.. LIKE THE P.O. ONE DOESN'T  
GET TO SEE INTO THE BACK ROOMS INTO THE CITY!  
AND SEETHEM ACTUALLY DOING THEIR WORK! THAT'S  
MY BROTHER'S NAME, I SAID... GORDON. SHE DIDN'T  
CARE SHE WAS AS FAT AND SULKY AS A....

BUT I WAS DELIGHTED.. AT THE "ROMANCE"? OF I T  
ALL?...AND LIMPED OUT TO CAR.. EYEING THAT OMINOUS  
CLOUD...IT WAS HERE AND ALL ALONG THE ROAD I SAW  
THESE GUYS..SOME PUD AND SOME SOME OTHER COMPANY  
THOSE GUYS ALL UP THERE ON THOSE POLES WORKING  
WITH ELECTRICTY IN THIS ONCOMING STORM. GEEZ!

WILL I MAKE IT? BEFORE THAT STORM HITS?..IT WAS  
NOW FRIGHTENING LOOKING: BY THE TIME I GOT TO  
THE MARKET... THE GRASS AND TREES WERE BEGINNING  
TO BOW IN A STRONG INVISIBLE WIND. AND THOSE CLOUDS  
WERE SO LOW! JUST THAT ONE BIG ONE... RIGHT OVER  
US... THE FINGERS OF IT REACHING AHEAD... LIKE  
RIGHT OVERHEAD..SPPEDING SPEEDING... I REALLY  
WAS KIND OF FRIGHTENED.. (TORNADO? OR LIKE?)..  
IT WAS SO LOCALIZED!

I WENT INTO L.S. THOSE TWO FUN GALS LAAODING  
SHELVES. I TOLDTHEM ABOUT CLOUD AND THEY BOTH  
WENT TO LOOK... AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU AREN'T STILL  
IN SULTAN? I SAID...(IMMINENT FLOOD?).. YEAH!  
AND WE LAUGHED AND JOKED. LAZILY. I FINALLY  
BOUGHT TWO SMALL BOTTLES OF PINK CHABLIS.. THEY  
HAD NOTHING ELSE IN SMALL BOTTLES...AND...

SUBHANGI RAEND OROPS THE DOOR... IT HIT. THEFIRST

JUST AS I WENT OUT THE DOOR , IT HIT.. THE FIRST SMASHING RAINDROPS. HERE IT COMES! I YELLED TO THE SKINNY OLD LADY PARKED NEXT TO ME! YEAH! SHE CRIES... AND I CONCEDED AND LET HER AND HER BIG OLD CAR GET OUT FIRST. AND THEN SMASH! THE BLINDING DELUGE... I PATTED MY CAR AND BEGAN TO RACE UP THE HILL (COME ON, BABY, WE'VE DONE IT BEFORE! BUT IT WAS ONE OF THOSE! THE HAIL! BOMBARDMENT. COULDN'T SEE A THING! WAS THINKING AND SORT OF "TALKING TO GOD: WELL, GEE! YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO MELODRAMATIC ABOUT IT! WAS JUST "MAILING THE PEARLS"..AND..WILL I GET HOME BEFORE..? OR... JUST AFTER THAT THOUGHT.. A BLINDING FLASH... SO THAT I JUMPED! AND THEN.. THUNDER RIGHT ON TOP OF IT! GEEZ! ALL THOUGHTS OF "SAFETY IN THUNDER STORM" FLED MY MIND.. I JUST DROVE LIKE HELL, BLIND, WHAT ELSE COULD! I DO? (TALL TREES. RADIO ANTENNAE.. WOULD I MAKE IT?)...(HOPE THERE'S NOT ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE!).....IT WAS AWESOME, CSCARY.. EXCITING. AS I CROSSED THE CLEAR PLACES I COULD SEE THE EDGES OF THAT MONSTER. IT WAS ONLY JUST OVER US! REALLY. BUT ..IT SEEMED TO BE..FLATTENING?... I DROVE WITHNO OTHER THOUGHTS THAN TRYING TO MAKE IT... AND SOME KIND OF JOKING WITHGOD. AS SAID. GEE! YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO MELO DRAMATIC! GOT UNDEER THE TRESS, ALMOST THERE... NO.. A WAYS TO GO YET.. WHEN AGAIN!FLASH! THUNDER! OH NO.. THE POWER LINE... I GUNNED MY CAR.. AND ..PRAYED?... WHEW. I SKIDDED INTO 105TH. CASE WAS STANDING ON HIS PORCH..LOOKING SMUGLY AROUND...(WHEN I'D GONE DOWN.. HE'D BEEN WORKING ON STILL!ON THAT RED CAR. I'D TOOTLED MY HORN... HELOOKED UP.. I WAVED.HE WORKED ON.) NOW.. I ROLLED MY WINDOW DOWN...DIDN'T QUITE MAKE IT! I YELLED! AIN'T IT AWFUL? HE GRINNED. (GRRR.)... (SSTORM B VOYEUR?)...GRRR.

I RACED INTO MY PARKING PLACE. WHEW. AND THEN... ALL WET ANYWAY... (CAR WILL BE FLOODED IN FRONT SEAT IF I DON'T PUT SOMEPLASTIC OVER) I STRUGGLED WITH THAT....I TIPPY TOESD.. (LIMP FORGOTTEN) THROUGH THE LAKES AND PUDDLES TO CABIN.

*In. after slipping + sliding in mud + puddles to get some firewood. I hit of what I'd heard on radio "the unexpected cadence" as the storm rumbled and growled away*

*after I got in. threw hell + high water!*

May - 1981

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I WENT TO MY DOCTOR APPOINTMENT.

(( SEE INSERT. I'M NOT GOING TO WRITE ALL THAT AGAIN!))

Insert #2

I FOUND OUT I HAD A BROKEN FOOT AND WOULD BE LAID UP AND ON CRUTCHES FOR THREE WEEKS, AT LEAST.

I GOT HOME. MY NOTE ABOUT THE DOG WAS GONE FROM THE NEIGHBORS' MAILBOX. ON ONE OF TRIPS OUT TO CAR, THE DAY HAVING TURNED NICE AND SUNNY, MARTY WAS OUT WASHING A NEW RED CAR, AND THE WHOLE BOB ALLEN FAMILY, OWNERS OF THE ST. BERNARD DOGS, WERE STROLLING UP THE STREET, TWO LITTLE KIDS, ALL DRESSED UP, DOGS AND ALL. I ASSUMED IT WAS TO BE THE DOG CONFRONTATION AND WENT OUT TO MEET THEM. "DID YOU GET MY NOTE?" "NO. MAYBE MY WIFE DID". SHE COMES. "NO". WE CHAT. I TRY TO EXPLAIN ABOUT THE CLUB. "WE GOT RENTED FROM" HE SHOWS ME A REALTOR CARD. "NOBODY SAID ANYTHING". (WIERD) I ASK MARTY IF SHE'S GOING TO THE MEETING? "NO. DON'T CARE". MM. I MADE EXCUSES AND WENT BACK INTO CABIN.

THAT EVENING: I GOT ON PHONE. TRIED TO CALL OTHER SULTAN ESTATES PEOPLE. COULD GET NO ONE. CALLED SEATTLE. GOT ABBIE FIRST. "BROKEN FOOT" "OH, BUT YOU GOT HOME OK?" "YES." SHE PUT DENNIS ON. I TOLD HIM, BRIEFLY, ABOUT MARGE AND THE PHONE CALL AND FOOT. HE SOUNDED WEARY AND DISCOURAGED, ABOUT HIS COLVILLE, HOUSE, JOB PROSPECTS. I OFFERED TO LET HIM OUT OF THE PENALTY. "NO, NO" HE WANTED TO DO IT. "IF YOU STILL HAVE THE MONEY. WE'LL. I'LL CALL YOU AND LET YOU KNOW WHEN TO ORDER THE LUMBER." WE HUNG UP.

I BEGAN TO SUFFER AFTERSHOCKS. FELL INTO BED TO REST UP FOR THE NEXT BATTLE.

SATURDAY, MAY 16-- I WOKE UP LATE, WITH MY FOOT HURTING, AND IT ALL BEGAN TO HIT ME, WHAT THIS WAS GOING TO MEAN, AND ECHOES FROM THE DAY BEFORE. THAT DOCTOR, I WAS HURT THAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO SEE ME AGAIN..NO FOLLOW UP. NEVER HAD HEARD OF SUCH A THING BEFORE.. AND ALL THAT SWEATING MY INSURANCE, UNABLE TO COLLECT: HE WOULDN'T BACK ME UP ON. HE SAID I HAD A CHIPPED BONE. I DRAGGED OUT ALL MY DOC BOOKS, BUT UNABLE TO FIND ANY HELP IN. HE WRAPPED MY FOOT SO THOROUGHLY I CAN'T EVEN SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE. AND I CAN'T TAKE A SHOWER: AND I MUST STAY OFF IT FOR THREE WEEKS. THEY SAID MY BLOOD PRESSURE WAS NORMAL. IT SURE DIDN'T FEEL LIKE IT WHEN I GOT OUT OF THERE!

MY GOING TO GET THE CRUTCHES, AS ORDERED. AND THEN HAVING HIS NURSE COME IN JUST AS I WAS GOING TO CHEAT. I WAITED TILL SHE LEFT AND THEN MADE THEM GIVE ME THOSE "WALKER CANES" INSTEAD OF CRUTCHES. ALL THAT CARRYING AND TRAIL AND LOFT AND SOM ON, I JUST DIDN'T SEE HOW I COULDMANNGE ON CRUTCHES. EVEN SO, HOBBLING AROUND WITH ONE CANE, I WAS SORE ALL OVER, TRYING TO USE NEW MUSCLES. IT WAS ALL LIKE LEARNING TO WALK ALL OVER AGAIN.

I BEGAN TO FEEL VERY SORRY FOR MYSELF. I SURE COULD HAVE USED SOME HELP LUGGING ALL THOSE GROCERIES IN ON THAT TRAIL, HOBBLING WITH ONLY ONE HAND TO SUE. AND NOBODY CALLING ME TO SEE HOW I CAME OUT AT THE DOCTOR'S. DESPAIR SETTLED OVER ME LIKE A BLACK CLOAK.

BUT I WAS GLAD I HAD THAT MEETING TO GO TO THE NEXT DAY: AT LEAST I COULD GET OUT, BE AROUND PEOPLE: TAKE MY MIND OFF IT ALL. I THOUGHT ABOUT MY TALKS WITH BOB ALLEN AND MARTY. BOB HAD SAID THAT TRAILER DOWN THERE WAS A MESS! HE'D HAD TO FIX THE PLUMBING, REPAIR MOUSE DAMAGE, THINGS LIKE THAT. AND THAT THAT OLD JALOPY LEFT THERE IS NOT GONE, JUST ON BACK OF LOT. HE SAID HE WAS IN TRAINING TO WORK AS PRISONER REHABILITATION AT THE REFORMATORY, WHY THEY JUST RENTING.

5:18pm

The Foot Story. Fri. May 15, 1981

SO. I PEE AT BIX'S. GET IN CAR, WHICH IS NOW HOT! IN SUN. THE DAY TURNED OUT BEAUTIFUL! NEVER DID STORM OR CLOUD UP. DIDN'T NEED MY RAIN JACKETS AT ALL, AND I HEAD BACK FOR THAT CLINIC. NOT AT ALL SHOOK. QUITE CALM. I HAD PRAYED HARD, OF COURSE, AND RUBBED POOR ST. A TO A SHINE. NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. I PARKED AND SAT OUTSIDE THAT CHARMING LITTLE CLINIC ALL SHROUDED IN SHRUBS AND STONEMWORK ON FRONT AND LISTENED TONEWS, BEING A BITEARLY. THEN, IT SO WARM AND NICE, TOOK MY JACKET OFF AND WENT IN.

IT WAS AS CHARMING INSIDE AS OUT. AND I HAD NO FEAR. I HAD STUDDIED UP ON THAT INSURANCE AND FOUND OUT THAT COL PENN WOULD PAY \$700 D FOR A FRACTURE...ACCIDENT.. (IF I COULD PROVE THAT. ) AND THE \$25 FOR AN X RAY. NO PROBLEMS. I PRESENTED MYSELF AT DESK AND GALS, OF COURSE, GAVE ME MANY FORMS TO FILL OUT. I WAS PREPARED AND HAD NO TORUBLE WRITING. RETURNED THEM. WAS HANDED A PRINTED SHEET: "WE DO NOTHING ABOUT YOUR INSURANCE: THAT'S UP TO YOU. DOCS DON'T NEED TO SIGN ANYMORE , ETC. ETC.". A BIT BRUTAL, BUT I UNDERSTOOD, HAVING HEARD FROM JULIE, ETC. WHAT A HASSLE IT WAS FOR THE DOCS."W WHAT DID BOT BOTHER ME WAS THE PART THAT SAID THEY WANTED THIER \$\$ RIGHT NOW. AH WELL.

SO I WAITED. AND WAITED. GFINALLY MY NAME WAS CALLED, LORNA? BY A FLOOZY LOOKING "NURSE". YOUNG GAL, NICE, BUT AFRO BLONDE BLEACHED HAIR, ETC. INTO THE LIL HALLS. STOP. I'LL WEIGH YOUINOW. I WATCHED. 143 $\frac{1}{2}$  SHE SAID. BUT JUST ATE, I QUIPPED. (I WAS FULL OF FUNNIES TO PULL.)

IN HERE. THE USUAL CUBLICLE WITHTHAT DREAD TABLE. NOW, I'LL TAKE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE. I'M HERE ABOUT MY FOOT, I SAID. OH. ARE! YOU?..SHE SEEMED PUZZLED.. AND I SHOWED HER MY FOOT WITHITS DENNIS ELASTIC BANDAGE ON. SHOULD I TAKE THIS OFF? OH MY! SHE CRIED... IT..LOOKS. AWFUL! SO PURPLE! MY FEET ARE ALWAYS PURPLE ! I SAID.. YOUR OTHER FOOT.. OH WELL.. I'LL TAKE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE ANYWAY. HAVE YOU ANY INJURIES ON THIS ARM???? OH.. I SHOWED HER (ONE OF MY FUNNIES.) HOW DO YOU BANDAGE AND ELBOW?....(MY FOOT FELT FINE. I! FELT FINE.)

SHE TREATED ME LIKE I WAS NINETL Y YEARS OLD...YOU SURE? YOU CANANON ME. ETC. THAT TABLE? HERE. LET ME HELP

Insert #2

Fri. May 15, (2)

8:15 am Hey! a spot of sun! ~~9:30 am~~ Forget it!

GARBAGE OUT. Sun + loud song - so cheering  
I dressed for "sunny show up", Ho. Before I  
finish in covering clo + clouds have spread in  
from West - + - my clothes all wrong. This  
weather - impossible to plan 5 min. ahead!  
So, am showered, hair cool, dressed (all  
wrong) - Now, for face + then - oh I wish I  
could write.

Mail. Mail. Weather. Kee-riper! Radio  
renewed on: nice Sat. will be showers. - So - I  
re-dress for rain. Blue sky + white clouds to  
West. Sun out again. Shirt. Foot - good - Mail.

How do they know? Pharmacy Catalog - just  
looking in these makes me feel young + healthy!  
New AARP medical card. Copies - I no have  
to go up + go thru these papers. Forget I had  
all these. Maybe I can collect from - one? -

Oh - more nice. Ten do all over - sink  
head to bang - twice - last night  
11:21 am. Bright sun. Crisis.

Hey - going thru all these medical papers -  
my history. 11:53 am. Think I'd better get  
going - Insurance - yes, I could clean up  
on that Cal. Pen. accident - like 1000  
for a broken ankle - but - I don't trust 'em

Sun's shining - + I don't know where place  
is - + - had better eat - some place -  
first? - "Pie?" - "Dinner" - where I'm going.  
All these papers - oh I hafta waste time  
on them? - not finished - mess - but  
that's vain - I feel better - my medical history -

Wally

4:54 p.m. Now can I cry? -

Will tel. later

2 -

\* SHE TOOK MY BLOOD PRESSURE.. (OOCH!) I WANTED TO TELL HER ABOUT BOB'S THING @ PRESSURES, BUT...SOMEHOW. I FELT ..WASTE OF TIEM. 144Xover 90 SHE SAID. IS THAT GOOD OR BAD? I SAKED. NO ANSWER. NOW..I WANT YOU TO ELEVATE THAT FOOT..??? NO HERE.. YOU SURE YOU'RE OK? WHY YES! I SAID.. AND PUT MY FOOT ON THE EXTENSION SHE PUT OUT...THE DOCTOR WILL BE IN RIGHT AWAY! WHICH ONE? ASKED. DR. DONKERS. (SIC)

SO. OF COURSE, I WAITED AND WAITED AND WAITED! PERCHED UP THERE ON THAT FOOL TABLE.. EVERYTHING.. MAGAZINE.. PURSE.. PENCIL...PAPER JUST OUT OF REACH.MADDENING.

AT LAST, THE CLICK AT THE DOOR. STARTS TO OPEN..THEN SHUTS AND THEN... HERE COMES THIS TALL, DARK, YOUNG, GOOD LOOKING GUY WITH MUSTACHE. I LIKED HIM. BUT HE WAS SO DAMNED BUSY! I COULDN'T GET THRU TO HIM!

WELL. LET'S SEE. YOU ARE..? LORNA. IS AID. HE WROTE ON HIS PAD.. AND YOU..?MY FOOT. AND..?(HERE WE GO!) YOU HAVE HAD.. HOW MANY HOSPITALIZATIONS?... UH.. (DAMMIT!)...OH.. AND WHO SENT YOU? (GEEZ I'D JUST WRITTEN ALL THAT OUT IN THE OFFICE...)...I TRIED TO EXPLAIN OR ASK ABOUT THE DENNIS BANDAGE..OH THSOE..HE SAID..NO GOOD.NOW.. Y SMOKE? (HERE WE GO!) YES. TRYING. HOW MUCH? OH PACK OR MORE A DAY...(HERE WE GO..THE NEXT QUESTION WILL BE: DO YOU DRINK? HOW MUCH? WERE YOU DRUNK AT THE TIME?) BUT... NO.... I TRY TO HELP MY PATIENTS QUIT SMOKING, BUT SEEMS YOU ARE NOT AT THE RIGHT TIME.. SEEMS TO HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLES.. (DON'T KNOW WHAT I GOT THRU TO HIM, BUT I BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF.)....I'D BLATHERED ON @ HOW I NEED! THIS FOOT... TRAIL..CABIN..STAIRS.. ETC. NEIGHBORS (NO GOOD.) ETC. (((MMM. REPLAY HERE? I JUST GOT UP..CAUGHT MY FOOTON TABLE LEG..MMM..))....

WELL HOW'S YOUR INSURANCE. I TOLD HIM. WHY I DELAYED.. CHECKING IT OUT.MMM.FOUR DAYS HE SAID. COUNTING ON HIS FINGERS. IT SHOULD! BE BETTER BY NOW... (YIPES!) THE GAL HAD JUST TOLD ME I'D DONE ALL THE RIGHT THINGS.).

WELL. OF COURSE I SEE WHY YOU'D WANT TO SAVE YOUR ANCE.. X. RAY ETC. FOR (MORE DIRE HAPPENINGS.) YES... NOW. I'D ADVISE AND X RAY..BUT IT WILL COST \$30.

SO'K I SAID. I CAN PAY.. BUT.. YOU CAN MAKE IT IN TWO  
PAYMENTS HE SAID. OH. WELL. YES. I'D LIKE AN X RAY. (I  
NEED THAT FOOT! WANT TO KNOW!)... WELL THEN..THE GAL WILL  
BE RIGHT IN...

MORE INTERMINABLE WAITS. AND THEN.. LED TO THE  
"LEAD TABLE" ROOM. BE JUST A MINUTE. WELL, I  
HOPE! I SAID.. WHICH WAY DO YOU WANT ME TO FACE?  
OH.. OK. ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT? WHY YES!  
I SAID. (WHAT IS! THIS?)....

FINALLY! A DEFORMED LOOKING GALCAME IN. AND I TRIED  
TO JOSH HER. GAVE UP. WE GOT THE PIX TAKEN.  
BACK TO THEPAD ROOM AND.. MORE WAITS!  
AND FINALLY! THE DOC CAME IN WITH X RAYS STILL  
DRIPPING...(IT'S ALWAYS FASCINATING TO SEE YOUR  
OWN INSIDES!) NOW..YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE IT...  
BUT HERE.. PIECE OF BONE BROKEN OFF...OH?...NOW..  
HE "PALPITATED" MY FOOT.. RELAX. I CAN'T(! I'M  
SCARED!,,... WELL.. YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO HAVE  
A CAST.I GROANED. HOW LONG? OH.. THREE WEEKS...  
(MIDDLE OF JUNE) AND CRUTCHES.. WHY? HE WAS VERY  
KIND AND GENTLE BUT SEEMED... "OTHERWHEARE"...  
DO YOU HAVE ANYBODY OYOU CAN MOVE IN WITH? PR  
CAN TAKE CARE OF YOU? NO.YOU DID THIS BEFORE? YES.  
THROW AWAY THOSE SHOES. DO YOU HAVE BOOTS? YES.  
AND THEN I FOUND OUT HE MEANT LACE UP ONES...NO..  
CRTUCHES..I CAN'T I WAILED..PATH..MUD..SLIPPERY..  
WELL THERE'S A LACE UP "BOOT" HE WROTE ONE OF THOSE  
DOC. SCRIBBLESX. WHERE? SNOHOMISH. I GROANED.  
YOU REALIZE, I SAID, THAT I!WILL HAVE TO DRIVE?..  
WELL I'M THINKING, HE SAID, AS I WAITED.. WELL  
WAHT'S THE PURPOSE? I DEA? I TRIED.. TO KEEP YOUR  
WEIGHT OFF THAT FOOT! WHY? BECAUSE IT WON'T HEAL.  
OH. AND THEN HE DISAPPEARED. AND I WAITED.. AND  
SNUCK A LOOK AT THAT X RAY.MMM....MMMM. I'LL BE  
BACK.HE SAID...AND AFER AN EON..HE DID COME BACK.  
AND BEGAN TO STRIP OFF LONG PIECES OF ADHESIVE  
TAPE AND WRAP THEM @ MY FOOT.WHAT ARE YOU DOING?  
WELL I'M TRYING TO MKAE SOMESUPPORT! FORIT...

I TRIED TO KID HIM. FIND OUT.. WELLL. IF I TAKE  
A SHOWER? OR.. IT'LL SMELL. YOU CAN'T ..HE SAID.  
WELLHOW LONG? FOUR DAYS. AND THEN...? OH YOU TAKE



OK. WHERE WAS I IN MY FOOT REPORT?... WELL I WENT BACK DOWNTOWN. SPOSED TO GO GET CRTUTCHES AT DRUG STORE. BUT.. (WHILE I'M HERE.) ..I PARKED AND WENT INTO JEWELERS. REMEMBER ME? SHE DIDN'T BUT PRETENDED TO.. THE PEARELS?...OH.. VERY NICE PEARLS... SYNTHETIC.. OYSTERS? NO NO.. BUT... WELL GOT THEM OFF, I SAID.. NOW..THIS WATCH: WON'T RUN...JEALOUS OF.. CALCULATOR? I SHOWED. GOT WATER IN IT. RUSTED SHE SAID. NO WAY TO FIX. BUT..I HAVEN'T WORN IT!...I LIMPED OFF. DOC. BROKEN ANKLE I SAID.. WELL YOU! HAVE A NICE DAY!

WENT AND GOT GAS. (WHILE I'M HERE.).. HOW ARE'. YOU? DUN'T ESK! I SAID... NAND TOLD. HMMM.. GUY OVER THERE. FAT ONE..STEPPED OFF HIS PORCH HIT A ROCK.. REALLY! BROKEN BONES... HI! MY LIL..KID... HOW YA DOIN? DON'T ASK HER..GUY LAUGHS...

I GO TO "MALL". (MY FOOT GEELS FINE!)..GO ..BF. STORE.. (STOCK U P ON THINGS TO BE INVALID WITH) NOTHING... BUY RED PEN AND LEAVE...

LIQUOR STORE. NE, BUT NOT SHE. NEW GAL. (TROUBLE TALK THAT STOPS AS I WALK IN)...HOW ARE YOU? DUN' ESK. SAY..WHERE'S YOUR GIRL? (WIFE?) HOSPITAL... CHEST PAINS..HEART ATTACK? NO..THAT OK.. WAITING TO SEE...(GEEZ!)

I GO DRUG STORE. ASK ABOUT CRUTCHES.. OH.. \$10 DEPOSIT.. \$3 FOR A WEKK. ... DUMB GALGETS SOME BEATUP OLD CRUTCHES OUT. (NO WAY').. I EWXCUSE MYSELF AND LEAVE....

SAFEWAY...I'M DOIN FINE. FOOT DOESN'T HURT..OR ANYTHING.. BUT... (STOCK UP FOR LONG INVALID BIT.) UP TO THIS TIME I AM BEING FUNNY.. BUT...HEART IS BEGINNING WEEPY FEELING..I STOCK UP.. WRITE A CHECK....? MAN ON CRUTCHES.. ARM TYPE...HMM.. I TELLGAL.. BROKEN ANKLE..KID HELP ME?.... LOOK UP.MARIE! DOWNTHERE. VIS A VIS: SHE LOOKS RIGHT AT ME. (WAVE? NO.) I DROP MY EYES..SHE GOES ON....

I GET KID TO BUY GROCERIES IN CAR.. (BE WARNED! I'M TELLING EVERYBODY! SHAVE YOUR LEGS!

4

BEFORE YOU GO TO DOC. WITH "BROKEN ANKLE"...  
ALL FUN.. BUT I FEEL MY FACE GETTING A BIT GRIM.  
AND SOME "TINY TEARS" BEGINNING IN MY TUMMY.

SO. I CASH A CHECK FOR "SUPPLIES".. MAY I? \$5?  
YEAH.. I WRITE A CHECK (THERE GOES THE PANELING!)  
AND I LIMP BACK TO DRUG STORE.(NOT REALLY.. MY  
FOOT FEELS FIN E!) OK.. WHERE ARE THE CRUTCHES?..  
SAY. DO YOU HAVE..THOSE ARM TYPE ONES? OH.. MUCH..  
PALAVER... DUNNO..YES.WE DO..WELL? SAME PRICE?  
DUNNO...IWAIT.. MEANTIME.. LOOK UP.. HERE'S  
THE DOC'S FLOOZIE... SLIPPING A PRESCRIPTION  
OVER THE COUNTER. WELLHELLO! I SAY...(AGAIN..I  
WON'T SAY WHAT COMES TO MIND..) SHE SEEMS MORE..  
RELAXED...DOC SAID I HAD TO! I SAY...??? CRUTCHES..  
???. (OH NEVER MIND.) SHE GOES... YEAH. I SAY..  
AS THIS REALLY IS FUNNY! DO YOU HAVE.. THOSE OTHER!  
CRUTCHES.. (NOTTHEARM PIT KIND)..OH I GUESS...  
HEY! GAL.. I YELLAT HER.. AS SHE GETS OUT..AN ANCINET  
OLDWOODEN FOLDING CHAIR TO CLIMB UP ON!HEY! DON'T!  
OR YOU! WILL BE ON CRUTACHES! SHE IGNORES ME...  
I DON'T GET A LAUGH DFROM THE DINGY.. WORRIED  
PEOPLE LOOKING FOR THERE ..."PRESCRIPTIONS"...

IPAYMY \$\$..TAKEMY CRUTSCHES.. AND WALK! TO MY CAR,  
OJK OK OK..I MEANT! TO PLANT AND WORK IN WOODS...  
NICE WEATHER. AT LAST! ME.. INVALID. THREE WEEKS  
THA MAN SAID...NO WAY!

I GET BACK HOME...NO..I'M VERYUPSET..I'LL  
TELL CASE....NOTTHERE...(NOBODY TO TELL'. TO)...  
I PARK MY CAR..AND... TEARS COME.. WEEEPS....  
BUT...I BEGIN TO LUG STUFF IN... HIP HIP... (  
I HAD A GOOD JOBAND I QUIT')... I MAKE IT...  
I GO INTO CABIN.. THE SUN HAS STRUCK THAT LIGHT..  
IBEGGED? OFF D ANDA!IT IS BEAUTIFUL! AND I AM NOT  
ALLTHAT "UPSET". BUT..I PUT ALL THE .. VEGGIES.  
IBOUGHTFOR MEETING... AWAY..(MANANA.).

~~NEIGHBORS... WALK WAY?~~

May 1981

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SE HE SAID THAT BIG WHITE DOG BELONGED TO WITHEROWS, WHICH SURPRISED ME. DIDN'T KNOW THEY HAD ONE. MARTY. SHE DIDN'T ACTUALLY TALK TO ME, JUST KEPT ON OWRKING AND YELLING AT ME..SOMETHING ABOUT GETTING THE HOUSE READY FOR SALE. ALL THIS, MY NEW ENIGHBORS, CHANGES, DOGS, EXODUS AND , LATER, KIDS. THE ALLEN KIDS YELLING AROUND DOWN THERE. WE'D NEVER HAD KIDS HERE BEFORE..TO STAY. I FELT LIKE..WANTED TO..GET WITH SULTAN ESTATES PEOPLE AND MARSHAL FACTS BEFORE THAT MEETING, BUT I HAD MORE PR\$ESSING PROBLEMS. AND, I'D TRIED, THE NIGHT BEFORE.NOBODY AVAILABLE.

Mood IT DIDN'T HELP MYMOOD OR PROBLEMS TO HAVE THE PROMISED NICE DAY TO TURN OUT COLD, GREY AND GLOOMY. THE ONLY CHEERING THING IN THAT UNAHPPY MORNING WAS THE THOUGHT THAT MAYBE, CARRIE WAS NOW GETTING THE PEARLS I'D SENT HER?

Mail JUST BEFORE NOON, I ATTEMPTED TO GO GET MAIL. IT WAS MURDER HOBBLING WITH ONE CANE ON THAT GRAVEL AND A BLISTER FORMING ON MY HAND FROM THE CANE. I MANAGED TO HOBBLE OUT AND BACK IN..ALL FOR TWO PIECES OF JUNK MAIL!

I BEGAN TO WORK ON FIXING THE VEGETABLE RELISHES AND SLAW SALAD, MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE POTLUCK FOOD FOR THE MEETING. IT WAS SA LONG, HARD, LABORIOUS , MESSY JOB.

afternoon THEN, THE DAY WINTRY COLD AND GLOOMYSTILL, I BUILT A FIRE, HOPING MY LITTLE SUPPLY OF WOOD WOULD LAST TO COOK MY DINNER, FOR I CERTAINLY WAS unable to GO OUT AND LUG IN MORE. IT DID. I WASA ABLE TO GET THATODD THINGI'D BOUGHT, OUT OF CURIOISITY, A "SKATEWING"! A FISH FIN. WEIRD! LIKE EATING..FINGERS! IT RADIO TIME BY THEN.THAT WAS THE ONLY OTHER BRIGHT SPOT IN THAT DAY, DELIGHTFUL SILLINESS ON MY FAVORITE PUBLIC RADIO STATION. I GOT MY HAIR PUT UP BEING CAREFUL NOT TO HOBBLE TOO CLOSE TO THAT HOT STOVE..ALL I NEEDED!

AND THEN, AFTER A NAP,I SPENT THE EVENING BEING ASSAILED, FOR THE FIRST TIME, BY UNBERABLE LONELINESS. FINALLY REALIZED ITS SOURCE: A BELATED REALIZATION THAT DENNIS AND HIS FAMILY WOULD BE GOING: I WAS LOSING THEM.

S, E. SUNDAY, MAY 17--<sup>18th</sup> (CARRIE'S BIRTHDAY) AND THE DAY OF THE SULTAN ESTATES MEETING, WHICH I FOUND MYSELF BROODING OVER WITH DREAD. FOR THINGS HAD CHANGED SO. NOT ONLY THE EMBARRASSMENT OF APPEARING IN MY NEW ROLE OF CRIPPLED LIL OLE LADY DINGILY GROOMED, VS. MY HOPEFUL? IMAGE OF MYSELF AS A CUTE, FUN, OLD GRANDMA GAL, WELL GROOMED, WELL INFORMED, HELPFUL WITH MY EXPERTISE, BUT THE NEW, UNEXPECTED SHCISM BETWEEN ME AND WHAT I'D THOUGHT WOULD BE MY RETIREMENT DAYS NEIGHOBRS. SOMEHOW I HADN'T SEEMED TO BE ABLE TO HIT IT OFF WITH THEM. LISTING WHOM I COULD COUNT ON TO BE MY FRIENDS AT THAT MEETING, I WAS DISMAYED. ORVILLE, MRS. DELP, MAYBE MRS. PETERSON..MAYBE. MARTY, CASE, ALLENS, THE MCNABBS WOULDNT BE THERE. THAT NICE OLD COUPLE, THE DUCIES? HAD NOT COME BACK TOTHEIR HOUSE YET. THE DUKES, WITHEROWS, MS. MOORE, ALL ON OUR STREET..DUNNO. FRIENDS OR FOES?

FROM PAST MEETINGS, I IMAGINED HOW ITWOULD GO: THE BOARD WILL ASK US FOR OUR INPUT AND THEN TALK US ALL DOWN AND DO AS THEY PLEASE. REVEAL NOTHING. TELL US NOTHING. OUTALK US. BITCH ABOUT HOW THEY ARE TRYING!YAK ON ENDLESSLY ABOUT THE DOGS AND THEN..DO NOTHING. SOMEHOW I WAS LOATHE TO GO.

I THOUGHT ABOUT THE NEXT FEW MONTHS..FAMILY THINGS...PLANS. SIGHED.MENTALLY KICKED MY ASS AND BEGAN TO GET READY TO GO.

THE WEATHER WAS..UNSETTLED.SOMETHING VAGUELY YELLOW SIFTING THRU SKYLIGHT, NOT

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(603)

RAIN. PUZZLED ME. ((POST HOC: I WAS TO LEARN ABOUT POLLEN IN WOODS.))

Meeting

I LIMPED AROUND, GLAD MY FOOT SEEMED QUITE SPRY, TRYING TO KILL AN HOUR AND A HALF BEFORE MEETING. CLEANED HOUSE, FOOLISHLY THINKING MAYBE SOMEBODY FROM MEETING LIKE TO COME AND SEE PLACE? FINALLY MADE IT OUT TO CAR THROUGH THE TANGLE OF BRUSH FAST OBLITERATING THE PATH. LAUGHED. MAYBE IT'LL ALL GROW OVER AND I'LL JUST..DISAPPEAR? SAT IN CAR, PUZZLING OVER WHAT SEEMED AN EARTH TREMOR?

THE MEETING. ((SEE INSERT)) *Insert # 3*

S.E. Calls

THAT EVENING, I CALLED MARVIN AND TALKED TO HIM. LOU HAD GONE SOMEPLACE. AND TOLD HIM WE'D MISSED THEM. HE SEEMED GLAD TO HAR FROM SOMEONE. AND THEN I CALLED MARIE AND TOLD HER WHAT A NICE MEETING IT WAS. GEE, THIS TIME INSTEAD OFS NIPPING AT ME, I COULDN'T GET HER OFF THE PHONE. SHE WAS VERY NICE! I ASKED HER IF THEY'D LET ME KNOW IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO MARVIN. WE ARE ALL SO WORRIED ABOUT HIM. JIM P. SAID HE LOOKED AWFUL! BOTH GOOD CALLS. GLAD I DID.

in valid

MONDAY, MAY 18--RAIN. I SLEPT IN AND RESTED UP, FOR..MY FOOT HURT! DR. HAD GIVEN ME A PRESCRIPTION TO DRIVE CLEAR INTO SHOHOMISH TO GET AND EXPENSIVE BRACE. BUT I DIDN'T FEEL UP TO IT. I TRIED EVERY BOOT AND SHOE I HAD, BUT NOTHING WORKED. LATER, I CALLED SNOHOMISH ABOUT THAT BRACE. \$20! AND NO THEY DIDN'T DELIVER. I ASKED HER TO DESCRIBE IT FOR ME. MAYBE I COULD DREAM UP SOMETHING? LATER IN DAY I CUSSED: CRUTCHES A HELP? I KEPT TRIPPING OVER THEM WHERE THEY'D FALLEN TO FLOOR. I HOBBLER OUT IN DOWNPOUR OF RAIN TO GET MAIL. I SPENT THE POURING RAIN DAY ON PUTTER, PAPER, CATCH UP JOBS AND KNITTING BY RADIO..THINKING. WELL..SPENT AS MUCH TIME UNRAVELLING BOTH AS MAKING ANY PROGRESS.



4:41pm The Meeting -

IT WAS A GOOD MEETING. SHORTER THAN USUAL, AND FEW PEOPLE, BUT GOOD ONES. ALL MY PREP, SCRIPTS AND QUIPS ET AL WASTED, EXCEPT MY VEGGIES. THEY WERE A BIG SUCCESS AND FITTED IN JUST RIGHT WITH WHAT OTHERS BROUGHT. NO OTHER RELISHES. CAME HOME WITH HALF OF THEM, OF COURSE. FOOD GETS LESS FANCY EVERY TIME, AS PRICES GO UP. JAN PETERSEN BROUGHT MOST OF IT: BEANS AND FRANKS, MACARON SALAD, AND SEOM PINK GOOP AND THERE WERE TWO CAKES. THAT WAS IT. SO MUCH FOR FOOD.

THE WEATHER WE WILL DISMISS, FIRST, TOO. STARTED TO SPRINKLE AS I LEFTXAKE BOTH TO GO DOWN AND AS I DROVE BACK IN HERE. OTHERWISE JUST DULL AND GREY.

THE PEOPLE: I WAS PLEASSED. OLDER PEAPOPLE: THE ORIGINALS. ONE ICOU'LD TALK TO. AND A NICER CLASS OFPEOPLE THAN LAST MEETING. DON'T KNOW HOW MANY: DIDN'T COUNT.

WELL LET'S TAKE IT FROM THE BEGINNING: I DELAYED AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. DIDN'T WANT TO RAP WITH PEOPLE WITH THAT CHIP ON MY SHOULDER (AND OFF MY FOOT?) ON WAY DOWN: PEOPLE AT DOOCEY'S. BIG FOR SALE SIGN UP. THEN EARLY AS I WAS, AND GATE OPEN NOT ASINGLE CAR. I GOT A LITTLE ALARMED: WALK OUT? BUT I COULD SEE SOME MAN IN GAZEBO... ORVILLE I SPOSE. BUT I DIDN'T WANT THAT EITHER, SO I DELAYED LONGIN CAR. THEN CHUCK CAME OUT AND WENT TOWARD HIS HOUSE... WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE? I ASKED. HE SHRUGGED AND WENT ON. SO I DELAYED MORE, UNTIL THEY STARTED COMING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS... WALKING..A FEW. MOST OF THEM I DIDN'T KNOW.

*the Old Plant*  
SO I GOT OUT AND WENT IN. NOBODY NOTICED MY CANE OR ANYTHING. O: AND SOME MAN WERE IN THERE, BUT HE VERY! ELABORATELY! IGNORED ME, OVERDID IT..NOT EVEN SPEAKING AND THEN GOING OUT IN BACK OF BUIDLING TO TALK.

PEOP:E WERE GATHERING SLOWLY. STRANGERS, MOSTLY. A NICELOOKINGOLDER COUPLE. MARIECAME IN THEN AND INTRODUCED ME TO THEM: THE WERNERS.. ABSENTEE OWNERS. THEN MARIE PRODUCED A TYPED LIST OF ALL SING(OWERS): AND ~~EST~~ ~~OVER~~ ~~OVER~~ ~~GOING~~ ~~TO~~ ~~FIX~~ ~~OUT~~

*the man*

*Insert #3*

Sun. May 17-②

radius: "1 person out of 100 have enough \$\$\$ when they are 65." @ 10:00 am Well, sun went an hour ago + fore casts rain, rain, rain. His to despair. // FOS - quite spray. - Fool me: I've made bed + cleaning house; in ridic idea Sunday might want a help me come back - or come + see.

(11 a.m) Some thing vaguely yellow sifting through sky light here. Wonder what it is: It aint rain. Make-up; thinking - trying to think up an "unexpected cadence" rejoinder to the inevitable "How ya doing up there?" that won't get me in trouble but convey a child's.

Can you wait for the book? "you really care?" (no) - "I dun no, what have you heard?" Good Question! "Fine. Who needs people?" "Gee! I haven't heard that question since the last meeting!" *like that one!* *Shrimp: Corwin's birth day.* Oh dear. wish I hadn't noted that.

Makes me sad. To think I couldn't - not allowed to be there when my baby turns 18! Oh shit! Was just trying to talk myself into liking people. What'll I do here for 1 1/2 hours? *Panic!*

Time calculator not work! + no watch. There, where! Wish I had a book. *11:55 am* to see. weather not bad out there - (weather) Path is fast dis. in overgrowth + ferns, but - I - can't do. Maybe I'll be overgrown + nobody will ever find me? - Sitting in car!

Earth tremor? I've felt before. (No earth-shaking BN going by). Not me. For, after a minute, it quit.

The Meeting  
(over)

Meeting  
- rehearsal!

Meeting  
- rehearsal

(~~USUAL CONVICTION HERE. NEWS OR WRITE UP?~~)

THE OWNERS. UNDERSTAND YOU WERE GOING TO FIX UP  
OUR SIGN. (OH?) SO.. I PRODUCED MY MAP AND MOVED  
OVER WITH THAT GAL AND WE CHATTED ABOUT IT ETC.  
ALL MY JUNK, I WAS GLAD I TOOK IT. REALLY USED IT  
AND PEOPLE WANTED TO SEE...IN FACT ONE WOMAN I  
SAT NEXT TO AND GOT CHUMMY WITH FINALLY, OLDER  
OPLE, TOO, ASKED ME IF I WAS THE SECRETARY ? AS  
TOOK NOTES AND PRODUCED ALL MY MAPS AND PAPERS.

LATER AS THEY FORMED FOR MEETING, I MOVED BACK TO  
OTHER (DULL ) TABLE SO I COULD SIT ON END OF BENCH,  
THEEASIER TO GET OUT. (ACTUALLY MY FOOT WAS JUST FINE.  
I SHLOUDN'T HAVE BOTHERED WITH THAT CANE? NOBODY  
SEEMED TO NOITC OE CARE MUCH. AND IT CRASHED TO FLOOR  
IN MIDDLE OF MEETING.)

THE DELPS WERE THERE. HE NEVER PAYS ANY ATTENTION TO  
ME, BUT NEITHER DID SHE, THIS TIME. SHE WAS SITTING  
WITH SOMEONE ELSE. LATER WE TALKED A LITTLE CHUCK  
WAS THERE, BUT NOT HIS WIFE. THE PETERSENS WITH THEIR  
SON, THEY ARE NICE! PEOPLE! IN FACT SHE THE ONLY ONE  
WHO CAME OUT AND OFFERED TO CARRY MY BAGS IN WHEN I  
WENT OUT FOR MY FOOD, ALTHO O. WAS RIGHT THERE. THEN,  
MY DELEIGHT, JERRY SMITH CAME IN. (OUR OLD PRESIDENT)  
AND GREETED ME WARMLY. THEN DELIGHT AGAIN, HERE CAME  
CUTE LITTLE MRS. DOOCEY. SHE, TOO SEEMED GLAD TO SEE  
ME. AND HE CAME IN LATER. I GOTTO TALKING TO THE TWO  
OLDER COUPLES I MOVED TO TABLE WITH. ALL IN ALL, I  
HAD NO "SOCIAL" PROBLEMS AT ALL. AND I BUTTED INTO  
THE MEETING SEVERAL TIMES WITH MY TWO CENTS WORTH OF  
INFO, ETC. MY MAIN PROBLEM WAS: I GOTTA CUT DOWN ON  
THE SMOKING. ESP. BEFORE MEETINGS. I HAVE NO VOICE:  
A CROAK. THEY COULDN'T HEAR ME. (AND THAT LUMP NEAR  
MY LARNX ..I'D BETTER WATCH IT.) ALSO I HAD TROUBLE  
HEARING. SEOMTHING NEW. THO IT WAS NOISEY AND THE  
ACOUSTICS BAD IN THERE AND FIRE CRACKLED AND POPPED.

MARIE GREETED ME QUITE "~~KANRXX~~ NATURALLY ", AS IF ALL  
OK. SO. I DIDN'T GET TO RAISE ANY OF MY "PROBLEMS".

WAS DELIGHTED JERRY SMITH THERE. AT FIRST I THOUGHT  
HEY SAID HE WAS NEW PRESIDEN T AGAIN, BUT NO...THEY  
VOTED IN CHUCK AGAIN. (I DIDN'T RAISE MY HAND) AND,  
OF COURSE. SAME OLD BOARD. BUT JERRY IS TEN TIMES AS

\* Fine Silver

SHARP AND THAT DUMB CHUCK, WHO IS UTTERLY DEVOID OF HUMOR. AND I WAS GLAD WHEN JERRY (AND DELP: HE'S SHARP, TOO.) CAUGHT CHUCK AND CORRECTED HIM ON SOME DAMN FOOL IDEAS HE WAS TRYING TO PUSH. SO.. ALL MY! PROBLEMS I WAS OINGTO PRESENT WERE BROUGHT UP AND STARAIGHTENED OUT BY JERRY AND DELP. O. WAS QUITE IMPORTANT AND CALLED UPON. SAW NEW THINGS NI HIM: HELOVES! ALL THAT. BUT IS A TEENSY WEENSY BIT OF A FLOOR HOLDER. HE AND <sup>his wife</sup> MARIE SAT SEPARATE, BUT WERE ALL COZY COUPLE OTHER TIMES. ("HAM AND EGGGS"..) (THEY GO TOGETHER, PEOPLE SAID WHEN THEY RE ELECTED THEM BOTH. MARIE LOOKED QUITE HANDSOME TODAY: SHE AND O A VERY NICE LOOKING COUPLE. HE ESP. IS A GOOD LOOKING MAN. HER EYES JUST DOTE ON HIM WHEN HE'S TALKING, BUT, AS SOON AS EVERYONE LEFT, AGAIN THEY STARTED BITCHING AND YELLING AT EACH OTHER.

O. ONLY CAUGHT HIM ONCE LOOKING AT ME WITH "THAT! LOOK. REST OF TIME HE WAS QUITE"EVASIVE." MUCHTALK ABOUT ALL THETHINGS THEY'VE BEEN DOING AND ARE GOING TO DO: SOUNDS LIKE THEY'LL BE GONE, ETC. FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.

BUSINESS: THEY ARE GOING TO OPEN THE POOL.AND... MARIE INTRODUCED ME FIRST THING TO "OUR NEW CARE TAKERS": A VERY! HANDSOME AND NICE YOUNG COUPLE. THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO START "NEXT WEEK" OR WHENEVER PUD GETS A POLE IN FOR THEIR ELECTRICITY (LIKE @ NEXT FALL?) THEY VOTED ON AND SIGNED FOR THE DOG LEASH LAW. AND THS I IS WHERE JERRY WENT TO BAT FOR THINGS I! WANTED TO BUG CHUCK ABOUT: YOU'D BTETTER CONSULT A LAWYER BEFORE YOU ADVOCATE (THINGS LIKE HE WAS TRYING TO TELL ME: YOU! HASSLE WITH NEIGHBORS). A LOT OFPEOPLE OBJECTED TO THAT CHUCK'S APPROACH. AND I THINK THEY GOT HIM SQUELCHED. CHUCK IS A STIFF AND POMPOUS CHAIRMAN. ONE DOESN'T JOKE AND KID WITH HIM AS WE COULD WITH JERRY. SO I DIDN'T GET ANDY QUIPS OR FUNNIES IN. AND THEN, AFTER, OF COURSE, THE BABLE YOU COULDN'T GET TO! ANYBODY.

AND, AS USUAL ALL FLED WHEN FOOD TIME CAME. AND THEI THERE WAS ONLY THE EASTERLYS, THE PETERSENS, AN ABSETNTEE OWNER OLDER WOMAN? AND I TO EAT. ALTHO.. NEW CARETAKERS CAME IN LATER AND THE JOHNSONS, YOUNG COUPLE I'D NEVER MET. THEY SEEMED NICE. THE ONES I

THOUGHT WERE MOTORCYCLE TOUGHS OVER THERE. 3  
SHE CUTE. HE WEIRDO LOOKING, BUT NICE. AND OH NO...  
THEY HAD NO BIG DOGS..JUST ONE LITTLE ONE THEY KEEP  
IN HOUSE. AND THE KENNEL BATTLE: RESULT: DUKES ARE  
HELD TO TWO DOGS ONLY, SHOULD ONE OF THEIR THREE DIE.  
AND..GUESS WHAT? THEY ~~REJECTED~~ APPOINTED THAT OLD SLOB  
TO BOARD! DECIDED HE WAS "NICE". AND NYE GAVEUP HIS DOGS.  
EPT ONE PUB. I NEVER DID FIND OUT IF WITHEROWS OWN  
THAT "STRAY" DOG. THEY WEREN'T THERE.

THE ST. BENARDS. I CLEARED THAT UP FOR THEM. MUST  
CALL ON THEM, THEY SAID AND GIVE THEM RULES. THEYDID'T  
KNOW THEY WERE THERE. NEW RENTERS!?! THEY CRIED. (CRIPES.)

WHEN THE FLAK ABOUT NEVER SAW COVENANT CAME UP, CAME  
OUT THAT THEY WERE LAX IN THIS AND MUST SEE THAT ALL  
WHO MOVE IN GET COPY. AND.. JERRY SO MUCH SHARPER THAN  
ALL.. WHEN LOTS SOLD... I HERA D HIM SAY IT'S THAT  
DMANED BRUENER AGAIN..TO DELP.

SO.ALL IN ALL, IT WAS A GOOD MEETING. I FELT MORE  
"COMMUNITY SPIRIT" THAN I HAVE BEFORE. WE ALL TOGETHER.  
BUT, AS SAID, THIS WAS THE OLDER! GROUP. THE ORIGINALS  
I SAID IT FOR ME: YES! WE WANT THE COMMUNITY PARK,  
AND THE POOL AND THE CARETAKER! AND THE WOODS! WHY WE  
BOUGHT AND CAME UP HERE!

SO ALLS. WELL THAT ENDS WELL? I WAS, AGAIN, THE "LAST  
DOG" TO LEAVE, LEFT WITH MARIE AND O. EMBARRASSING.  
AND I NOTED I BEGAN TO "LIMP" AS THEY BEGAN TO CLEAN  
UP. IT'S EMBAARRASSING, NOT BECAUSE OF O <sup>oh</sup> I, BUT...  
IT'S ONE OF THOSE TIMES THAT ONE SITS AND REHASHES..  
(IFINALLY THREW MY COFFEE AWAY... THEY RUSHING ME  
OUT SO.) AND OR. SAYS.. WHY DON'T YOU COME DOWN FOR  
AWHILE? MARIE WAS MAKING "DATES" WITH OTHER PEOPLE  
LIKE MAD. NEXT TIME YOU'RE UP DO! COME AND SEE US!  
ETC. AND O. WAS URGING EVERY ONE TO EAT! EAT! EAT!...  
W(KEN FOLK... ONLY HER... POLITE) WEHN IT  
WASN'T EVEN HIS FOOD. BUT,, AS I ILINGERED.. THAT  
BARRASING TIME..TRYING TO FINISH MY COFFEE... NOTHING  
S SAID TO ME... ERR UH.. WELL... SEE YA..AND I  
DRIFTED OUT THE DOOR....YEAH. THEY SAID.



4  
TAKING OUT THE REDWOOD TREES. BUT I DIDN'T  
GET A CHANCE. I MEAN CEDARS.

I THINK 'I'M GOING TO LIKE THOSE KIDS. NOW LOOK, RIC  
CAME UP WITH..AS CHUCK SUGGESTED (DUMB! IDEA') THAT  
WE ALL CORRAL ANY NEIGHBOR'S DOGS THAT BUG US..AND  
BRING THEM INTO PARK AND CAGE THEM. AND CALL "THE  
OPS". (GEEZ!) I'M NOT ABOUT TO GO OUT AND TRY TO CAPTURE  
SOME WILD DOG LET LOOSE. WHERE I CAME FROM..MY DAD.  
HAS SOME LAND..AND THERE ARE DOGS PACKS ROAMING.  
(CHEERS! FROM INSIDE ME.)... BUT..WE DON'T WANT TO  
HAVE TROUBLE WITH THE ENIGHBORS, CHUCK ARGUES .  
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT THE BOARD.. PEOPLE WOULD GET MAD  
AT THEM?... IT'S UP TO THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENIGHBORS  
TO SETTLE THAT WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS. WE!(THE BOARD)  
DON'T WANT TO GET INTO TROUBLE. THERE WERE BEGINNI  
TO BE LITTLE MUTTERS AND MURMURS FROM CROWD. ME TOO.  
I ALMSOT! PUT MY HAND UP TO GET INTO THAT FIGHT, WHEN...  
JERRY CUT IN: CHUCK. I THINK YOU'D BETTER CONSULT A  
LAWYER...OR.. COUNTY..WHEN YOU TURN IN THIS LEASH LAW  
THING...YOU'RE GETTING INTO SOME DEEP TROUBLE THERE!

LATER, I TALKED TO JERRY: SO YOU'RE SELLING OUT? OH  
) . IF I DO..I WILL BUY ANOTHER LOT.. WANT TO HAVE  
SOME PLACE I CAN COME TO UP HERE. (WHEW.)...WE NEED  
HIM!

EARLIER CHUCK HAD STARTED OUT ON KIND OF A "SET SPEECH".  
NOW..IF ANY OF YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLES, I WANT YOU TO  
CALL ME! AND WE'LL DISCUSS IT.FIRST TIME I FELT MY  
FACE GET GRIM AND I HEARD MYSELF SAY.(GEEZ.)...AND  
TURNED TO MY RATHER FEISTY LOOKING NEW OLD LADY  
NEIGHBOR.. "AND GET HIM OUT OF BED. I SAID".. NOW.  
I'M NOT HMME ALL THE TIME.. CHUCK WENT ON.. AND...  
(THAT'S FOR SURE.)...I GET UP AND WALK MY DOGS AAT  
FIVE A.M. AND I ALWAYS! MEET SOME LOOSE DOG.. AND I  
DON'T! ILKE!IT! AT THAT TIME IN A.M.HAVEN'T EVEN  
HAD MY COFFEE! YET.... BUT.. AREN'T YOU GOING TO  
BACK US UP? SOMEOBDY CALLED OUT...

WHEN CHUCK SUGGESTED THAT WE CORRAL THE OFFENSIVE DOG  
AND BRING IT DOWN INTO THE PARK AND "LOCK IT UP"...

ALL KINDS OF MUTTERINGS AND MURMURINGS BEGAN. AND I  
RAISED MY HAND AND GOT UP AND READ MY READ MY CLIPPINGS  
ABOUT DOGS I'D KEPT..(IN THEI C'OK OF A VOICE)....  
AND JERRY INTERVENED AND SO DID DELP. AND RICK.(I!  
DIDN'T HAVE TO SAY ANYTHING!) CLIPPINGS I'D KEPT ABOUT  
DOGS I MEAN...(OH BY THE WAY I PUT THAT MOUSE BAIT  
OUT LAST NIGHT: IT SAID TO KEEP AWAY FROM HOUSE  
PETS. MAYBE I DID! GET RID OF MOORE'S CAT?)....  
THAT DOESN'T WORK. JERRY SAID, WRY.. THEY CALL IT  
"ENGAGEMENT".. AS I READ SULTAN'S SOLUTION..) SHAPR  
GUY. ANYWAY.. CHUCK BACKED DOWN... DELP GOT UP: AND  
WHAT IF WE HAVE KIDS IN HERE? AND THEY GET BITTEN?  
NAD MRS. DELP GOT UP.. I MEAN THEY ALL TRIED TO  
RAISE THEIR HANDS,,AND IT WAS ONLY JERRY WHO NOTED  
THE RIASED HANDS AND CALLED ON (INPUT)? CHUCK SEEMED  
TO BE GETTING CONFUSED. IWELL I! HAVE A DOG THAT  
DEARLY LOVES ME! IF I TIE IT UP OUTSIDE THAT FENCE...  
IT! DOESN'T KNOW THAT THESE KIDS COMING IN..(GOOD GAL!)  
ADN MY TABLE MATES BEGAN TO MUTTER AND.. TRY TO TELL  
ME SOMETHING..I! THINK DOGS SHOULD BE CORRALLED!  
ONE SAID. MAN..WE! HAVE A DOG.. BUT...ITDOESN'T  
BOTHER NIEGHOBRS.

WELL ITWASN'T A HOT FIGHT. THELEASH LAW READS.."  
AND! CATS! "CHIUCK RAISED HIS HEAD.. I THOUGHT OF  
CASE AND THOSE YUK CATS OF HIS...EDITH'S...ROAMING  
LOOSE." THAT SOMEONE! (I'VE GOT NOTES HERE) OVER  
THE AGE OF TEN MUST SEE THAT THAT ANIMAL IS NEVER  
MORE THAN TEN FEET FROM IT'S OWNER."() (CRIPES.)...

AND THAT MEANS, CHUCK WENT ON...THAT YOU REALLY DON'  
HAVE TO CONTROL YOUR ANIMALS... JUST "KEEP AN EYE" ON  
THEM. THRE WEREN'T ANY CRIES OF "OBJECTION".. ETC...

BUT DELP AND JERRY RATHER WEARILY INTERVENED:CHUCK?  
'YOU'RE GETTING IN PRETTY DEEP HERE.).... YAYYAY!  
SMALL MURMURS FROM AUDIENCE. THIS DOG PROBLEM..WILL  
NOT! GO AWAY.. JERRY TOOK THE FLOOR. IT WILL ONLY  
GET WORSE!(AYA!)NOW.(ILOVE! JERRY) ~~IT ISN'T WORSE~~  
~~FOR HERMAN. ASTOR, BUT... "DEMOC DEMOCRACY" WE~~  
HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT. VOTE?....

WE HAVETO VOTE FOR A NEW PRESIDENT, HE SAID. NOW. I! WON'T BE HERE... CHUCK? WHILE WE VOTE.. WHY DON'T YOU GO OUTSIDE? SO HE WENT OUTSIDE AND WIAITED... LIKE A "BAD BOY" BANISHED. HANDS? JERRY CALLED FOR.? MINE! WASN'T THE ONLY ONE THAT DIDN'T GO UP. (JERRY. OF COURSE, WAS TRYING TO SPARE HIM THE EMBARRASSMENT OF A NOT! UNANIMOUS VOTE.)? HEY! CHUCK! HE YELLED.. YOU CAN COME IN NOW! YOUR'E VOTED INI...(AND GET YOUR ASS OVER THERE. AND TAKE OVER THIS MEETING!).

AI WATCHED HIM.. HE WENT OUT.. STILL WITHING HEARING DISTANCE.. AND SSTOOD. BACK TO MEETING PLACE...WAITING. OK. COMEBACK IN! AND NOW.. HEY! SOMEBODY CALLED OUT.. WE FOGOT TO VOTE O. AND MARIE IN! OH YEAH... ANY.. (OBJECTIONS?) ALL, OF COURSE. RAISED THEIR HANDS. I WAS WATCHING MARIE'S FACE. IT WAS SMUG. SHE WAS WRITING ...EYES DOWN.....THEY GO TOGETHER! ALL SAID. I VOTED. (YAY.) AND THEN O. GOT UP AND MADE A LONG, ITRESOME SORT OF SPEECH. ABOUT THE WADDAA WRIGHTS? ??HUNH.OH WATER RIGHTS..CHUCK MEANT.INTERVEDNED AND HAND UP AGAIN.. TOLDMY! STORY ABOUT FIRE PROTECTION. I'. TALKED TO FIRE MARSHAL INMONROE AND SULATN... (PNLU YTIME I GOT TO MENTION MIKE) MY SON WANTS ME TO ET FIRE INSURANCE FOR OUR.."TINDER BOX" (NO LAUGHS.) THEY TOLD ME! AND I TOLD..JERRY TURNED TO DELP AND LAUGHED. WELL...(ALL THIS TIME THEY'D BEEN TALKING @ WATER! HOWWE GONNA PUT A FIRE OUT? NO WATER?).... WELL WE WERETALKING ABOUT.. FIRE INSURANCE..I PRESSED ON....(WATER! WON'T SAVE YOUR PLASTIC! HOMES!).... TRAILER HOMES..

I WAS MIFFED, BY THAT DERISIVE LAUGH. BETWEEN THOSE GUSY. AND O. GOT UP AND MADE A SPEECH ABOUT BEING CAREFUL..IFYOU BUILD A FIRE. (I'VE LONG HAD THAT! PRINTED ADMONITION. OH I QUIPPED TO O. SEE YOU'RVE MADE A BIG FIRE! AGAIN. HE DIDN'T "GET IT").

WELL I SAID, BACKINGDOWN.. I MEAN..FIRE SINURANCE! THEY TOLD ME! THAT.. THOS STAND PIPES... NOW DON'T LAUGH! (I KNOW! THEY WILL BLOW! AND SO DOES THE (REDEPT.).... ARE OK FOR.. INSURANCE. UH..OH..

HYDRANTS! DELP AND JERRY BEGAN TO LAUGH. SOMEBODY BROUGHT UP. CAN YOU HOOK A HOSE INTO THEM?... ETC... DO THEY HAVE.. OFF CONNECTINS ...?THOSE "BLOW PIEPES".?

O. FINALLY! GOT AROUND TO WHAT I! WANTED TO SAY: WELL ALL THEIR.. SUTUDEIS ETC..THEY'LLHAVE TO PUMP FROM THE SIMMINGPOOL. (SO. THEY ALREADY TOLD EM THAT.)...

WELL THE MEETING WAS SORT OF DISINTERGRATING. EVERYBODY WAS KINDOF GETTING TIRED OF RAISING THEIR HAND.. FOR.. (IGNORED) ATTENTION.... MQY BUTT HEURT. THOSE HARD BENCHES.(READING LAST NIGHT: AMERICA HAD FEW CHAIRS. IT WAS THE CHAIRMAN! (CHIEF GURU) WHO GOT TO SIT IN A CHAIR..THE REST SAT ON BENCHES AND STOOLS.) I', I'D THOUGHT! OS TAKING A CUSHIION. BUT "THAT AIN'T CRIKECT"...BAD ENOUGH TO PRETEND? A BROKEN ANKLE?...

SO.

~~MINUTE... TO...~~

AT THE LAST. THEY CALLED FOR.. ANYBODY HOME ALL DAY HERE? (FIRE ALARM?).... I WANTED! TO RAISE MY HAND. BUT.. DAMNED ANNKLE.. WHAT GOOD WOULD I! BE..IN.. A BUCKET BRIGADE?)....OH. FOGOT TO SAY..WHEN THEY WERE TLKING ABOUT WATER PRESSURE ETC... CAN I HOOK A HOSE? INTO I'T?....I TURNED TO MY NEW NEIGHBOR... (MY SON DID.. WRONG PIPE... PHWEEW! WATER OFF INTO THE WOODS.).... I GESTURE D....(BIG PEE!?)....

WELL I LISTENED TO WHAT O. HAD TO SAY..BEYOND US... GOLF COURSE..HOMES ETC.. SIX INCH PIPES...NO WAY! CNAN WE BUY INTO THAT! (HMMM)... BUT! I THOUGHT... FIRE!@FIRE! FIRE!ANYBODY GOT A WHI<sup>3</sup>/<sub>E</sub>?OR.. SCREAM?(I CANNOT.CANCER OF THE LARYXN)....?)ALL WE HHAVE TO DO... COMES THE SCREAMS! IS..CHOP TOSE CEDAR LOGS.. NURSING LOGS.. AND ALL HELL! WILL GO DOWN THERE. (THEY Y WANT WATRER?)..LET THEM HAVE IT!MEANTIME.. MY! WOODS.. AFIRE. ACRACKLE.....WOOD HOUSE..(AT LEAST. DENNIS... NO FUMES. ICANGO BURY MYSELF UNDER DIRT. JUMP INTO THE CREEK.....ANDTURN AROUND AND SEE... :MY HOUSE.. DESTROYED. ATLEAST!WRY REMARK. I DON'T HAVE TO SAVE! ANYBODY.(NOBODY HERE..BUT..ME.)....

~~... (SOME) ...~~

~~... BUT WHEN I ...~~

May 1981

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Tuesday, MAY 19-- MY SENIOR CLASS DAY. I SHALL MISS IT. SOON OVER. IT IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY WEEK. ONLY TIME I CAN TALK ABOUT THINGS I'M INTERESTED IN TO SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS. THOUGHT, AS I GOT READY TO GO IN YET ANOTHER DAY OF POURING RAIN IN WHAT THEY ALL SAY IS AN UNUSUALLY COLD MAY, 11 MONTHS SINCE I MOVED INTO CABIN!

AT THE SENIOR CENTER, I HAD A HECK OF A TIME MANAGING PURSE, CRUTCHES, STAIRS AND ALL. I ARRANGED TO EAT LUNCH THERE BEFORE PEGGY AND BETTY ASKED ME TO JOIN THEM AT LUNCH AT HOSPITAL, WHICH SURPRISED AND DELIGHTED ME..TO BE INVITED. BUT TOO LATE TO CHANGE. I STAYED. AND WAS AGAIN PLEASED TO FIND NEW MADE FRIENDS SO FRIENDLY, EVEN MARIE. She was actually cordial

THE CLASS WAS INTERESTING, THOUGH THERE SEEMED TO BE DROP OUTS. FEWER THERE, WHICH, ACTUALLY WAS NICE: MORE INFORMAL. I WAS ABLE TO GET SOME QUIPS IN, LIKE: THE SUBJECT WAS "HELP". "THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE CAN'T BE DEPENDENT.." TEACHER BEGAN, AND SOMETHING ABOUT "CRUTCHES". NOW CUT THAT OUT! I CRIED. AND GOT A BIG LAUGH. AFTER CLASS BETTY AND PEGGY AND I HAD A LOT OF FUN, JUST RAPPING AND GOOFING OFF, BETTY NABBING ME TO FILL ME IN ABOUT MEDICAL FORMS TO FILL OUT. AND I HAD A GOOD CHAT WITH BOB, OUR TEACHER. THE GALS HAD TO GO BACK TO OWRK AND SO WE PARTED AND I LEFT FEELING MORE LIGHT HEARTED THAN I HAD IN AGES.

I STOPPED IN MONROE AND CARRIED OUT MY IDEA FOR A SOLUTION TO FOOT SUPPORT IDEA. I BOUGHT SOME ANKLE HIGH TENNIS SHOES, WHICH I THOUGHT I COULD LACE TIGHTLY AND HAVE MUCH MORE USE FOR THAN A MEDICAL SUPPORT. I HAD A LOT OF FUN CHATTING AND JOKING WITH WOMAN WHO WAITED ON ME. I WENT OUT FEELING GOOD. THINGS SEEMED TO BE GETTING BETTER. "TRACK SHOES" I GUESS THEY CALL THEM NOW. MAYBE I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK AGAIN? I THOUGHT AS I WENT OUT

AND FELT EVEN MORE SO WHEN, GOING TO LIBRARY LATER, LOREN EISLEY'S LAST BOOK STARED AT ME FROM THE NEW BOOK RACKS. ((SOMETHING NICE FROM MY PAST. MY NAME WAS LORNA LIVESLEY. WE CORRESPONDED, BRIEFLY..ANOTHER STORY)) TO EXPLAIN RATHER MURKY ALLUSIONS LIKE THIS TO THOSE WHO MAY NEVER HAVE EXPERIENCED SUCH THINGS: SOMETHING HAD POPPED UP AT THIS PARTICULAR PERIOD THAT ONE PUNDIT CALLED "UNEXPECTED CADENCES" I REGRET I KEPT NO NOTES ON? WE DISCUSSED IT OUR CLASS..THOSE TIMES WHEN THINGS SEEM TO SUDDENLY "CHIME" TOGETHER FOR NO APPARENT REASON. KNOW WHAT I MEAN? LIKE....

THIS, TOO. DENNIS CALLED EARLY EVENING. "HEY! I GOTTA GO BACK TO COLVILLE TOMORROW! THAT JOB I WANTED.." "WEED COMMISSION" ..SEEMS THERE'S A CHANCE! CAN I USE YOUR GAS CREDIT CARD?" "WHY, SURE!" "CAN I DROP BY TOMMORROW..EARLY..SEVEN A.M. THEN AND PICK IT UP?" "WHY, SURE! GOING NORTH CASCADE ROUTE THEN?" "YEAH. WON'T BE ABLE TO STAY LONG..A LONG TRIP." "JUST GOT MYSELF SOME "TENNY RUNNERS"!" I SAID SUDDENLY SILLY, JOYFUL....

AND LOOKED, LATER, AND SAW SOMETHING SYMBOLIC IN MY NEW "TRACK SHOES" LYINH BESIDE THE CRUTCHES ON THE STEPS ON THE <sup>Steps</sup> STEPS DENNIS HAD BUILT.

ED'S HOUSE? DENNIS AND I HAD REFERRED TO ON THE PHONE. MIKE SAYS GO AHEAD AND SELL. ME, TOO, I SAID. LET'S GET RID OF THE GHOSTS! [[delete?]]

SUDDENLY IT SEEMED AS IF THINGS WERE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!?

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 20-- DENNIS HAD SAID HE'D COME ABOUT 7. I BEGAN TO GET FOOD READY FOR HIM TO TAKE WITH HIM. BY ALMOST NINE NO SIGN OF HIM I CALLED. "SORRY" HE SAID. JUST THINKING ABOUT CALLING YOU. LATE START. STILL GONNA COME THIS WAY? YEP. SEE YA. OK.

A LITTLE LATER, LEE CALLED, MY TINY LIL GAL FROM SENIOR CENTER. WE MADE OUR ADIEUS TO EACH OTHER, SHE GOING ON TO OTHER LIFE PLANS. I'LL MISS YOU, SHE SAID. ME TOO, I SAID.

THEN I BEGAN TO GUEST WAIT AGONY. I FOUND IT HARD TO PACE FLOOR WITH A BROKEN ANNKLE. THE MAILI WAS DISAPPOINTING: NO LETTER FROM CARRIE AND A LETTER FROM MIKE: HO NOT COMING.

DENNIS CAME SOO AFTER. HE DIDN'T STAY LONG, JUSTLONG ENOUGH TO COLLECT SOME MONEY AND CREDIT CARD AND EAT SOMETHING. HE SEEMED VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE FOOD I'D FIXED TO TAKE WITH HIM. HE TALKED ABOUT HIS NEW JOBCHANCES. SORT OF ENVY YOU, I SAID ALL THOSE FIELD TRIPS. YEAH, HE SAID, I CAN GO ALL OVER THE COUNTRY..LOOK FOR A HOUSE. BECAUSE OF MY FOOT, I BEGGED OUT OF SEEING HIM OUT ON TRAIL. ODDLY IT WAS HE WHO STUMBLED ON HIS WAY OUT. HEY! I CRIED LOOK AT THE APPLE TREE! SIN'T THAT EXCITING? HE WALKED CLEAR VOER TOLOOK AT IT...MAYBE HE SAID WILL STOP ON WAY BACK..

AFTER HE LEFT, IT RAINED AND RAINED ANDRAINED. AND A DOG HOWLED INCESSANTLY. I GOT OUT MAP AND FOLOWED HIS ITINERARY. DESPITE THE UNHAPPY ASPECTS OF THE DAY, THERE WERE OTHER "OMESN"? THAT MADE ME FEEL THAT HE WOULD GET THE JOB AND ALL WOULD BE WELL.

LATER, I CALLED MIKE ANDDIVESTED MY FOOT OF BANDAGE. ENOUGH OF THAT!

THURSDAY, MAY 21-- CARRIE'S BIG DAY. HER GRADUATION. DID SHE GET THE PEARLS? IWOKE LATE AND MY FOOT WAS RED AND SWOLLEN AND SORE AND THE DAY WAS DISMAL. WHEN I PAIN FULLY LIMPED OUT TO MAIL (WONDEERING HOW I WAS GOING TO GET THE GARBAGE OUT IF SO LAME?) AND THERE WAS NO RECEIPT FROM CARRIE ABOUT THE PEARLS, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. NOTICED A REALTY "FOR SALE" SIGN ON MARTY'S HOUSE. THAT WAS RATHER DEPRESSING.

I WENT IN AND CALLED THE POST OFFICE. THEY SAID I'D HAVE TO WAIT THIRTY DAYS BEFORE I'D KNOW FOR SURE. SO I CALLED CALDWELL, AND GOT MELINDA, CARRIE'S NEW STEPMOTHER. OH YES! SHE GOT THE PEARLS AND WAS DELIGHTED! I CALLED THE POST OFFICE BACK..WELL I'D HAVE TO COME IN AND THEY'D "SEE" ABOUT IT. ALL I NEEDED.

I SPENT THE REST OF THE DAY JUST READING AND PLAYING INVALID IN THE RAIN AND GLOOM. ALONE. I DID TRY TO SOAK MY FOOOT AND TEST MY NEW SHOES, BUT FOOT BAD.

FRIDAY, MAY 22--I WOKE TO SO MANY WOES I FELT AS IF A GREAT STONE HAD BEEN ROLLED ON TOP OF ME. THE WEATHER STILL DRIZZLY AND MORE PREDICTED. I DIRTY AND ILL FEELING AND SO BEHIND IN ALL MY CHORES. AND HEAVY GARBAGE TO TAKE OUT. AND I WOULD HAVE TO GO TO MONROE AND TAKE THOSE CRUTCHES BACK AND GET SOME MONEY..GAVE ALL I HAD TO DENNIS, WHOM I WAS AFRAID MIGHT DROP BY IF I LEFT TO GO MONORE. AND ALL THOSE QUEER NOISES IN NIGHT, AND THE INCOMINGPPATH SO OVERGROWN I AFRAID I WOULD BE IMPRISONED IN A JUNGLE.

AS I BEGAN THE BATTLE OF THE DAY, FIRST, ONE PROBLEM SOLVED. I OPENED A DRAW ER AND FOUND IT FULL OF POISON MOUSE BAIT! I MANAGED A SHOWER, FIRST IN A LONG TIME IT SEEMED AND GOT INTO NEW SHOES, MY FOOT SEEMING BETTER? AND STRUGGLED OUT WITH THE GARABGE, USING THE CART, AND ANGRY AT THAT ST. BERNARD DOG STANING OUT THERE BARKING AT ME. THEN ANOTHER BLOW, RADIO SAYING MEMORIAL DAY WOULD BE OBSERVED MONDAY, NOW, INSTEAD OF TRADITINAL DAY. THAT BLEW ALL MY PLANS.

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IMANAGED TO GET READY AND SET OUT FORMONROE LEAVING NOTES AROUND ALL OVER FOR DENNIS. AND THINGS GOT BETTER. THE SUN CAME OUT AND I GOT THE CRUTCHES RETURNED, HAD COFFEE AT THE BAKERY AND EKED OUT SOME MONEY AND SUPLIES. MY FOOT WAS EVEN BETTER. AND THEN I SET OFF FORHOME LOATHING TO LEAVE THE WARM SUN AND GO BACK TO THAT GLOOMY PLACE. ON WAY I WAS APPALLED AT ALL THE REAL ESTATE AND FOR SALE SIGNS. EVEN ON OUR STREET. IT ALL BEGINNING TO TAKE ON THE FEEL OF A GHOST TOWN.

SURE ENOUGH. WHEN I GOT HOME IT WAS CLOU&DY, CHILL, DARK AND MY NOTES TO DENNIS, UNDISTURBED. WAS A LONELY FEELING. BUT THEN THE SUN CAME OUT!



CHEERED, I STAYED OUT IN CAR AND CLEANED IT OUT. THEN I WENT IN AND GOT TOOLS AND BEGANTO BARBER A WAY THROUGH THAT JUNGLE. I WAS THRILLED TO SEE THAT THE BLACK BERRIES WERE FORMING. I'D HAVE A BUMPER CROP! BUTWHAT USE COULD I MAKE OF THEM? NO FREEZER, NO CANNING EQUIPMENT, NOBODY TO FEED. AHA! MRS. ALLEN CAME OUT DOWN THE STREET ,BITCHING AND YELLING AT HER KIDS AND TAKING THEM FOR A WALK. i'd ask her if she could use some? BUT BEFORE I COULD ENCOUNTER HER, SHE TURNED HER BACK AND WENT IN. I STRUGGLED TO GET SOME WOOD IN AND THEN DECIDED I'D BETTER GIVE UP FOR DAY, WONDERING IF DENNIS...???? WHICH MADE ME KEEP RUNNING TO WINDOW EVERY TIME I HEARD A CAR.

INSIDE I PANIKED. I'D TAKEN THE CTRUCHES BACK BUT I HAD LEFT THAT CANE JULIE GAVE ME IN MONNROE? I NEEDED IT! AND THEN IT STARED AT ME FROM A CORNER. I LIMPED AROUND IN WOODS DESPAIRING AT ALL THE THINGS I'D TRIED TO GROW NOT! GROWING. I FELT VERY ANCIENT AND OLD.. A CRIPPLE IN AN OVERGORWN HALF ACRE. NOT EXATCLY WHAT I'D HADD IN MIND!

LATER. RESTED. AND MY FOOT MUCH BETTER! I CALLED ABBIE. NO, DENNIS WASN'T HOME YET. I CALLED CASE ABOUT THE WOOD. HESUGGESTED WHAT I'D THOUGHT OF. WELL, HAVE THE KIDS LOAD THE WOOD INTO MY PICK UP AND I'LL DRIVE IT UP TO YOUR HOUSE.

I MOONED AROUND. ABOUT 9 P.M. DENNIS CALLED : HE GOT THE JOB! SUDDENLY EVERYTHING WAS BEAUTIFUL!

SATURDAY, MAY 23-- I SPENT THE DAY AT HOME, ALONE, WISHING SO MUCH THAT THERE TO SHARE THE BEAUTY OF THE SPRING WOODS, FOR THE SUN CAME OUT, INTERMITTENTLY, AND IT WAS VERY PRETTY. IN THE AFTERNOON, I WENT DOWN TO THE SPOT I HAD CLEARED JUST OUTSIDE OF C EDAR GROVE, WHERE I'D HOPED TO MAKE A GRASSY, SUNNY LOUNGING PLACE. THERE I WORKED LONG AND HARD REWEBBING AND DERUSSTING MY PATIO LOUNGE CHAIR. AND WHACKING AT ENCROACHING BLACKBKERRIES. JUST ME AND THE BUGS AND THE BIRDS. I GAVE UP AND WENT IN FINALLY AS THE SUN GOT COY AND AND THE CRASH OF A TREE SOMEPLACE PLUS THE CREAKING AND GROANING OF RUBBING ALDERS RAHER FRIGHTENED ME. I WAS MUDDY, DIRTY AND GRUBBY, BUT I ENJOYED IT, BEING ABLE TO BE WHERE IT NOT MATTER. AND I ENJOYED LOOKING AT MY LITTLE, RED, PEAKED HOUSE THERE FLOODED WITH LOVE OF IT.

DURING THAT TIME, IT OCCURRED TOME FOR THE FIRST TIME: IF DENNIS GOES, THE CABIN MAY NEVER GET FINISHED!?

I SPENTTHE EVENING AS USUAL, EATING, KNITTING AND LISTENING TO RADIO. AND, OF COURSE THINKING. ONE DOES DO THAT..UNTIL ONE FALLS ASLEEP.

SUNDAY, MAY 24-- A DAY ALONE IN POURING RAIN MOSTLY JUST GRUMPING AROUND AND COUNTING MY WOES. MY FOOT WAS BETTER BUT I FOUND MYSELF WEARY OF BEING CRIPPLED

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AND DIRTY AND TRYING TO ADJUST TO UNFAMILIAR THINGS, LIKE NOISES IN NIGHT I COULDN'T ACCOUNT FOR, NOT ANIMAL NOISES, PEOPLE NOISES..A CAR DOWN STREET. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'D FELT A LITTLE TREPIDATION..MY AS YET UNCURTAINED WINDOWS. AND EVERY MORNING A CARPET OF DEAD MOTHS TO SWEEP UP. I DID WALK OUT ON THE TRAIL ONCE, JUST TO GET OUT AND WAS RATHER APALLED TO FIND ONE COULDN'T SEE THE CABIN AT ALL FROM STREET. JUST A GREEN WALL!

I DID DO ONE THING, BESIDES PUTTER THROUGH DAY: GOT MAD AND CUT THE CORNER OFF STARWAY STEPS WHERE I'D TRIPPED AND HURT MY FOOT ON WAY TO PHONE.

MONDAY, MAY 25-- Memorial day AS OBSERVED. I SPENT THE DAY ON A "BIG PRIMP" FOR THE NEXT DAY I HAD MY CLASS AT SENIOR CENTER. IT RAINED ALL DAY LONG, DISMAL AND DRIPPING. PERHAPS I SHOULD GIVE A TRIBUTE HERE? IN ALL THESE DAYS OF MY INCARCERATION I WAS SUSTAINED BY READING THE LOREN EISELEY BOOK. I THINK I SHOULD HAVE GONE QUITE MAD WITHOUT HIS "LONG VIEW"?

I AWOKE, AFTER A NIGHT OF MIND BOGGING POURING RAIN TO A DISMAL THOUGHT: MEMORIAL DAY! A YEAR AGO I HAD LOOKED FORWARD SO TO THE NEXT ONE WHEN I WOULD BE IN MY CABIN AND THE WHOLE FAMILY WOULD BE GATHERED FOR A FINE PICNIC HOLIDAY! I QUELLED THAT THOUGHT AND BEGAN TO DO A LITTLE MURDERING. FOR THE HOUSE WAS FULL OF BUGS FROM MY HAVING LEFT THE DOORS OPEN THE NIGHT BEFORE? BUT MY LITTLE HOUSE BIRDS SANG IN THE DAY. AND, IN A WAY, IT WAS RATHER NICE BEING ABLE TO DO AS I PLEASED ON A HOLIDAY, ESPECIALLY WHEN, LISTENING TO RADIO, I HEARD ALL THE DUMB THINGS OTHER PEOPLE WERE DOING "FOR FUN". MY OWN QUIET HOLIDAY SEEMED LESS PITIABLE.

MY MYSTERIOUS NIGHT NOISES. IN RETRIEVING SOMETHING FALLEN BY DESK I DISCOVERED THE HOLE LEFT WHERE TELEPHONE GAVE AND I HAD TRIED TO SNAKE THAT WIRE IN. AHA! SO THAT'S WHERE THE NICE WERE COMING IN!? SURE ENOUGH. SOME RUSTLINGS THERE, LATER. I TAPED THE HOLE.

I BEGAN A BIG CLEAN UP OF ME, HOUSE, GETTING THINGS IN ORDER. ON A TRIP OUT TO CAR THERE WERE SIGNS OF A STORM? LEAVES, BRANCHES DOWN. ONE BIG AS MY ARM AND SHARPENED RIGHT ON PATH. RATHER SCARY. WHEN WOULD ONE HIT ME!? SALMON BERRIES RIPENING...READ THAT INDAINS ATE THEM TRIED ONE. NOT VERY GOOD. I LIMP AROUND, BUT IT WAS WET....

LATER. A GOOD DINNER, GOOD MUSIC ON RADIO. A FIRE. ALL QUITE COZY. THEN....

7:45 P.M. PHONE! DENNIS OF COURSE. IT WAS. SAY, CAN I CASH THAT FIFTY DOLLARS?.... OH YES...CAN YOU GET THRU TILL FIRST?...OH THINK SO...GONNA WORK AT SEARS AGAIN THIS WEEK AND WILL PICK UP \$300, AND THEN I REPORT TO WORK MONDAY....YOU MEAN...?.... YEAH. HE SOUNDED VERY BLITHE AND LACONIC. HOW'S IT UP THERE?...OH, BEEN RAINING ALL WEEKEND...OH? SUN SHINING HERE...GRR! WHILE IT HITS ME WHAT HE'S GOING TO BE SAYING, HE GOES ON ABOUT SEEING ABOUT SEEING REAL ESTATE AGENTS AND CALLING MIKE AND THEN HE'LL BE OVER THE FIRST OF JULY TO GET ABBIE AND THEIR STUFF.

I TRY TO CARRY ON A NORMAL CONVERSATION AS MY INSIDES COLLAPSE. OH..YEAH... SUDDENLY I'M HAVING TROUBLE WITH MY VOICE...IS JOB STATE? (ABOUT PAY)..NO. COUNTY (ooch)JOB IS WHEAT COMMISSION. ONLY LASTS TILL OCT. BUT AT LEAST I'LL BE OVER THERE....YOU..UH..THINK YOU CAN FIND WORK OVER THERE?...OH YEAH. HE GOES ON ABOUT GODFREY GOING TO LEND HIM HIS TRUCK AND..THEN I'LL COME OVER THE TENTH OF JULY AND LOAD UP STUFF...I GULP.WON'T SEE YOU AGAIN THEN?...OH, MAYBE I'LL DROP BY GOING OVER SOMETIME. DUNNO. HE SOUNDS VERY HAPPY AND BLITHE AND TELLS OF MANY THINGS HE HAS TO DO THE HOUSE ETC.....I DON'T ORDER THE LUMBER THEN?....NO.....WELL.OK..... I'LL TRY TO CALL YOU LATER IN THE WEEK.....UH. MY FOOT'S OK.....OH IS IT?..... YEAH. I BLATHER ON ABOUT NOT REALIZING HOW YOU MISS A FACULTY UNTIL IT'S NOT

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THERE OR SOMETHING. MY GUT WAS BOTHERING ME. I JUST COULDN'T TALK ANY MORE.....  
OK..I"LL...TALK TO YOU LATER. WE HUNG UP.

I FELT LIKE I"D BEEN SHOT IN THE STOMACH. DIZZY. I JUST SAT. AND THEN I CALLED THE  
STORE. YOU OPEN? ..YES...I GOT MY CAR KEYS AND CHANTED "HANG IN THERE , BABY, HANG  
IN THERE....hang in there....".....AS I DROVE TO STORE

on the way back A GORGEOUS SUNSET TO WEST..A DOG RAN IN FRONT OF CAR..I DIDN'T EVEN  
NOTICE IT...I REACHED IN GLOVE COMPARTMENT AND GOT OUT MY ST. ANDREW'S CROSS TALISMAN  
AND RUBBED IT HANG IN THERE..HANG IN THERE...

GOING BACK INTO CABIN..JOLTED. THE LITTLE APPLE TREE. I NEARLY CRACKED UP..DENNIS  
WILL NAVER GET TO SEE..MY NEW KITCHEN WALL..NEVER GET TO SEE..NEVER ..NEVER.....

I HAD A BAD EVENING. AND THOUGHT IT RATHER IRONIC THAT I HAD HEART FOR DINNER..  
AND..SQUASH.....

TUESDAY, MAY 26--I WAS GETTING READY TO GO TO MONROE, KEPT CHECKING AT THE WINDOW  
ON WEATHER, WHICH WAS BEING CAPRICIOUS. A BEAUTIFUL DOE DEER WAS MINCING UP THE  
PATH, PAST THE APPLE TREE RIGHT TO ME! AS FAR AS THE LOG. HELL, DEER! I CALLED  
OUT.IT DIDN'T ACT STARTLED AT ALL.AFTERWARDS I THOUGHT HOW ODD THE DOGS HADN'T  
BARKED. IT JUST STOOD THERE, ITS BIG EARS WAVING, TOTALLY UNAFRAID AS I TALKED TO  
IT. WHERE'D YOU COME FROM? I EXPECTED IT TO BOUND OFF, BUT IT DIDN'T, JUST TRIPPED  
OFF DAINTELY DOWN TOWZRD THE CREEK, NO BOUNDS OF FRIGHT. I WAS SO EXCITED! WE'D  
NEVER HAD A DEER IN HERE IN ALL THOSE FOUR YEARS! THEN OH NNO! WOULD IT EAT THOSE  
PRECIOUS FRESH LEAVES ON THE APPLE TREE?

Insert #4

I GOT MY ERRRANDS IN MONROE DONE. THERE ARE ONLY TWO MORE OF THOSE CLASSES AT  
CENTER. I WOULD MISS THEM. HIGHLIGHTS OF MY WEEKS.  
I CALLED DENNIS AND ABBIE WHEN I GOT HOME AND TOLD THEM ABOUT THE DEER AND SO  
ON. JUST A FUN TALK. NO "BUSINESS" TRANSACTED.

Wednesday may 27--WAS A BUSY DAY. I HAD BUSINESS TO TRANSACT AND ATTEND TO BUT  
PERSAONL THINGS, NOT PERTAIN TO CABIN. A LOT OF "IRONS IN FIRE" THINGS I"D GOTTEN  
ADVICE ON AT CENTER. I SPENT MORNING IRONING CLOTHES AND WAITING FOR THAT CALL  
FROM LEE. THEY WERE GOING TO CHANGE ME OVER ORSOMETHING AT SENIOR CENTER.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD DAVE CASE WAS BACK, SO I HAD HOPES OF GETTING MY CAR WORK  
DONE. I WAS PLEASES WHEN THAT CUTE LITTLE MRS.WITHEROW WAVED TO ME DOWN STREET.  
NEIGHBORS HADN'T BEEN ANY TOO FRIENDLY.

WHEN MY CALL CAME I WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED. SOME NEW WOMAN ASSIGNED TO ME? LEE  
HAD QUIT AND I DIDN'T GET TO SAY GOODBYE TO HER!

I TOOK A PICTURE OF THE LITTLE APPLE TREE AND THEN, IT SUCH A NICE DAY I WENT  
TO THE NURSERY AND BOUGHT SOME PLANTS FOR MY HALF ACRE.

Insert #5

6:22pm Tues/ Monroe May 26, 1968  
I'LL NEVER! GET TODAY DOWN..JUST TOO MUCH TO TELL  
BUT WILL MAKE A STAB AT IT HERE.

FIRST: I WANT TO SAY: I FEEL AS I HAD DIED, AND  
BEEN REBORN AGAIN. NOT HAPPILY! RELIGIOUS REBORN:  
BUT REBORN INTO A DIFFERENT WORLD: EVEN INTO A  
DIFFERENT ME. A NEW LIFE. ONE I'VE NEVER HAD  
ANY EXPERIENCES WITH BEFORE.

IT WAS A BIT SCARY. THE ANIMALS HAD MUCH TO DO WITH  
IT. WORLD OF WOODS AND WILD ANIMALS. I'VE NEVER  
EXPERIENCED THIS BEFORE. NOT THE FEELING: THIS NEW  
WORLD I FIND MYSELF IN. THE ANIMALS. STARTED WITH  
THAT DEER! THIS MORNING. THAT REALLY HAUNTED ME  
ALL DAY, SEEING HER! THERE..AND THEN THAT WOMAN  
AT LAUNDRY SAYING THERE WERE WAS A BLACK BEAR AND  
CUB ON HER PROPERTY JUST WEST OF HERE. I DUNNO,  
LORNA. MAYBE WE ARE OUT OF PLACE?

I ZSHAN'T BE ABLE TO TELL IT ALL. I WILL HAVE TO  
PUT DOWN THE MOST VIVID THINGS FIRST. AND THAT WAS  
THE DEER. LET ME STICK TO THAT, FIRST.

THE DEER: I WAS ENGROSSSED IN DRESSING, RED AND  
WHITE TO GO WITH TENNY RUNNERS...AND VERY METI-  
CULOUSLY. HAIR WAS A MESS. AND HAD TO FIGHT IT A  
LONG TIME. TOOK ME HALF AND HOUR TO GET TENNY  
RUNNERS LACINGS JUST RIGHT. WAS HURRYING...LOT  
TO DO...WEATHER.. HAD MY WARDROBE ALL PLANNED....  
SUN. BUT IT KEPT GOING AND DARKENING..NMENAT I'D  
HAVE TO CHANGE ALL MY WORDROBE, ETC..IF.. RAIN...  
SO. I KEPT RUNNING TO WINDOW AND CHECKING SKY...  
WEATHER... AND THEN I SAW IT: A BEAUTIFUL DOE WAS  
MINCING UP THE PATH..PASSING THE APPLE TREE..A  
LOVELY THING! WELL, HELLO DEER! (DEAR) I CALLED  
OUT. IT DIDN'T ACT STARTLED AT ALL. (ODD THE DOGS  
HADN'T BARKED I THOUGHT LATER.) IT JUST STOOD  
THERE, AND ITS BIG EARS WENT BACK TO HEAR BEHIND  
IT BACK AND FORTH... AND THEN IT CAME RIGHT TO!  
ME... AS IF TO "CHAT".. CAME AS FAR AS THE LOG.  
JUST STOOD THERE. I TALKED TO IT.. WHERE DID  
YOU? COME FROM.. ? I EXPECTED IT.. AT A SOUND OR  
NOISE FROM ME TO GO BOUDNING OFF INFRIGHT. NO.

Invent # of

Expt - new

IT SEEMED QUITE ASSURED. QUITE AT EASE, QUITE UNAFRAID. AS IF LISTENING TO ME. AND THEN , IT TRIPPED OFF SO DAINITLY ON THOSE LONG, SLENDER LEGS.. DOWN TOWARD THE CREEK.NO BOUNDS OF FRIGHT. I WAS ASTOUNDED! WE'D NEVER! HAD A DEER IN HERE. IN ALLTHSESE FOUR YEARS. I WAS TERRIBLY EXCITED! AND THEN..OH NO! THE APPLE TREE! HAD IT , WOULD IT? EAT THOSE FRESH NEW LEAVES?

I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO LOOK. BUT I WAS TORN BETWEEN LOVE FOR THE LIL TREE AND THIS BEAUTIFUL CREATURE. LATER. THE TREE WAS UNDEFILED. AND YES. THEY ALL TROLD ME.. THEY WILL EAT THEM. ILEFT.WORRIED... ABOUT TREE.ANDTHAT IS WHY I STOPPED AND TOLD.. WELL. ANOTHER STORY.POACHERS. AT THAT MOMENT DIDN'T CONCERN ME TOO MUCH. THE DEER STORY WENT ON.. THROUGH MY DAY.. MY TALKING TO PEOPLE.. ABOUT...DON'T FEED! IT!. THEWOMAN..(NATIVE) AT LAUNDRY SAID...MY BUYING THE TREE "POISON"... (TREE..OR DEER?)....ETC. IT WAS. MAY I SAY, LOREN, A VERY SPOOKY TING TO HAPPEN AFTER HAVING READ ABOUT YOU AND THOREUA AND WALDEN POIND, ETC. AND TRYING TO UNDERSTAND!

BUT. THE DEAR DEER. IT REALLY SHOOK ME UP. I WAS SO! EXCITED I WAS ALL ATREMBLE! I WANTED TO RUN @ AND TELL! EVERYONE! OR CALL UP D AND A AND TELL!

I DID DIG OUT PAPERS AND TRY TO GET AHOLD OF THE PETERSENS.. IF YOU HEAR SHOOTING?... ETC. NO ANSWER. SHOULD I? MARIE AND O?.. OR CASE? OR.. WELL OF COURSE NOBODY HOME.. I HAD TOGO: WHETHER TO TAKE TIMETO STOP AND TELLTHAT ALLEN DINGBAT WOMAN.. HEY! YOU.. ONLY PERSON HOME HERE: CALL ...STATEPATROL..IFYOU HEAR SHOTS! I WAS ALL WOUND UP...SHE LOOKED AT ME.. WITH HER COCK EYE. AND SNOTTED.WELL. DEER ALL OVER. SO?.... IT WAS MY FIRST THUD..(IN THIS NEW WORLD I'D COMEINTO?) SO WAHT? DEER ALLOVER?...WELL THIS GHOST THING WENT ON ALL DAY..(A VERY AMAZING DAY, MAY I SAY)... ANTED SOMEBODY! TO BE AS EXCITED AS I ! WAS...

WHEN I GOT HOME,I PICKED UP PHONE AND CALLED D AND A. ABBIE.(I DON'T CARE! TELL THE KIDS ! I SAID..)



WOULD YOU MIND? I WAS SORE DISTRAUGHT... ((I SHOULD  
TELL BOB THAT THIS IS ONE OF HIS FLOOGIES.. HE  
GLOOGULES..HE ASKED US TO COME UP WITH AS EXAMPLSE  
NECXT WEEK..BUT I CANNOT BETRAY.. MY NEW "FRIENDS?")....  
I HAD TO WRITE? HELL.I'D FILLED OUT FORMS FOR  
THEM BEFORE! I STARTED TO WERITE..TOOK A DEEP  
BREATH.. GALS WATCHING ME..MY HAND BEGAN TO TREMBLE.

WHOM CAN WE CALL? IN CASE OF...I JOLTED. MMM...  
WELL..(DENNIS GONE) I WROTE DOWN BUD'S NUMBER...  
AND WHAT'S THIS? I SASKED.. "YOUR INTERESTS"?  
WELL....I JUST STOOD THERE.. ZOMBIED.. WELL...  
"ART" I WROTE.. WEARILY".. OH I KNOW! YOU ARE  
INTERESTED IN ART! LOIS MOVED IN.. BUT... WHAT ELSE  
TO SAY? HISTORY. I WRIOTE..I'M INTERESTED IN THE  
HISTORY! @ HERE I EXPLAINED LAMELY... AND.. (HEL  
WITHIT..) CAN I WRITE..MEN? I KIDDED LOIS.  
BIGCONFUSION...

THE "COCKSUCKERS".. TEH WOMEN... BOB (WONDERFUL I  
ALL WENT IN AND WAITED FOR HIM. I SAW HIM COME.  
I DOUSED MY CIG. WENT IN. THEY WERE ALL GONE.???

WELL MUCH WENT ON.. I WAS NERFUSS.. SCRIBBLED....

"DOODLED" I KNEW BOB WAS WATCHING MY NERFUSS..  
DOODLES. CRUTCHES.. BROKEN BONES.. I NUDGED  
BETTY NEXT TO ME: I WISH! HE'D GET OFF THAT KICK!  
LAUGH.

I CAN'T I JUST CAN'T. BEE: N A BIG DAY. YOU.. IT TRED?  
ONE OF THE GALS ASKED ME.. OH.. NO...

BOB? I SAW HE WAS GIVING UP ON THAT CLASS... HIS  
EYES. SMART AND GEELFUL... YES. LORNA? I.. WISH..  
OF ALL THE THINGS ON YOUR LIST... UH, NEGATIVE ATTITUDE  
OR FEELINGS?.. HE MADE A NOTE.

THE NURSERY

Wed. May 27

I DROVE THROU THE MOST BUCOLIC SCENERY POSSIBLE: SUN AND ACRES OF BUTTERCUPS ALL OVER AND COWS LYING IN LUSH GREEN FIELDS... THE SORT OF THING POETRY IS WRITTEN ABOUT.

WHEN I GOT THERE.. GOING INTO A KIND OF GROVE OF TREES FROM THE OPEN FIELDS.. WELL. PEASANT TYPE PEOPLE TALKING STANDING AROUND... FAMILY GOSSIP... ONE OF THE SQUAT FEMALE FIGURES MOTIONED ME TO A PARKING PLACE. ANDI WAITED WHILE THEY FINISHED THEIR BUSINESS WITH THE PARTING PEOPLE. IT WAS A CHARMING PLACE., WOODSY.ABLAZE WITH BLOOMS OF EVERY KIND. LITTLE WOODSY TRAILS...I ACHED WITH THE BEAUTYOF IT ALL.

WELL THERE WERE TWO SQUAT LITTLE WOMEN. ONE PRETIER THAN THE OTHER... LATERI WAS TO FIND OUT THE PRIETIER ONE WAS THE MOTHER! THE UGLIER ONE..(OH NO. NOT AGAIN! ) SEEMED TO HAVE SOME KIND OF EYE AFFLICTION ( I MUST WRITE UP ABOUT THAT... ) *Seems so many people in Monroe - "walk-eyed"*

I LAUNCHED INTO MY PITCH: CITY GAL.. WANT SOME.. PLANTS AND (INFO).... ETC. SHE WAS VERY GRACIOUS AT FIRST, THEN DUMPED ME FOR AN UGLY SKINNY PEASANT TYPE FOREIGN WOMAN WHOSEEMED TO HAVE A PREVIOUS ORDER WAITING. FOR HERBS. NOT FOR THEIR USE, BUT JUST DECORATIVE. WELL I SORT OF BUTTERD IN..AND IT WAS FUN! EWWEKLAUGHED. TRADE YOU MY BOOK @ HERBS .. I SAID. ETC. ME..NO SUN...

AT THE TIME I COULDN'T DECIDE WHICH WOMAN WAS "WHICH.. THEONE IN THE PICTURE.. SO I WAS GINGERLY.. IN TALKING.. AND THEN..IT SEEMED TH DAUGHTER..THE UGLY ONE. ..WAS THE OWNER..BEGAN TO SAY. I DON'T KNOW, ETC. TO MY (RATHERFOOL QUESTIONS)... WHEN SHE FOUND OUT I WAS ONLY GOING TO BUY A CHEAP PLANT OR TWO.. SHE SORT OF WANDERED OFF.

BUT I WAS SICK. FRUSTRATIONS: SHE'D JUST SOLD THE LAST PARSELY. BUT HOW..LETTUCE? YOU GET IT... THEN WHAT? LOOKS LIKE EATING NOW.. OH..FEW DAYS... YOU'VE GOT SOME MORE, ETC. SHE LEFT ME TO ..COGIATE... ME. I MEAN...

*Insert #5*

I WANDERED AROUND IN THEIR LITTLE PLASTIC "GREEN HOUSE"..  
TEMPTED LIKE HELL! AND SORT OF TALKED TO WHAT  
TURNED OUT TO BE MOMMY. ALL THOSE FINE PLANTS!  
IF ONLY I HAD..SOME SUN! WOULD HAVE BEEN ..WAS..  
FUN! LOVELY PLACE..BUT MY FOOT HURT LIKE HELL!  
NOT ANKLE LITTLE TOE...???.

MAY I? I ASKED. AS SHE "DUMPED ME".. WANDER?  
WHY SURE...BUT I COULDN'T. FOOT HURT SO... I  
TAKED A PATH OR TWO.. IT WAS UTTERLY LOVELY! ANY  
PLANT YOU COULD NAME! ALL SO HEALTHY! BLAZE OF  
BLOOMS. BOTH FAMILIAR AND NEW...

I'D ROAMED IN THEIR GREEN HOUSE". THIS PLASTIC?...  
GOT SOME.. DOES IT.. KEEP PLANTS WARMS..OR???  
OH NO..JUST CUSTOMERS. RAIN OFF...HOW LONG YOU  
BEENHERE?SIX YEARS. OH. JUST READ ABOUT YOU IN  
PAPER.OUR AD? NO NO...

WELL I GOT SOME LETTUCE. AND SOME CHIVES... SHE'D  
POUT OUT A DINGY ONE.. I . MAY I? WENT AND ESELECTED  
A HEALTHIER ONE...I'D ASKEDHER ABOUT MY ONION SETS.  
OH DON'T EAT THOSE! WHY NOT? SHE SHURUGGED..THEY  
ARE "SETS"..???? WHEN THEY LEFT ME THERE...  
I WANDERED..WISHED I HAD SOME SUN... NIBBLED..  
TARRAGON.. BOUGHT. (LATER.. I SAW THE LABEL.  
AFTER I PUT IT IN A TINY CORNER.. "GROWS TO 30")  
OH WOW.

WELL I LEFT. AND WENT BACK HOME. IT WAS.."LATE".  
FELT I'D GOTTEN A BIT OF A BRUSH OFF THERE..BUT.

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL! PLACE! JUST BEAUTIFUL! IF TAT'S  
WHERE I'D AND A BOUGHT THE APPLE TREE... I DON'T BLAME  
THEM FOR WANTING TO... DO SAME. I'D ASKED HER A BOUT..  
TAKEN THE ..POW! CHEMICAL D. HAD "ADVISED"..DUNNO  
SHE SAID.

WELL HOME. I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO WRITE UP. (GOT SOME  
HUNGRY PLANTS HERE...)"IN SHOCK"....

WELL. THE NURSERY STORY.. ENDED, I SUPPOSE..  
WHEN I LEFT THERE.TERRIBLY! DISAPPOINTED: JUST  
MISSED A PARSLEY PLANT BY ONE SALE! (THAT SPORK  
GRABBEDTHE LAST ONE) JUST FOR PRETTIENESS!

Wed in my -27 (2)

I WENT HOME. OUT OF ALL THAT EDEN OF SUN AND BLOOSM.. TO MY ..GREY DINGY PLACE...AND FORFEITED. WRITE UP.. TO RACETHE SUN AND GET THOSE PLANTS.. "IN".

AS ALWAYS. THE DOING BIGGER TASK THATN THE THOUGHT OF IT... BUT.I WAS DETERMINED TO DO IT RIGHT! THIS TIME.. READ ALLTHE FINE PRINT... NO DRAINAGE? (MY HOME MADE PLATNER) THEN.. INTHIS ORDER... CARACK UP SOME POTTERY POTS.. I BEGAN TO SMASH.. MY POTS.. EVEN (██████████) I HAMMERED! BANGED!.. THERE' .DAMN YOU! THEN.. SOME PEBBLES...I RAN OUT TO MY SEPTIC TANK FIELD.. GATHERED PEBBLES.. EXPOSED BY RAIN..THEN...CHRARCOAL.. I RAN DOWN TO FIRE PIT AND GOT SOME..THEN..MOSS.. ILIPMED UOP INTO WOODS AND GRABBEDSOME...(MY FOOT WAS KILLING ME!).... PUT SOME.. TRANSPLANT CHEMICAL IN... I REACHED FOR THE STUFF D. HAD BOUGHT...

STRANGE I WAS THINKING ALL THE TIME..I'VE GOT EVERYTHING I NEEDED HERE!...BUT..TIME.... TIME.. GOTTAAPPLETREE!

IGRABBED THAT CAN OF "WEED KILLER"... AND RAN OUT. READ DIRECTIONS...(IT'S VERY! POTENT! D HADWARNED.) I READ.. GOT SCAREDTO HELL!" IT WILL KILL BUGS..BEEES PETS..CHILDREN YOU... KON'T LET IT DRIFTOFF ONTO ANYTHING! ETC. ETC..(RADIO..NEWS.. ALL THAT SHIT ABOUT.. "ORANGE".)I WEPT..WITH ..FEAR.. AS I REACHED AND BENT DOWN THE TOP BRANCH..JUST OUT OFREACH.( I HOPE IT DOESN'TKILL YOU!)? TREE. (WASH'. WASH! BUT DON'T CONTAMINATE THEWATER!). (WELL MAKEUP YOUR FOOL MINDS!) I GOT A BIT SICK AFTER THAT "DUSTING".. IMAGINATION? OR FACT?.....I STUMBLED BACK TO CABIN.. SUDDENLY NAUSEATED. ??? AND WASHED MY HANDS..GLOVES OFF UNDER HOSE...

NOTHING REEALLY HAPPENED. I MEAN I DIDN'T PASS OUT OT THROW UP OR ANTYHING.... AFTER FIGHTING RADIO.. IWENT AND LOOKED AT MY PLANTS: ERECT? AFTER ..WILT. (I HOPE!)....

AN D THAT'S THE STORY OF LORNA'S "HALF ACRE"...A

THE TROUBLE WITH "PROJECTS".. I THOUGHT IS ..  
THEMESS! IWENT AND PEEKED.AFTER..LISTENING TO  
NPR. (OH GOD! I DON'T WANT TO HEAR HOW REAGAN..  
ET. CO... ..ETC.. AND THEPOORMORMROMS  
UNQUOTE..IN UTAH..PUTTING A SCARED WOMEANTO FRONT  
FORTHE..VS.... MMM.).....I WENT AND PEEKED AT  
ME "GARDEN". DID I IMAGINE? THEY'D PERKEDUP?

~~.....~~ BLIND"

SO MUCH'. TO TELL'  $\frac{1}{2}$  GET WOTH.. THINK ABOUT!

@ 8 pm

~~.....~~  
"TIRED".. SHUFFLINGF.. A BITOFF.. CENTER...  
NO NOT "TIRED". ..MMM...  
MY CAR TODAY.WANDERING.. TO LEFT.. TIRE? OR?...  
PULL! TO LEFT...???.  
BOB? IHAVE MUCH TO TELL I HAVEN'T TOLD. (I KNOW.  
I KNOW) SEE IT IN YOUR EYES....FELOW SHAMAN?  
FELLOW?... HE LAUGHED.. AS I TOLD MY "DOC"  
STORY..MADE A NOTE...WE ..UNDERSTAND(! DONT WE?  
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE THOSE GALS UP THERE.. RIGHT?  
NO. NOT WITHOUT MEN! I DO NOT WANT A YAKKY..GOSSIP  
SESSION...

PEGGY. MAY I CALLYOU UP AT HOME? SOMETIME?  
SHE REAERED... PUTME OFF... AT HOME!...?  
 $\frac{1}{2}$ RETTY WOMAN..ONLY THOSE WHITE HAN,DS.. SKIN...  
SHE'S GOT SCHERDEMA?...? EVERYBODY..(BUT MARIE) SEEMS  
TO HAVE SOME..."AFFLICTION".....

12:23 PM

Back from Salt Lake  
Thurs. May 28

CAN'T FIND THE LINE IN THAT BOOK I KEPT THINKING OF AS I DROVE TO SULTAAN TO SEND D. THE REST OF THE \$\$ HE NEEDED TO GO OUT OF MY LIFE. SOMETHING @ "MIRACLES HAVE THEIR OWN CONCLUSIONS: WE HAVE NOTHING TOSAY ABOUT THEM".

MY ADRENALIN MUST HAVE BEEN WORKING? I FEEL TERRIBLY EXHAUSTED...ALMOST ILL. JUST WANT TO SLEEP AND WILL AFTER I MAKE THIS REPORT.

WHAT A WILD TIME THAT WAS, DENNIS'S CALL ETC. RIGHT ON TOP OF THAT BOOK ETC. AS IF EVERYTHING WAS MEANT TO FIT TOGETHER ORSOMETHING. (TOO TIRED TO THINK OF RIGHT WORDS.) SO I ENDED UP GOING TO SULTAN, AFTER ALL. AND ITTURNED OUT TO BE A REAL FUN TRIP.

EVERYBODY HAS BEEN SO NICE! TO DAY.HELPFUL,FUN., UNHURRIED. I DROVE BACK IN THE ALMOST TOO WARM SUN FULL OF LOVE FOR MY "PEASNATS" AND THIS LOVELY COUNTRYSIDE. PERHAPS IT WAS THE SUN OUT? EVERYONE SO FRIENDLY AND GREETING..EVEN STRANGERS PASSING.

SO. I DROVE DOWN. SO MUCH ACTIVITY! PEOPLE , MEN WORKING HIGHWAY FULL OF TRAFFIC. I ROUNDED THE BIG PUD EQUIPMENT CRANE ONTO HIGHWAY..BANK..AND HERE WAS ANOTHER. POINT HERE IS I GET A LITTLE AWED AT MEN WORKING ON THOSE DANGEROUS THINGS, STANDING FIGURING IT AND THEN. GULPING THEIR FEAR, DOING IT.

GAL IN BANK..VERY NICE. NO PROBLEM. I DESPOSITED \$15. CALL TRUDY, I SAID. SHE WAS DCOING SO AS I LEFT.....P.O. ILEFT CAR IN BANK LOT AND CROSSED OVER. (COUDLN'T HAVE DONE THAT IN CITY!) AGAIN, VERY NICE GAL (NONE OF THESE GALS GOOD LOOKING: REAL BUMMY, BUT SO NICE.) I TRIED TO EXPLAIN TO HER ABOUT BILL SIGNING FOR THAT PACKAGE.. A CRUCIAL SITUATION I SAID. ETC. LODNG TALK. AND HOW I'D WAITED FOR THAT SLIP AND WHAT MONROE P.O. HAD SAID, ETC. AND THAT I HAD TO CALL LONG DISTANCE, ETC. SHE INSISTED SH'ED GET TO BOSS , WHO NOT THERE, THEN AND THAT I SHOULD HAVE MY \$\$\$ BACK. I KEPT TELKLING HER THAT IT WASN'T THAT THAT MATTERED. JUST THE PRINCIPLE OF THE THING. SHE AGREED. SHE TOOK ALL MY NAME, ETC. AND INSISTED THEY'D DO SOMETHING

Insert 6

ABOUT IT. ((ASIDE HERE: GEE! I FEEL SO WOOZY AND DIZZY????))) I LEFT FEELING THAT IT WAS CERTAINLY MORE ATTENTION TO THE MATTER THAN I MEANT.

I WENT INTO BANK AGAIN AND SIGNALLED GAL: ALL OK? OH YES! SHE NODDED. OH. BEFORE I WENT IN..SOME BUMMY LOOKING GUYS IN A STATE CAR. (HIGHWAY? AMAYBE OLD FRIENDS?) I WENT OVER NAND BUTTED IN: HAD NICELONG CHAT WITH NICE LITTLE BUM AT WHEEL. FISHERIES. HETOLD ME WHAT THEY WERE DOING AND WHY. TAGGING SALMON FINGERLINGS UP ON MT. INTERESTING. WE WISHED EACH OTHER WELLL. AND THEN INTO BANK. AND LEFT SULTAN.

I FELTVERY STRANGE. NOT PMSICALLY: PSYCHICALLY? AS IF SOME STRANGE THINGS WERE GOING ON.KIND DEED FOR D. ALL THAT...AND HWO AMAZING WELL IT HAD WORKED OUT..THAT LITTLE PUZZLE.. WITH SO MUCH HELP. AND ABOUT D. CALLING BACK JUST BEFORE I LEFT: YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO ALL THAT JUST FOR TEN \$. OH.. WELL, I SAID, GOING TO SULTAN ANYWAY. (I AWAS?) AND ABOUT HIS SAYING HE'D COME BACK AND FINISH HOUSE MAYBE IN WINTER , AFTER THIS JOB OVER.. DREAMER. BUT..NICE THOUGHT. AND MAYBE HE'D STOP BY ON HIS WAY SUNDAY..DIDN'T KNOW. AND HISOFFER TO PAY ME BACK OUT OF SOME \$\$ A. WASGETTING NEXT WEEK. NO NO.I'LL GET BY. (WONDER IF I WILL? IT'S GOING TO BEA VERY EXPENSIVE MONTH!) AND OF HIS SAYING I'D HAVE TO COMEOVER AND VISITTHEM, AFTER, HE'D RENT FOR A MONTH AND THEN COME BACK AND GET A. AQND KIDS..MAYBE JULY FOURTH WEEK END OR WHENEVER GODFREY COULD HELP HIM. AFTER THEY GOT A BIG OLD HOUSE TO LIVE IN. I GROANED AT THE IDEA OF DRIVING THAT ROAD..DISTANCE.. ETC. WELL SAVE YOUR \$\$\$ AND FLY TO SPOKANE AND THEN IT'S ONLY A SHORT WAY FROM THERE.. WE'LL SEE. I SAID. WAS NICE TO BE INVITED, ANYWAY, EVEN IF ABBIE DIDN'T...

SO. MY MIND SO FULL OF ALL THOSE THINGS.. I ALMOST FORGOT I WAS GOING TO STOP AT *J.S. Inc* PULLED OFF JUST INTIME. ON WAY TO, I HUNGRY, WAS VERY TEMPTED TO GO TREAT MYSELF TO BREAKFAST IN SOME RESTUARANT..BUT...

*I did*

May 28 - ④

I DROVE HOME ON THAT SUNNY, DESERTED, BEAUTIFUL  
COUNTRY ROAD. SLOWLY, VAGUELY WISHING THERE WAS  
SOMEONE I COULD JUST SIT IN THE SUN WITH AND  
TALK TO. MAYBE CASES OUT? ..BUT THEY WEREN'T.

I DROVE INTO MY LITTLE RABBIT HOLE. SAT. SIGHED.  
THEN AWALKED IN..PAST THE APPLE TREE (IT SEEMS TO  
BE OK. ALSO MY "GARDEN" HAS PERKED UP MY PLANTER  
BOX.) IT GOT COOLER AND COOLER AS I WENT UP THE  
TRAIL. AND THE CABIN WAS CHILL AND DARK...  
AND WAHT! A MESS! APAPERS. TOOLS. STRANGE NOTES..  
ABOUT ALL THOSE THINGS I HAD TO DO...MY PAPERS  
STILL BY PHONE ABOUT TALK TO LEE AND DORRIE..  
THE PO. THINGS.. BANK NOTES.. NOTES ON CALLS TO  
BANK I MEAN... CLUTTER. MEXS. MESS.

WHAT IF I HAD DIED? I THOUGHT. AND SOMEONE HAD  
COME IN HERE? THEY WOULD HAVE THOUGHT: WHAT IN  
THE WORLD INTERRUPTED HER ? TO GO OFF AND LEAVE  
THINGS LIKE THIS. IT LOOKS AS IF SOMEONE HAD LEFT  
VERY HURRIEDLY. WELL?

AND THEN, S SAID I FELT VERY ILL, AS IF I WERE!  
GOING TO DIE. WELL, THEY'LL JUST HAVE TO SEE IT  
THIS WAY.

---

I HAVE SOME NOTES HERE ABOUT YESTERDAY. MIGHT AS  
WELL FINISH THEM UP. THE CEMETERY: WAS FULL OF  
FLOWERS..FROM MEMORIAL DAY. JUST ABALZE WITH BOUQUETS.

THE GOLF COURSE, FULL OF MEN PLAYING. WHERE I NOW  
LOOK FOR O. (NSTEAD A OF A JIM) BUT WOULD I KNOW  
HIM IF I SAW HIM?.....IN MONROE: ALL THE TIME I  
WAS THERE: BN. ROARING Y. SIRENS GOING ALL THE  
TIME.. WE STEPPING OUT TO LOOK, FIRE DOWN ST.  
ENGINES. SMOKE. LITTLE HOUSE. TURNED OUT NOTHING  
BAD, OLD COUPLE.. MY PALS THERE SAID. BUT.. WHAT  
AN AWFUL THING! FIRE ON THIS BEAUTIFUL DAY, I  
THOUGHT. SIRENS SIRENS. I HAD TO STOP AND LET  
FIRE ENGINE GO BY (IT IS AID CAR, TOO) AS I LEFT  
SAFEBAY. SORT OF WORRIED ME. I THOUGHT OF MY  
CABIN UP THERE....NOBODY KNEW WHERE THEY WERE  
GOING.....

~~MY SISTER... NOT THERE... TAKING IT EAST,~~  
THEY SAID.

OK. ONELAST THING: WAS THE DAY OF AFFLICTED EYES:  
SEEMS EVERYBODY I TALKED TO HAD SEOMTHING WRONG  
WITHTHEIR EYES: ~~NRXKLEKX~~ MRS. ALLEN..IS WLLEYED.  
WALL EYED. (AND HOMELY. AND SHARP/NASTY) SHE  
YELSSAND SCREAMS AT THE KIDS. WELL YOU'RE THE ONL.  
ONE HOME, I SAID AS I STOPPED AND TOLD HER HOW  
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO CALL THE COPS IF..THAT DEER...  
SHOTS. AND WHY WOULDN'T I BE HOME?SHE SNAPPED.  
WITHTWO LITTLE KIDS!(BRATS. THE OTONE SAID) I  
DON'T LIKE HER. SHE COULDN'T HAVE CARED LESS ABOUT  
THE DEER ETC. GET OUT OF THE STREET! SHE SANPPED  
AT THE PUP.SHE'S ALWAYS STANDING IN FRONT OF CARS,  
SHE SAID TO ME. I GRIMMED OFF.

AT CENTER:LOIS IS WALL EYED. (SUCH PEOPLE ARE HARD  
TO TALK TO. WHICH EYE DO YOU LOOK IN?) AND SEOM  
THING WRONG WITH HER BACK..SOME SLIGHT DEFORMITY,  
THES.S. GUY. ONE BADLY INJURED EYE... THE GALAT  
THE NURSERY NEXT DAY..THOSE THIC KLENSES..

EVERYBODY, I THOUGHT, ESP. THOSEPEOPLE AT THE  
SR. CIT CENTER SEEMS TO HAVE SOME AFFLICTION: NO  
WONDER I FELT AT HOME WITH MY CRUTCH? HELEN IS TOO  
FAT.. ~~MNEATHA~~ ACTS AS IF SHE'S HAD A LOBOTOMY?  
WELL. THEY AREN'T ALL CRIPPLED.. THO, EVERYBODY  
BUT MARIE, I'D THOUGHT AT FIRST. AND SHE HERDS  
THEM AROUND LIKE A FLOCK OFFLAME DUCKS. MMM.

A LAST COMMENT I'D LIKE TO MAKE TO BOB, IF IT  
HAPPENS AGAIN LIKE LAST TIME: MARIE LEADING HER  
TRAIL OF OLD CRIPPLES.. ALMSOT A DOZEN TRAINLING  
HER LIKE IMPRINTED DUCKS. "PARADE OF THE LEFTOVERS"  
I'D LIKE TO SAY. "BUT! YOU WOULDN'T HAVE SEEN THAT  
ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO! ALL THOSE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE  
BEEN DEAD ~~BYXKOWX~~ THEN." NOW..THEY KEEP THEM ALIVE..  
A"AMBULATORY". WALKING ZOMBIES. WHY!?

WELL. THAT'S IT. TO SLEEP.IN SUN.

Insert #5 May 1981

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THURSDAY, MAY 28-- DENNIS CALLS IN THE MORNING, FIRST THING. HE SAYS HE IS LEAVING SUNDAY AND NEEDS SOME MONEY. COULD HE BORROW SOME MORE?

SO A WILD BIT OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS AND PHONE CALLS . I THREW ON SOME CLOTHES AND WENT TO THE BANK IN SULTAN AND FINALLY GOT SOME MONEY TRANSFERRED TO HIM.

Insert #6 Call to Dennis

I SPENT REST OF DAY LYING IN SUN AND READING BOOK...

FRIDAY, MAY 29-- I WORKED OUTSIDE CLEARING A "DRIVEWAY" AND CHECKING AROUND ON THINGS IN MY WOODS AND LAMENTING AND WONDERING IF ANYBODY WOULD EVER COME UP AND SEE ME.. ALL THE PLANS AND PROMISES. I WAS VERY ALARMED TO FIND A HUGE BRANCH OFF THAT BIG COTTONWOOD RIGHT BESIDE THE PATH. LIVING IN WOODS CAN BE DANGEROUS? I SPENT REST OF DAY JUST GOOFING OFF.

SATURDAY, MAY 30-- MID MORNING I CALLED DENNIS TO SAY GOODBYE. HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO CALL ME LATER IN DAY. HOW'S IT GOING? I ASKED....WELL, IF I CAN FIGURE OUT THIS RAT'S NEST IN MY MIND..BUSY DAY..GOTTA SEE THE REAL ESTATE GUY THIS AFTERNOON AND TURN HOUSE OVER TO THOSE CROOKS TO SELL. HE TELLS. SAID HE REPORTS TO WORK MONDAY AT 8 A.M. BUT NOT PAID TILL JULY 1 SO NOT ABLE TO RENT A HOUSE WOULD RENT A CABIN FOR HIMSELF..\$100 A MONTH..DOESN'T MATTER JUST A PLACE TO SHOWER, SLEEP. THE KIDS NOT OUT OF SCHOOL TILL THE TENTH..WILL GET AN EARLY START TOMORROW THINK I'LL GO I-90 BETTER ROADS.. UGH..THAT LONG TRIP. WE CHAT ABOUT SPRAYS AND THINGS, APPLE TREE.. WELL THANKS FOR ALL THE HELP ETCC. I'LL BE BACK TO PICK UP ABBIE AND KIDS AROUND THE FIRST OF JULY.....WELL, KEEP IN TOUCH.....YEAH. GUESS I'LL HAVE TO LEARN TO WRITE LETTERS..THE PHONE BILL!.....WELL HAVE A GOOD TRIP.....YEAH. WELL THANKS FOR CALLING. ....OK. WE HUNG UP, HE SEEMED ANXIOUS TO GET WITH HIS DAY'S PROBLEMS.

I CALLED MIKE AND MARYLYN THEN. GOT MARYLYN AND A LONG CHAT. SHE SAID MIKE WOULD CALL ME SUNDAY NIGHT.

THEN, EXHAUSTED, UPSET, I JUST COULDN'T STAY AND MOPE ALONE IN THAT RAIN. I HAD TO GET OUT. I CLEANED MYSELF UP A LITTLE, STOPPED AND GOT THE MAIL. IT DIDN'T HELP TOO MUCH. MY DOCTOR BILL FOR MY FOOT. I'D TOLD DENNIS I HAD TO HOLD OUT ON MONEY UNTIL I KNEW WHAT IT WAS. I OPENED IT, BRACED FOR \$100. IT WAS ONLY \$67, BUT THAT DIDN'T HELP MUCH FOR IT HAD NO PROOF OF "FRACTURE" WHICH I'D NEED TO COLLECT INSURANCE AS NEAR AS I COULD FIGURE OUT.

I WENT ON DOWN TO STORE. THREE MEN AT THAT DUMPY PLACE ALLANS ARE RENTING. ONE WAVED TO ME. CASE WAS WORKING ON PUTTING FLOORING IN HIS HOUSE IN THE POURING RAIN. AND I HAD FRETTED ABOUT WET LUMBER. ORVILLE WAS WORKING ON TAKING A TREE STUMP OUT IN THE COMMUNITY PARK. I STOP AND TALK TO HIM TELLING HIM ABOUT THE NEW PEOPLE (ALLANS) IN I GUESS ITS WILLYS' PLACE, I SAID. OH? I'LL HAVE TO GO UP AND TALK TO HIM. HAVING DONE THAT LITTLE BIT OF MISCHIEF I WENT ON TO STORE. WHERE I TALKED TO OTHER CASUALLY MET PEOPLE. THEN HOME. IT DID ME GOOD TO GET OUT AND GET MY MIND ON OTHER THINGS BUT.....

SUNDAY, MAY 31-- IT ALL CAUGHT UP WITH ME. I SPENT THE DAY JUST COLLAPSED AND

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PLAYING INVALID: NURSING MY FOOT: MENTALLY ACCOMPANYING DENNIS ON THAT LONG TRIP AND REMEMBERING AND SUMMING UP. THE END OF MAY AND THE END OF DENNIS' SUPPORT. IT WAS GOING TO BE TOUGH NOT TO HAVE HIS HELP ON ALL THOSE UNFINISHED THINGS AND I LEFT WITH ALL THAT STUFF HE WANTED ME TO SAVE FOR HIM UNDER THE HOUSE..THE UNUSED LUMBER AND INSULATION..THE LITTLE WINDOW FOR THE DOOR HE WAS GOING TO DO..THE BRICKS AROUND THE STOVE. YET IN ANOTHER WAY A SORT OF RELIEF. I COULD NOW GO AHEAD AND DO THINGS I'D HAD TO HOLD OFF ON BECAUSE AT ANY UNEXPECTED MOMENT DENNIS MIGHT WANT TO WORK ON. I SPENT A LONG, USELESS DAY SUMMING UP, CROSSING OVER. THERE WERE MANY CARS DRIVING BY MARTY'S, LOOKING. I HAD A HORRIBLE THOUGHT: WOULDN'T IT BE AWFUL IF SOME NOISY YOUNG PEOPLE MOVED IN WITH MOTORCYCLES, LOUD MUSIC, PARTIES?

LATE EVENING MIKE HADN'T CALLED AND NOTHING FROM ABBIE AS TO DENNIS GETTING THERE. SO I CALLED HER. NO, SHE HADN'T HEARD. I GAVE UP AND WENT TO BED.

MONDAY, JUNE 1----I FOUND MYSELF STILL "WALKING WITH SORROW" AS THAT BOOK HAD SAID AND WEEPS IN MY TUMMY. CHANGES. I'D HAVE TO SNAP OUT OF IT AND FIND NEW THINGS TO DO. IF THEY OPENED THE POOL, AT LEAST I COULD WANDER DOWN THERE AND CHAT TO PEOPLE. BUT WOULD I BE ABLE TO SWIM WITH MY BAD ANKLE? I THOUGHT RUEFULLY ABOUT IF I'D HAVE TO FORFEIT THAT PLEASURE? AUNTIE ALICE PRESSURING ME TO COME DOWN AND SEE HER: WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO NOW: DENNIS AND ABBIE GONE, NO PLACE TO STOP OVER OVERNIGHT. AND THEY WOULD NOT HAVE A PHONE IN THEIR NEW HOME..I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CHAT WITH THEM...WELL, I COULD START WORKING ON MY STORY OF THE CABIN BUILDING..THAT WOULD BE MY XMAS PRESENT TO THEM? LIKE IT OR NOT?

I WANDERED AROUND LISTLESSLY, WROTE OUT BILLS, THEN DECIDED I'D BETTER GET OUT A CHANGE OF SCENE. I GOT READY TO GO TO MONROE, STARTED DOWN THE PATH..ALL THAT WOODS BEAUTY AND NOBODY TO SHARE IT WITH...SUDDENLY I BEGAN TO CRY. AND LUMPS IN MY THROAT AS I DROVE DOWN..PAST CASES..NOBODY THERE..PAST THE COMMUNITY PARK..THE TREE ORVILLE HAD BEEN WORKING ON,,GONE,, ONLY THE STUMP...NO CARETAKERS THERE ANY MORE.

IN MONROE I WENT TO THE LIBRARY, JUST TO WHILE AWAY TIME. A KIDS BAND CAME MARCHING BY..THE HIGH SCHOOL BAND. I THOUGHT, RATHER YSTERICALLY, WELL I HAVEN'T BEEN TO TOWN FOR AWHILE, BUT YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO GET THE BAND OUT! I SAT IN THE CAR, FEELING LISTLESS, SLEEPY. THE NOON WHISTLE (SMALL TOWN) JERKED ME AWAKE. I WANDERED LISTLESSLY AROUND TOWN. DUNBAR'SS THE LUMBER COMPANY. HURT. NEVER MORE. I'D TOLD THEM I'D BE IN TO GIVE THEM OUR ORDER... \$150 SAVED AND READY TO GO. NOT NOW. NEVER MORE. NOTHING MORE TO BUY FOR CABIN. IT HAD BEEN FUN. I WANDERED MORE ALL INTEREST, REASON TO BUY THINGS FOR CABIN GONE. I JUST WANDERED AIMLESSLY AROUND TOWN. THEN WENT HOME.

WAS CHEERED THERE BY SEEING MY ATTEMPT AT GARDEING FLOURISHING THE LETTUCE, THE GRASS, THE BEANS, MY LITTLE BOX GARDEN..WELL..THINGS TO SUSTAIN ME KEEP ME BUSY...

That evening mike called. GIVING HIS SANCTION TO SELL ED'S HOUSE. AND I CONFESSED TO HIM THAT I HAD NO SENTIMENTAL ATTACHMENTS TO THE PLACE. CHANGES. END OF ERAS.

TUESDAY, JUNE 2-- WAS CLASS DAY AT SENIOR CENTER. GAVE ME A CHANCE AT A BREAK IN THE DOLDRUMS I'D FALLEN INTO, GET AWAY FROM MY GHOSTS. AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE A GOOD, INTERESTING, SOCIAL AND PRODUCTIVE DAY. GAVE ME HOPE THAT I HAD OTHER THINGS.

AS I LEFT. THE MAIL. FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE. WOULD GIVE ME SOME INKLING OF

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WHAT MY COSTS WOULD BE IN THIS NEW..AND LAST..DWELLING. BUT I WAS INSULTED! ALL OUR WORK AND INVESTMENT! THE CABIN EVALUATED AT \$25,010; LAND \$ 6000: TOATL \$ 31,010. AND MY TAX WOULD BE \$465 FOR YEAR? I WOULD HAVE TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON <sup>that</sup>

AT THE SENIOR CENTER: I SPENT MOST OF DAY THERE. ATE LUNCH THERE, CLASSS AND THEN HAD ALL THOSE APPOINTMENTS WITH BETTY AND THE MEDIACAL STAFF ABOUT MY INSURANCE AND SO ON FOR FOOT. I RATHER PANICKED: THIS WAS THE NEXT TO LAST CLASS: WHAT WOULD I DO THEN? BUT IT WAS A FUN DAY. LOTS OF TALK AND LAUGHTER. IN CLASS I WAS THE WIT: HAD THEM ALL LAUGHING. THEN BETTY AND PEGGY AND I WENT DOWN TO BETTY'S OFFICE. I'D NEVER BEEN THERE BEFORE. (AND DIDN'T KNOW I WAS TO SPEND MUCH TIME THERE. IN DAYS TO COME.) WE HAD FUN, LAUGHING AND JOKING. THEY BOTH HAD BOY FRIENDS SN AND WERE KIDDING ABOUT GETTING ME ONE. AND <sup>VI invited</sup> PROMISED TO COME UP AND SEE MY CABIN.

I CAME HOME MUCH CHEERED AND STOPPED AND TALKED TO CASE..ABOUT OUR ASSESSMENTS ETC. THINGS LOOKED MUCH BRIGHTER. I HAD NEW FRIENDS..A NEW LIFE?

ALL THIS SUNNY OUTLOOK TO BE WASHED AWAY IN THE NEXT WEEK... <sup>g</sup>

WED. JUNE 3-- RAIN. I CONFINED TO CABIN AND GLOOM, PUTTERING AT NON CABIN RELATED CHORES, TRYING TO REACH AND STRAIGHTEN OUT MY ~~MAX~~ SENIOR CENTER "HELPERS" PAST AND TO BE. NOT BETTY AND PEGGY. ASSIGNED "HELPERS".. A FRUSTRATING PUZZLING VAGUE RUNAROUND. AND VERY ALARMED BY "FLASHING LIGHTS " IN MY LEFT EYE. ALL WITH AN OBLIGATO OF DENNIS "UNDONES"..THE WOOD HE DIDN'T GET SAWED FOR ME...THE UNFINISHED BATHROOM.. THURSDAY: FRIDAY..FRUSTRATING AND UNSUCCESSFUL CALLS AND A TRIP INTO MONROE AND TALKING TO CASE, MARIE, PEOPLE TRYING TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE TAXES, FIRE INSURANCE, THINGS LIKE THAT. AND ALL THE TIME RAIN, RAIN RAIN. DOWNPOURS, ROADS FLOODED, EVEN POWER OFF THURSDAY. IT JUST DIDN'T SEEM POSSIBLE IT COULD RAIN SO MUCH.

ITRIED TO EASE THE ISOLATION..NOT EVEN ANY MAIL FROM ANYONE..BY MAKING A FAREWELL CARD FOR CLASS TEACHER, WRITING MIKE, CALLING MY SISTER IN CALIFORNIA. MADE A WASHING AND ERRANDS TRIP TO MONROE ~~AND BOUGHT A HAMMOCK~~, BUT IT WAS A MISERABLE WEEK, ALL PROJECTS STOPPED AND STYMPIED BY THE ENDLESS RAIN. WHILE OUTSIDE THE "JUNGLE" GREW AROUND ME SO FAST I HAD FEARS I'D BE BURIED ALIVE.

BY THE END OF THE WEEK, WHEN IT STILL PURING DOWN, BOTH MY FIGURING AND WEATHER REPORTS AGREED: A MOST UNUSUAL WET SPELL. MY FIRST SPRING IN CABIN!

BY SUNDAY I FOUND SOME RELIEF BY GOING UP AND TACKLING THE LOFT, SETTING UP MY DESK, GETTING OUT THINGS I'D WAITED SO LONG TO BE ABLE TO DO. MY ART TOOLS, EVEN BEGAN TO SKETCH A LITTLE. AND! FOUND A VERY DEAD MOUSE UP THERE! AND I HAD TO KEEP REMINDING MYSELF..THE UTTER SILENCNE!! WAS WHAT I HAD CRAVED WHEN I IN THE CITY. MONDAY WAS ANOTHER PUTTER DAY ALONE IN RAIN.

TUESDAY, JUNE 9, -- MY LAST CLASS DAY. BOTH THE WEATHER AND MY FOOT WERE BETTER. I WENT TO CLASS ARMED WITH SKETCHES AND CARTOONS I'D MADE. AND THEY WERE A HUGE SUCCESS. AT END OF CLASS I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND BOB, THE TEACHER AND I EMBRACING: WE'D HAD A MEETING OF MINDS, THOUGH OUR TWO FAT LIITTLE BODIES WAS MORE LIKE A MEETING OF TWO PILLOWS. WAS RATHER SAD. EVIDENTLY THERE WOULD BE NO MORE CLASS..FUNDING DIFFICULTIES. SOME OF THE WOMEN WANTED TO CARRY IT ON BY THEM SELVES, BUT THE ONES I LIKED BEST DEMURRED SO, SO DID I. <sup>3 feet</sup> -A GOSSIP GAGGLE NOT THE IDEA.

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SAD, TOO, WHEN BETTY AND PEGGY ANNOUNCED THEY MIGHT BE TRANSFERRED TO THE EVERETT OFFICE. SEEMS THERE WERE BIG SHAKE UPS IN SOCIAL SERVICES GOING ON. (I DIDN'T QUITE REALIZE IT THEN, BUT IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES CUTBACKS BY THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION.)

I WENT DOWN TO MONROE, AFTERWARDS AND BOUGHT THE LAST HAMMOCK THEY HAD. ONLY FUN THING I'D PURCHASED IN AGES, IT SEEMED.

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10-- I WAS HOME ALONE IN THE RAIN AGAIN. THIS TIME A THUNDER STORM. AND I NEARLY BLEW UP. SOCIAL TRIES? TRYING TO CALL THAT SENIOR SERVICE "HELPER" AGAIN. HAD A HELL OF A TIME GETTING HER AND PHONE TROUBLES, MAN ON LINE CHEWING ME OUT AND CRACKLE AND POP NOISES. AND THEN I CALLED PEGGY AND SUGGESTED A LUNCH DATE FRIDAY. NO, SHE HAD A MEETING IN SEATTLE SHE HAD TO GO TO. THEN I CALLED CASE AND ASKED HIM IF HE HAD NEWSPAPERS FOR MY STOVE FIRE. LEAVE EM ON THE PORCH, HE SNAPPED. I GAVE UP ON THAT! DAY.

IN THE EVENING I STOOD BY THE FIRE I'D BUILT AND DRANK SOME FIREWATER AND CRACKED SHELLFISH I'D BOUGHT WITH MY BARE HANDS AND TEETH AND LISTENED TO THE CRASH OF THUNDER ABOUT THE CABIN AND THE POUNDING RAIN WHILE THE RADIO HAD A PROGRAM WHICH HAD RECORDED THE EERIE SOUNDS OF HYENAS FEEDING ON A KILL. VERY PRIMEVAL! AND VERY APT TO THE WAY I FELT! THEN THE STORM ABATED TO A SUDDEN SILENCE.

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THURSDAY, JUNE 11-- AND I AWOKKE LATE THE NEXT MORNING AND STEPPED OUT OF BED INTO A POOL OF SUNSHINE! THE STORM IS OVER?

I PACED AND PACED, THINKING ABOUT HOW ABORTIVE ALL THOSE ATTEMPTS WERE TO GET HELP. OH SURE! SURE! I'D ASSURED THE KIDS: I'LL BE ALL RIGHT! THEY HAVE ALL KINDS OF SOCIAL SERVICES TO CHECK ON YOU AND HELP YOU. HA! WHEN IT CAME RIGHT DOWN TO IT, ALL KINDS OF NIGGLING EXCUSES AND RESTRICTIONS.

THE SOUND OF A BIG TRUCK FUSSING AROUND DOWNTHE STREET. BUT I COULDN'T SEE WHAT IT WAS, SO ISOLATED I WAS BY THE GREEN JUNGLE OVERGROWTH. I GOT DRESSED AND WENT OUT TO CHECK. IT WAS MARK WITHEROW, THAT YOUNG NEIGHBOR DOWN THERE. HE'D GOTTEN A BLADE IN TO CLEAR OUT HIS SIDE YARD, WHICH SENT ME OFF INTO RATHER BITTER THOUGHTS ABOUT HOW FEW MEN THERE WERE IN MY FUTURE TO HELP ME, NOW THAT DENNIS WOULD BE GONE. AND HOW TOO CONCERNED IN THEIR OWN AFFAIRS THE FEW HERE WERE TO HELP..THE CASES, THE NEIGHBORS.

WAS THAT CLEAR SKY? I DIVESTED THE CAR OF ITS PLASTIC COVER AND NEARLY DROWNED MYSELF IN THE LAKE OF COLLECTED WATER ON IT.

THE BEGAN A PATCHY DAY OF SUN AND SHADOW, GOOD AND BAD TRIVIA, ENCOURAGING, DISCOURAGING. FIRST, I GIRDED MYSELF TO CALL BETTY. SHE SEEMED TO HAVE MORE KNOW HOW ABOUT ALL THOSE CONVOLUTIONS OF SOCIAL SERVICES. I GOT HER AND WAS CHEERED BY A LONG AND GOOD TALK. ITOLD HER ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES I'D HAD AND SHE GAVE ME SOME INSIDE SCUTTLEBUTT ABOUT AND SOME OTHER NUMBERS TO TRY. DON'T GET DISCOURAGED! SHE SAID. WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU! (I NEEDED THAT!) I ASKED HER IF SHE WANTED TO GO TO LUNCH THE NEXT DAY? SURE! SHE SAID.

THEN AS SO-WELCOME BLUE SKY TEASED WITH LITTLE CLOUDS ACROSS, SO MY DAY WENT: I FOUND THE ABALONE SHELLS FROM MY SHELL FISH DINNER THE NIGHT BEFORE I HAD WANTED TO KEEP AND THOUGHT I'D THROWN OUT: I'D MENDED THE LITTLE CUTTING BOARD MIKE HAD MADE ME AND I'D BROKEN THE NIGHT BEFORE AND HAD PUT IT OUT IN SUN TO DRY. BIRD SHIT ON! I GOT THE MAIL: MY DIVIDEND CHECK!—BUT NEGATED BY BILL FOR ALL THE GAS

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I'D LET DENNIS CHARGE ON MY CREDIT CARDS. THE LOCAL PAPER: "NO SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOUNTS ON PROPERTY TAX FOR THOSE WITH SOCIAL SECURITY OR STATE RETIREMENT" I CUSSED. THAT LET ME OUT (OF DISCOUNT) AND, SEEMS TO ME THOSE ARE THE ONES WHO NEEDED IT THE MOST?.... SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE REFRIGERATOR..EVERYTHING FREEZING IN IT....

CAR RADIO ANTENNA, LONG BROKEN. A SPOT OF SUN. I WENT OUT TO WORK ON IT TO THE NOISE OF UNFRIENDLY NEIGHBORS: MARK USING THAT NOISY RIG: MRS. ALLEN BITCHING AT HER KIDS AND USING WEED CUTTER. I SORT OF FIXED ANTENNA AND THEN JUST SAT IN CAR AND/OR LEANED AGAINST THE WHEEL OF ABSORBING THE ONLY SPOT OF SUN UNTIL..MY PHONE RINGING!!!!?? AND ME CLEAR testing tes testing testing testing testing grrr AND ME CLEAR OUT THERE! THE ONLY TIME MY PHONE EVER RANG AND I EXPECTING SO MANY CALLS AND AN ACCIDENT ON NEWS THAT MIGHT HAVE PERTAINED TO DENNIS ON HIS NEW WEED JOB..ONLY PARTLY CAUGHT.."MAN KILLED ON WEED KILLER..ABOUT DENNIS" AGE..FROM SEATTLE". I STUMBLED OVER ALL THOSE GODDAMNED ROOTS IN PATH ON MY LAME FOOT TRYING TO MAKE IT TO PHONE. IT STOPPED RINGING JUST AS I GOT THERE, GASPING.

I WENT BACK OUT. IT WAS NICE TO HAVE THINGS START TO DRY OUT, BUT MY ATTEMPTS TO USE THE MACHETE ON THE DEVOURING BLACKBERRY VINES FEEBLE BECAUSE OF MY ARTHRITIC WRIST. AND THE SLUGS WERE DEVOURING MY GARDEN FASTER THAN I COULD REJOICE OVER A NEW GREEN SHOOT. DINNER/NEWS TIME. I GAVE UP AND WENT IN.

LATER IN EVENING, ABOUT NINE O'CLOCK PHONE RANG! I RACED FOR IT. MY MISSED CALL!? SOME YOUNG KID: WRONG NUMBER.

SOME DAYS ARE LIKE THAT. I FELL ASLEEP.

FRIDAY, JUNE 12--THIS TO BE A FUN DAY: A LUNCHEON DATE WITH A NEW FRIEND. AT SIGHT OF POURING RAIN AGAIN I BEGAN CUSSING. AND I CUSSED AND CUSSED AND CUSSED. EVERYTHING WENT WRONG. I DRAGGED THE GARBAGE OUT IN MUD AND RAIN. I MANAGED TO PRIMP UP THE BEST I COULD. THEN THE CAR WOULDN'T START. AND WHEN IT DID THAT FRIGHTENING SMOKING AND OMINOUS NOISES AS I BATTLED WHAT HAD TO BE THE UNLUCKIEST TRAFFIC PROBLEMS FOR A CAR ABOUT TO GIVE UP AND DIE ANY MINUTE. I WAS A NERVOUS WRECK, RATHER THAN THE CAR BY THE TIME I GOT TO THE CENTER.

THERE IT SEEMED A CHAOTIC MADHOUSE. I FINALLY GLEANED IT WAS THE DAY OF THEIR DANCE. TO LOIS" QUERY IF I WERE STAYING FOR I DEMURRED..MY FOOT AND ASK HER OR SOMEONE TO GO DOWN THE STAIRS I COULDN'T NEGOTIATE AND TELL BETTY I WAS THERE.

TOOK AGES FOR BETTY TO COME, AND THEN SHE WANTED TO KNOW IF SHE COULD BRING A GUEST? WHAT COULD I SAY? THE GUEST TURNED OUT TO BE A NICE ENOUGH, BUT NOT EXCITING MAN. OUR CARPENTER! BETTY HISSED. USED TO BE PEGGY'S BOY FRIEND. I WAS SURPRISED WHEN HE USHERED US TO A VERY FANCY LIMOUSINE..HIS. WE WENT TO THE HOSPITAL FOR LUNCH, I CURIOUS..A HOSPITAL FOR LUNCH!?

IT WAS VERY NICE ALL NEW, BUT A CAFETERIA. I GROANED INWARDLY. KNEW IT. I A BAD CASE OF SHAKES, THE CAR AND ALL. I COULDN'T CARRY THE TRAY. BETTY DID. AND TENDED ME LIKE ONE OF THE DISABLED ANCIENTS AT THE CENTER. PARKINSON'S ISN'T IT? SHE WHISPERED TO ME. AND THEN I WAS! A WRECK. I HOPE NOT! I QUAILED, FRESH FROM THE TRAGEDY OF MY COUSINS PARKINSONS.

WE WENT BACK TO THE CENTER. TWO THINGS TO TELL HERE. THE REST I WILL PUT AN INSERT

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IN [[NOT PERTAIN TO CABIN STORY, BUT WANT TO KEEP FOR POSSIBLY OTHER USES SOMETIME?]] THERE WAS A TERRIBLE ELECTRICAL STORM. THE POWER WENT OFF, JUST AS THEY ALL GOT READY FOR THEIR DANCE.

LATER I WENT DOWN INTO MONROE AND FOUND OUT THAT MY "IMPORTANT" PHONE CALL WAS ONLY THE CLERK TELLING ME PAPER I'D ASKED ABOUT HAD COME IN.

Insert June 12

SATURDAY, JUNE 13-----I WOKE LATE. AND AFTER THAT SOCIAL DAY IT SEEMED MORE LONELY AND SILENT THAN EVER AT CABIN, ESPECIALLY WHEN, LATER, THAT WEIRD MIST RISING ON THE CUL DE SAC A BIT O SUN IT? GAVE ME THE IMPRESSION OF BEING ISOLATED FROM WORLD, LIKE THAT PLAY "BRIGADOON". YET I DIDN'T MIND TOO MUCH. IN A WAY IT WAS KIND OF A RELIEF, JUST ME AND CABIN AND CAR, AFTER ALL THAT COUNTRY BUMPKIN EXPERIENCE THE DAY BEFORE. (SNOB!)

THE WEATHER CONTINUED UNSETTLED ALL DAY. ONE ONLY HAD TIME TO SAY THE WORD "SUN" THAN IT WENT. LATER WHEN I WENT OUT ON PORCH TO GET WOOD FOR A FIRE, THE WOOD SEEMED WET BY JUST "OSMOSIS". AND THERE WAS A SMELL OF MILDEW AND DECAY.

I SPENT THE DAY ON A QUICK RUN TO STORE, AFTER WHICH I HAD FUN COOKING ALL THAT GOOD FOOD ON MY LIL STOVE..IN EVENING. AND TRYING AND GETTING MY SISTER IN LAW, PAULA, AND CATCHING UP WITH ALL THEIR NEWS AND PLANS. AN WORKING ON FINANCES.

BUT THE BIGGEST HIGHLIGHT OF THE DAY WAS THE MAIL BRINING A LETTER FROM DENNIS: "I'LL COME TO VISIT YOU WHEN I COME TO MOVE OUR STUFF AND FAMILY..FOUND A HOUSE TO RENT..3 BEDROOM LOG HOUSE...<sup>15</sup> MILES SOUTHWEST OF HERE (COLVILLE)..BARN..CREEK.. GRAIN FIELDS AND WOODS..\$325 A MONTH...RATHER IDYLIC..3 BEEF COWS. I FEEL OUT OF PLACE WITH ALL THESE FARMERS..THEY KEEP TELLING ME IT'S PRETTY LAID BACK (???) HERE AND THAT THEY ARE CONSIDERING IT AN INVESTMENT IN ME TO LEARN ALL THIS WEED AND SPRAY STUFF THIS SUMMER. BESIDES THAT, WHO ELSE WOULD STAND BETWEEN THE ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND FARMERS FOR \$1000 A MONTH AND NO BENEFITS?...COUNTRY HERE IS BEAUTIFUL..NO DESERT IN SIGHT..ALL WOODS AND GREEN VALLEYS..BEATS THE HELL OUT OF ALKI..IF ONLY MY FEET WERE ON THE GROUND. GOING TO GODFREY'S THIS WEEK END... (MOVING ARRANGEMENTS) THOUGHT ABOUT DRIVING TO SEATTLE..BUT SEVEN TIMES..\$40 ROUND TRIP GREYHOUND BUS.(????) ANYWAY WE'LL HAVE TO PLAN ON WORKING ON YOUR PLACE WHEN THIS CONTRACT RUNS OUT IN NOVEMBER..ALTHO THEY ARE SAYING THAT THE SOIL CONSERVATION CORPS HERE MIGHT NEED AF FORESTER. WE'LL FIGURE THAT OUT LATER. SEE YOU IN A FEW WEEKS, LOVE, DENNIS." THE LETTER LEFT ME A LITTLE CONFUSED, NOT KNOWING JUST WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT..JOBWISE. BUT I WAS AWFULLY GLAD TO HEAR FROM HIM AND THAT HE HAD A CHANCE TO TRY OUT THE KIND OF LIVING HE'D BEEN WANTING.

MY EYE WAS BOTHERING ME AGAIN THAT DAY..SEEMED.."INFECTED"?

AND, YES, I SPENT SOME BROODY MOMENTS THINKING ABOUT ALL THAT BUMPKIN "ROMANCING" AND FACING THE FACT THAT I WAS UNLIKELY TO MEET "MY KIND OF GUY" IN THIS RURAL SETTING AND THAT MY ROMANCING DAYS WERE OVER. BETTY SUMMED IT UP: YOU UP THERE ALONE, SCARES THE GUYS OFF, SMALL COMMUNITY..TALK! TALK! TALK!

SUNDAY, JUNE 14--WOKE TO ANOTHER DISMAL DAY AND DISMAL THOUGHTS. WHILED AWAY THE DAY WRITING LETTERS TO M AND M AND DENNIS, FOOLING AROUND SORTING OUT MY ART TOOLS, TRYING A SPONGY WALK OR TWO OUTSIDE AND JUST ADJUSTING TO GETTING READY TO "LIVE OUT HER DAYS" AS I HAD JUST READ SOMEPLACE.



I FELT HER OUT ABOUT IT. BOY THAT'S GOING TO BE A WEIRDO! SHE THE "TEACHER"... I WANCERED TO LOBBY WH ALL THIS MYSTERIOUS STUFF WAS GOING ON.. PEOPLE STANDING AROUND.. MUCH TALK OF FUNDS. AND M\$\$ CHAN HANDS; ETC. ETC.???? OH. FIRST. SAY, CALL BETTY AN TELL HER I'M HERE, WILLYA? I FELT UNABLE TO NEGOTI STAIRS. SHE DID. SHE SAYS COME ON DOWN. MY FOOT , SAID.. STAIRS. OH. I'LL CALL HER BACK..NONON... BUT SHE DID... SO I STOOD AROUND AND WAITED. BROKEN CONVERSATIONS... ONE NEVER DOES! GET TO FINISH A SUBJECT WITH LOIS...JABBER JABBER.. CONFU I TRIED TO CATCH SOMETHING TOMAKE SOME SENSE OUT O IT ALL,, BUT COULDN'T. THAT OLD GAL WITH THE \$\$\$ E YOU STAYING FOR THE DANCE? SHE ASKED. OH! I'D FORG ALL ABOUT THEIR FRIDAY DANCE. N O NO..MY FOOT..(ET I HAD NOTICED THAT ALL THE OLD GALS WERE ALL GUSSI UP AND MORE MEN THAN USUAL AROUND... SO. THAT WAS

I WAITED AND WAITED FOR BETTY. COULD HAVE GONE DOV THERE AND BACK IN TIME SHE TOOK. WHERE ARE YOU GOING FOR LUNCH? LOIS ASKED ME. SO SHE KNEW? OH.. I DUNNO I SAID... SHE MENTIONED PETOSA'S (I SURE DIDN'T WANT TO GO THERE!) OR THE HOSPITAL, SHE SAID. THEY USUSUALL GO THERE. OH YES..WHERE IS! THIS HOSPITAL?ETC ETC ETC.

FINALLY BETTY CAME UP THE STAIRS. I WAS SURPRISED SHE WASN'T DRESSED UP MORE. HAD A ON A DINGY LITT RAINCOAT SLICKER THING. DO YOU MIND? SHE SAID BEF SHE WAS ALLTHE WAY UP THER STAIRS..IF SOMEONE EL COMES WITHKTX US? (I DID VERY MUCH. THE WHOLE POI WAS R TO GET OFF ALONE AND SCUTTLEBUTT AND TALK BUSINESS.) OH NO.(WHATDINGY OLD WOMAN WAS SHE TAK I KNEW PEGGY GONE. SHE TURNED TO A RATHER NEITHER THIS OR THAT MAN FOLLOWING HER UP THE STAIRS. TH IS OUR CARPENTER... HI. I SIAD. THEN HE WENT OFF SOMEPLACE AND SHE EXPLAINED TO ME: THAT'S PEGGY'S EX BOY FRIEND .HE'S FEELING REAL BAD, SO I THOUGH I'D ASK HIM TO COME. (JEEZ!) HE CAME BACK.. SHALL WE TAKE MY CAR? OH YES. B. SAID. SO WE WENT OUT.. INTO THE RAIN, ETC.. B. HAD SAID. OH. HE'S OK. AS I'D SAID WELL I THOUGHT WE COULD TALK. HE WON'T TELL.

AND THERE WAS THE MOST BEEYOOTIFUL! CAR PARKED OUT THERE!

WE CAN ALL RIDE IN FRONT, HE SAID, MOVING THINGS. (4)  
THEY IOPENED THE DOOR.. AND I GASPED. IT WAS THE  
MOST BEAUTIFUL! PLUSH DARK GREEN INTERIOR... PLUSH  
AND NAUGAHYDE..JUST EXACTLY! THE COLOR OF MY COAT  
AND CLOTHES I HAD ON. WE JOKED AND KIDDED: DO I GO  
WITH THE CAR OR IT WITH ME? WE CLIMBED IN ..B. IN  
THE MIDDLE.

I WASN'T FEELING VERY WITTY. ALL MY QUIPS FLOWN.  
AS WE HEADED WEST ON SR2 (WHEREIN HELL ARE WE GOING?)  
AND PASSED PETOSA'S.. B. KIND OF INTIMATED SHE'D LIKE  
TO GO THERE..OH I'M KIND OF CURIOUS ABOUT THIS HOSPITAL  
THING, I SAID. LET'S GO TO THE HOSPITAL, CLIFF NESS  
(FOR THAT WAS HIS NAME SAID.) I'D QUIPPED ON THAT, THO.  
WHAT'S A CLIFFNESS? IS THAT A NOUN?....

SO WE DROVE UP IN FRONT OF THIS BEEYOOTIFUL NEW POSH  
BUILDING. IT WAS RAINING LIKE HELL STILL..AGAIN. CLIFF  
SAID HE'D LET US OUT AND GO PARK (SO NICE! TO HAVE  
A MAN! @ AGAIN.) AND B. INSISTED THAT I PUT ON A  
RAIN BONNET SHE PRODUCED. THO I DEMURRED...(MY  
HAIR!)... SO WE WENT IN..IT WAS A VERY VERY FAWNCY!  
BUILDING! ALL NEW ETC. I HAD A DEJA VU FEELING.  
CLIFF JOINED US AND I FOLLOWED THEM. CONFUSED AND  
THEN WE CAME OUT IN THIS GORGEOUS! CAFETERIA! AGAIN  
DEH DEJA VU FEELING.(BUT MY INSIDES QUAILED: CAFE  
TERIA! AND ME WITH MY HEAVY PURSE AND SHAKES.)  
THE MENU..POSTED..B. SHOWED ME. (OH BOY! SHRIMP  
LOUIE! BEEN AGES!) I DIDN'T EVEN LOOK AT THE PRICE.  
MY PURSE FULL.(IT WAS ONLY UNDER \$3 AS IT TURNED  
OUT..AND VERY! GOOD AND VERY! GENEROUS SERVING..)  
I..I..AS B. HANDED ME A TRAY WITH A COFFEE CUP ON  
IT..( I KNEW! I JUST COULDN'T! SHAKES.) UH..TEA...  
I PICKED UP THE PYREX HOT WATER URN..MY HAND FLOPPED.  
I..BETTY?? I'LL DO IT, SHE SAID. NOW YOU JUST LEAVE  
IT THERE AND I'LL CARRY IT FOR YOU (DAMN AND GRR!)  
AND SO...SHE TREATED ME JUSGT LIKE ONE OF THE ANCIENTS.  
I WAS SO! MAD!) I KEPT TRYING TO EXPLAIN..CAR..SHOOK..  
ETC. SHE IGNORED ME. LATER WHEN I'D MANAGED JUST  
BY SHEER WILL TO PICK UP MY CUP , ETC. AND SHAKES  
MORE OR LESS WWUIT I MENTIONED IT AGAIN.. MAKING  
EXCUSE. WELL, IT'S PARKINSON'S ISN'T IT? I NEARLY  
FELL THROUGH THE FLOOR! I HOPE! NOT! I CIRED. DON'T  
MENTION.. MY COUSIN... (BOY! THAT WAS AN OUCH!)

SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME')..WELL, IT WAS VERY NOISY  
IN THERE...AMNY MANY POSH PEOPLE..HELLO! THERE!  
BETTY CRIED TO SOME OLDER WOMAN WHO CAME IT... THAT  
THE MAYOR SHE SAID. AND ALL THESE WELL DRESSED PEOPLE  
AND MEN FOLLOWING HER... WONDER WHAT'S UP? SHE SAID  
EVERYBODY! EATS HERE, ETC. ETC.I CAN SEE WHY..I SAID  
BEST RESTUARANT I'VE FOUND IN MONROE (AND I WONDER  
WHERE THEY GOT THE \$\$\$? I THOUGHT)....

WELL.CLIFF WASN'T MUCH FUN. BUT HE STARTED WAITING  
US ETC. MANNERS.. AND I SIMMERED DOWN. AND WAS ABLE  
TO EAT AND RDRINK MY TEA, ETC.HE AND B. GABBLED. I  
COULDN'T HEAR IT WAS SO NOISY...I KEPT TRYING TO  
BRING UP MY DORRIE PROBLEM AND CALLS, ETC.. (BUSINESS  
BUT SHE... KEPT...BEING MORE INTERESTED IN OTHER  
THINGS.WHAT? I SAID. DIDN' 'T CATCH THAT. CLIFFHAD  
SAID HE'D SEEN A CABIN UP ON RIVER... WOULD LOVE!  
TO LIVE UP THERE,ALONE, ETC... SO YOU WANT TO BE A  
RECLUSE? SHE CHARMED HIM....CARPENTER? I ASKED. JUST  
TO MAKE CONVERSTATION.. OH.. I HAVE SOME WORK I MIGHT  
HAVE TO HAVE DONE... DO YOU? PART TIME WORK?... HE  
AND B. LOOKED AT EACH OTHER..???? OH..YES. YOU CAN  
CALL BETTY. IT WASN'T UNTIL MUCHLATER THAT I  
REALIZED WHAT IT SOUNDED LIKE: ME ON THEMACHINE?  
AND I CAUGHT B. INHALL WHEN CLIFFWENT OUT TO GET  
THE CAR.AND TOLD HER. DIDN'T REALIZE.. SHE JUST  
LAUGHED.(I WASN' THATINTERESTED IN HIM. DULL.)

WELL WHAT ELSE HAPPENED IN THAT STRANGE "RETURN  
TO MYOWN LIFE STYLE?. LOOK! I CRIED.. THAT  
BEAUTIFUL PATIO OUT THERE: A DELG DELUGE! WHY..  
IT'S HAIL! I CRIED. I SAT UTTERLY ASTOUNDED. NEVER  
SEEN SUCH RAIN IN MY LIFE. DIDN'T SEEM TO BOTHER  
ANYONE ELSE.

WELL WE GOT THROUGH OUR LUNCH. I'D MANAGED PRETTY  
WELL. DESPITE. WAS "BACK TO NORMAL". WE WERE OVER  
ONEP.M. BUT DIDN'T SEEM TO BOTHER B.I HADN'T BEEN  
ABLE TO NEGOTIATE ONE BIT OF "BUSINESS" WITH HER.

WE GOT UP TO LEAVE. B. SAID..YOU AND C. GO THAT  
WAY AND I'LL MEET YOU LATER..WANTA CHECK WHO'S IN  
HOSPITAL ETC. ??? IT WAS STILL POURING "CATS AND  
DOGS"...I'LL GO GET THE CAR, C. SAID... AND YOU  
WAIT FOR B. MEANTIME. THEY HAD TAKEN ME ON A  
TOUR OF SOME (VERY CRUDE) OIL

PAINTINGS..LOCAL GAL..MARKED FOR SALE \$100. (5)  
I BOUGHT ONE, CLIFF SAID. AND I BOUGHT ONE OF LOI'S'  
FOR # \$35 B. PUT IN...I DIDN'T DARE SAY ANYTHING,  
BUT MY INSIDES CURDLED! I LAUGHED.. WELL. I WOULDN'T  
DARE! ASK \$100 FOR ONE OF MINE! GUESSI'D BETTER GET  
MY PAINTS OUT(WRITELY)?

WELL. I WAITED FOR B. MEANTIME CLIFF DROVE HIS GORGEOUS  
MACHINE RIGH TUP THE RAMP TO THE FRONT DOOR! HOW'S  
THAT! FOR SERVICE?HE ASKED.JUST LIKE AN AMBULANCE!  
I QUIPPED. YOU SIT IN THE MIDDLE THIS TIME! B.  
WHIPSERED TO ME. I TRIED TO GET IN.. MY COAT CAUGHT..  
THE SEAT BELT THING WAS RIGHTIN MY CRTOCH.ERR..UHH..  
I SAID. NOT DARING TO SAY WHAT I WOULD HAVE..@ ..  
FIRENDS.. NO NO IT'S ALL RIGHT.. ISADI, BUT B. REACHED  
UNDER AND MOVED IT.

SO. WE WENT BACK AND CLIFF LET US OUT AT THE DOOR.  
AND WENT TO PARK THE CAR. EVERYTHING..PLANTS, ETC..  
HAD BEEN FLATTENED BY THE STORM. ((WHOOHS! I  
JUST WENT AND THREW UP. ALL THATWINE, ETC. BEEN A  
LONGTIME! SINCE I'VE DONE THAT!))... SO. I'VE GOT TO  
LEANR TO WRITE WITHOUT PROPS?))

FROM THEN ON IT WAS UTTER CHAOS! NOISY! GAD! THE  
DANCE WAS IN FULL SWING... B. WENTOFF TO DANCE WITH  
SOMEONE. CAME BACK TO WHIPSER TO ME THAT THIS WAS  
HER CURRENT GUY...(A BALD HEADED MAN.)I WAS IRKED TO  
HELL. NOT ABOUT ALLTHE FUN AND GAMES GOING ON, BUT  
I WAS GETTING ABSOLUTELY NOWHERE! WITH MY BUSINESS  
I'D COME TO TRANSCAT WITH HER... EVERYTIME I BROUGHT  
IT UP SHEW AS FLITTING OFF SMOOMEPLACE... CHARMING  
PEOPLE.. ETC. FINALLY!FINALLY! SHESAID..LET'S GO  
DOWNSTAIRS TO MY OFFICE. SO WE DID, I SETTLING DOWN  
TO DOBUSINESS AFTER SHE GOT THROUGH WITH THIS BIT  
OF CHITCHAT AND GOSSIP SHE SEEMED TO BE HUNG UP ON.

AN HOUR AND A HALFXTERX AND TWO CIGS I DIDN'T WANT  
LATER... SHE WAS STILL TALKING NON STOP.I COULDN'T  
GET A WORD IN EDGEWISE. INTENSE DETAILED RELIVING  
OF HER WHOLELIFE AND THE LIFE STORIES OF PEGGY...  
ALLTHOS PEOPLEUSPSTAIRS ETC. YES. YES. I KEPT NODDING,  
EYEINGTHE CLOCK...HER CHATTER WAS SCATTERED AND  
CONFUSED.. FR JUMPING FROM ONE THING TO ANOTHER...  
A LOT OF IT I'D HEARD BEFORE...

SHE'D GIVEN ME A CARD BUSINESS CARD OF DORRIE'S..  
(BUIG FAT OLD GAL) WITH "IF YOU NEEDHE LP, JUST  
CALL!" BY THAT TIME I HAD DEFINITELYR GOTTEN THE  
MESSAGE.(NO HELP HERE. AT ALL!) EITHER THROUGH BET  
OR DORRIE!

MEANTIME I WAS NEARLY OUT OF MY TREE! WITH THAT  
ELEPHANT STOMPING GOING ON NEVER OUR HEADS..(THE  
DANCE.)...SHUT UP IN THAT TINY BASEMENT CUBICLE,  
NO WINDOWS. COULDN'T SEE IF WEATHER... DOOR ON  
AUTOMATIC CLOSE ETC... AND B. GOING ON ON ON ON...  
I FINALLY EYED THE CLOCK.. UH.. MYCAR.. WASHING...  
YOUR CAR? SHE FUMBLER FOR CARDS... A GUY TO FIX...  
NO NO... NO NO.. I WAS TRYING TO CALL TIME ON HER  
NOW,, IF WE CAN JUST CALLTHAT BARABA GAL...(WHAT  
WE'D COME DOWN THERE TO DO..)

SUDDENLY IT WAS PITCH BLACK IN THERE. ALL THE LIGHT  
HAD GONE OFF.I'VE GOT A CANDLE SHE SAID FROM THE  
DARK.WELL I'VE GOT A CIG LIGHTER. LIGHT IT, SHE  
SAID.. S O I DID.. ALMOST BURNING MY THUMB WHILE  
SHE SOUGHT FOR AND LIT A CANDLE. AND THEN..I WANDERED  
OUTO F THERE BAD! (WAS IT STILLDAYLIGHT?)...B. WANDERED  
OUT THE DOOR AND IT CLOSED .LEAVING ME IN PITCH B  
IGROPED FOR THE DOOR. IT WASSTILLDAYLIGHT OUT  
THERE... THEY WERE ALL STANDING AROUND...PEOPLE.  
WHAT HAPPENED? I ASKED..OH...VAGUE ANSWERS AND TH  
THEY ALLWANDERED OFF.. WHILE I WAS TRYINGTO GET A  
LAUGH.NO WAY! AM I STAYING IN THAT ROOM WITH B!(  
(TALK!) SH'ED TOLDME EVERYTHING!THE MOST INTIMATE  
THINGS..A EVERYBODY...((WHICH I HOPE TO LAST LONG  
ENOUGH HERE TO RELATE.)) THEY ALLWANDERED OFF...  
NOANSWERS.. AND THEN B. SAID LET'S GO BACK UPSTAI  
THE DANCE WAS ON AGAIN. OR A MEETING.. B. BOUGHT  
CAKE AND COFFEE..( I THOUGHT IT WAS FREE..) AND  
THEN WE SATDOWN IN THE HUBBUB. THEN THE LIGHTS  
WERE ON AGAIN AND B. WAS OFF DANCING ...LIGHTING  
IN A WHILE TO INTRODUCE ME..TO A FEW WANDERING ME  
OR WOMEN... MOSTLY MEN.. AND POINTING AND SCUTTLE  
BUTTING.YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE! THE JEALOUSIES!  
THAT GO ON HERE..PSST PSST.ETC.I LOOKED AT THAT  
DREARY BUNCH OF JOUNCING OLD BODIES AND THOUGHT..  
(OH GAWD!) THE NOISE WAS DEAFENING. BUT MY FOOT  
WAAS TAPPING TO THE MUSIC.. DANCE WHY DON'T YOU?  
B. NO NO...MY..ER..FOOT...

6

BETTY WAS STILL FLIBBERTY JIBBET. I KEPT TRYING TO PIN HER DOWN. LOIS CAME BY. STILL HERE?... HEY... LET'S GO..B. LED ME TO A WELL FURNISHED "LUNGE", WELL MORE LIKE IT! WHY HADN'T WE COME HERE BEFORE?... BUT I STILL COULDN'T PIN HER DOWN TO "BUSINESS".. LOIS CAME IN.. PHONE.. YOUR BOSS... B. WENT...I GAVE UP.I GOTTA GO, I SAID...LOIS.SMUG LOOKING: DON'T FORGET!TUESDAY! I STOOD AROUND WITH THE TWO OF THEM... STILLWAITING TO FIND OUT WHERE IN HELL I WAS. BUT... NOTHING. JUS "TUTTER CONFUSIONS! I 'D KEPT INTERTUPTING B. ..OR TRYING TO.. THIS IS ABOUT THE NOISIEST! DAY.. COMPLETELY OPPOSITE OF WHAT..UP THERE..(CABIN)... (THE"ELEPHANT DANCE" THE NOISY CLACK OF VOICES AT THAT LUNCH.. THE NOISE OF STORM OUTSIDE...)

WELL.. I GOTTA GET DOWN SMOME TOF THE SCUTTLEBUTT B. TOLD ME..(NOW DON'T TELL! BIT)....SHE IS..FROM THINGS SHE LET DROP..@ SIXTY YEARS OLD.(SHE SURE AS HELL DOESN'T LOOK IT! HE'D SHE'S ..CUTE! PRETTY)... SCARF @ THENECK. A LA KATHYRN HEPBURN ETC...HER. LIFE STORY AND PEGGY'S AND THE OTHERS..(AND I THOUGHT I! HAD TROUBLES..)....BUT..THIS IS THE STINGER! I'D GOTTEN A BRIGHTIDEA..WHEN OBVIOUSLY I WAS BEING DUMPED.. (NO MORE PHONE CALLS ..HELP FROM SR. SERVICES..FUNDING, ET AL.) THAT'S WHAT I FIGURED WAS GOING ON, I MANAGED TO TELL HER...WHY DON'T.. THE EASIEST! THING..I'D SAID TO HER AS WE WENT DOWNTO HER OFFICE...IS TO FORGET! ALL THIS AND JUST HAVE MARIE CALL ME? ONCE A WEEK.. ORSMETHING. ALLTHE ABOVE INTERVENING. I BROUGHT IT UP AGAIN...CALLING TIME ON HER.AFTER ALL. WE ARE! NEIGHBORS. ETC.WELL.SHE WAS CAGEY.. UH.. I WOULDN'T. OH?.. WELL..UH.. YOU SEE, MARIE HAS A ..PROBLEM. OH? I SAID, TRYING TO CONTROL THEAMSUED TWTITCHINGMY FACE WAS DOING.OH? WELL. YOU SEE.. HER.. HUSBAND... ORVILLE! (I STARTED AT THE NAME) HE..I..USED TO WORK WITHEACH OTHE.....WELLMARIE HAS A PROBLEM! YOU SEE.. ORVILLE! IS A "WOMANIZER"! OH. I SAID. EYES MERRY. HE.. SAY WHY DON'T WE GO BACKUPSTAIRS?... OH BETTY! YOU DON'T HAVE TO BUY MY CAKE AND COFFEE! OH YES! I WANT TO!HE HE.. WELL. HE MADE (PASSES AT ME!) AND.. THAT CUTE GAL THATUSED TO WORKFOR US..HIM...THEN.. YOU DON'T THINK I SHOULD COUNT ON MAREIE?... I SURE HAD A HARD TIME PINNING HER DOWN!..NO.NO. WELL YOU SEE.. YOU ARE A VERY ATTRACTIVE WOMAN! AND..UP THERE ALONE... WELL MARIE..

OH MY! I SAID. WISHING MY EYES WOULDN'T TWINKLE  
SO...I..UH..RATHER FIGURED THAT...OUR.. CLUB MEETING  
LET'S GO BACK UPSTAIRS, LORNA! BOY FRIENDS.. LONG  
FRANK' DISCUSSIONS.. ALL THEY WANT! SHE SAID... IS  
FOR YOU TO GO TO BED! WITH THEM! MY EYES TWINKLING.. AS  
SHE SAID. WELL I! AM NOT INTERESTED IN THAT! HER EYES  
SCOOTED OFF MINE. (MY INSIDES.. WERE GIGGLING.)....  
(HOW RIDIC! AT OUR! AGE..) SO MANY JELLIES. SHE SAID  
ALL THESE OLD PEOPLE.. (YEAH. I THOUGHT. LAST CHANCE.

WELL I AM NOT GOING TO POST HOC THIS NOW.  
I JUST LEFT THERE. TIRED, CONFUSED. (ECHO ECHO.. BOB'S  
IF YOU THINK THIS! IS BAD? JUST ..WAIT?)...  
I WAS LATE. B. ASKED ME.. SO YOUR FOTT WON'T LET YOU  
COME DOWN (TO HER OFFICE) AGAIN? B. I SAID I HAVE  
TAKEN UP YOUR WHOLE DAY ALREADY!

I WENT OUT TO CAR. (WOULD IT WORK?). STARTED IT...  
GOT DOWN TO LAUNDROMAT... THE SUN HAD COME OUT.. AFTER  
THE STORM... WENT IN.. ALL MACHINES APE! (THE POWER  
SHUT OFF) I DEBATED. WELL I CAN DO IT... TOM.. SULTNAT  
THERE'S A FREE MACHINE WILL BE ONE.. MY GALS SAID.  
I WAS TIRED. LATE. WE TALKED. (HOW ARE THE BEARS? I ASK  
MY GAL? OH.. DIS. MAYBE THY' REHIBERANTING.. I SAID..)  
HER MOTHER.. SO BRACVE.. SO WELL DRESSED... FRIENDLY...  
LITTLE GAL.. SO CUTE! I WANTED TO HUG HER... BUT SO  
NOISY! IN THERE, TOO.. I SAW SUN ON ME... (HERE I  
WAS IN THIS NOISY! PLACE..) WHILE WARM SUN... DID  
MY WASH... FRIENDS.. WANTING TO TALK... FINISHED MY WASH  
WENT OUT... STORM CLOUDS!

I RACED TO MALL. (BACKWAY.) L.S. HI! SHIRLEY? HOW YA  
DOIN?... OH FINE! SHE AND I TALKED... HER HUBBY LIST  
BF. STORE. MMM. JUST AS I DROVE AROUND THE BACK WAY  
TO GET TO IT. I REMEMBERED... BETCHA! THAT CALL.....

I WENT IN.. BOUGHT A FLYSWATTER AND LOOKED FOR MY BUYER  
SHE WAS GRINDING KEYS. I WAITED. WHEN SHE TURNED AROUND  
I KIDDED HER.. (SURE WAS A TEMPTATION! YOUR BUTT) OH.. SHE  
SAID... THAT PAPER.. SEEMS THERE'S A GREAT DEMAND ?.  
FOR IT. I WAS SHOCKED.. BUT I THOUGHT... ONLY ME?...  
NO NO.. EVERYBODY WANTS! UH.. THAT BASKET UP  
THERE? HOW MUCH? (WANT SOMETHING TO HIDE MY LIQUOR I



BUT SEEMED "IN A HURRY". AND I COULDN'T THINK OF ALL I WANTED TO TELL HER. DASHED OFF A FEW THINGS AND THEN..MARV IN CAR. WELL HI! TOLD HER WHAT CAME OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD..CASE..NEW HOUSE.. UNDERSTAND IT'S TWO STORY? (SO THEY ARE! IN CONTACT?) BUT I LET THEM GO. THEY SEEMED ANXIOUS TO GET GOING.

AND SO WAS I..THAT OMINOUS BLACK CLOUD AGAIN... I WANTED TO GET HOME AND STUFF IN BEFORE THE NEXT! STORM.

SO. I HEADED FOR HOME. RADIO..SORT OF ON...FADING.. COMING IN..NOT.. SOMETHING ABOUT TERRIBLE! TRAFFIC JAMS IN SEATTLE. "LIGHTNING HIT..." BUT I NEVER DID CATCH THE REST OF IT...THO I WAVE ALLOVER ROAD... TRYING TO..CAR WANDERED...GUY TAILGATING ME AGAIN... MADE ME NERVOUS... BUT I LOST HIM JUST IN TIME... FOR THAT DEVELOPMENT.. SIGNS. YEP. "FOR SALE"... GLOATED.. WENT ON.

HOME. GOT OUT OF CAR..THUNDER. RAN IN AND..TRAIL.. WET. POCK MARKED ..HAIL? WAS WORRIED.. TIME? I SET "TINY" CALCULATOR...FIVE OCLOCK.. BY RADIO.(MAKE NOTE TO RESET CLOCKS, ETC.).. MADE THREE TRIPS OUT TO BRING STUFF IN. GOT STUFF ALL IN AND CAR COVERED. WHILE THUNDER ROLLED ...DISTANTLY... MADE IT. WHEN! FOR THE FIRST TIME.. I FELT.. LUCKY. MY CABIN.SOMETHING ABOUT THAT NOISY, FRANTIC DAY...GEEZ.NOW..TO WRITE UP..(UGH).. I THREW FOOD INTO FRIG.. CHANGED HABITS... WENT TO TYPEWRITER... JUG AND CIGS...WHAR WHAT TIME! IS IT? (FOR "JOURNAL"..) CLOCKS.. LOOKED. PUZZLED.. LOOKED.. "TINY CALCULATOR"...MY! POWER WASNIT OFF! ??? WEIRD. STARTED TO WRITE....TRIED TO GET IT ALL DOWN..THEN....GUT REJECT.. I WENT AND THREW UP. KINDA FUN. JUST WHAT I FELT LIKE DOING. THEN.. WENT ON. THEN.. STOPPED AND CALLED MARV AND LOU. AND FILLED IN..WHAT I COULDN'T REMEMBER BEFORE.?. JERRY SMITH.. UH.FINESILVER? MARV ASKED..YEAH.. DON'T LIKE HIM I SAID...NEW CARETAKERS. THEY THERE YET? NO.. MAY 17TH.. NOT YET.. NICE YOUNG COUPLE.. BUT..(INNOCENTS)...MISS YOU! ETC..

BETTY. CURIOUS ABOUT MAR ORVILLE. BUT WHAT DO THEY DO? OG..HE AND MAIRE BOARD... FIGHT.. I FELT I WAS WASTING TIME...

June 1981



Me - in my "Paradise"

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MONDAY, JUNE 15--- I WOKE LATE TO A SPOT OF SUNSHINE THAT I HOPED PRESAGED A BREAK IN THE ENDLESS RAIN. IT DIDN'T. LATE AFTERNOON IT BEGAN AGAIN. BUT THE DAY DID BRING A BREAK IN WHAT HAD SEEMED LIKE AN ENDLESS IMPASSE IN PROFFERED FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS. SUDDENLY, AS IF SPROUTED IN THE RAIN LIKE THE WOODS JUNGLE GROWTH, A SPURT OF CONTACT WITH LONELY LORNS. MIKE, ON PHONE THE NIGHT BEFORE, REMINDING ME OF THEIR PLAN TO SEND STEVE UP FOR A VISIT IN THE SUMMER: A LETTER FROM CARRIE IN MAIL, THANKING ME FOR THE PEARLS (AT LAST) AND COULD SHE COME AND VISIT IN DECEMBER, WHEN A BREAK IN HER COLLEGE COURSE? AND COULD SHE BRING HER NEW BOY FRIEND, DAVE? AND THEN...

AROUND NOON, A (COLLECT) PHONE CALL FROM DENNIS. HE SOUNDED DISTRAUGHT. I CAN'T MAKE IT. THE STOP BY VISIT HE'D PLANNED ON HIS WAY BACK. AND A RATHER GARBLED, HARD TO FOLLOW ACCOUNT OF CHANGE IN PLANS. SOMETHING ABOUT YAKIMA AND GODFREY AND A STOVE. AND HE NOT LIKING HIS NEW JOB. GODFREY CALLS ME G-MAN! HUNH? GOVERNMENT MAN! THEY (MEN IN OFFICE) HAVE ALL GONE AWAY! HE WAILED. I'M ON MY OWN! BUT I GET 18 1/2 A MILE TRAVELING EXPENSES..I'LL PAY YOU BACK! AND THE COWS WON'T TALK TO ME!(???) AND THE WEATHER'S BEEN BAD HERE, TOO..WORST IN 19 YEARS! BUT, MOST OF ALL TO ME, SHATTERING NEWS: WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO MOVE THIS WEEK THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SAT. COULD I COME DOWN THERE..TO SEATTLE..OR..WHAT? (TO SAY GOODBYE.)

I HUNG UP, STUNNED. AFTER WHAT HAD SEEMED LIKE EONS OF LONELY LORNA FORGOTTEN IN THE RAIN FOREST, EVERYBODY'S DISCOVERED GRANDMA AGAIN?

I WHILED AWAY THE DAY WITH UNHAPPY THOUGHTS AND THE RADIO NOT HELPING WITH LITTLE LECTURE ABOUT PHOBIAS AND THE FEAR OF BEING AFRAID. IT WAS A BLOW. LOSING WHAT I'D COUNTED ON AS TWO MORE WEEKS TO ENJOY HAVING THEM AROUND AND EXULTING OVER DENNIS' NEW FOUND HAPPINESS..THE JOB AND ALL. HE NOT HAPPY! AND MY COUNTING ON <sup>him</sup> THEM SEEING THE CABIN FOR THE LAST TIME: A SORT OF BUILDERS' SUM UP. NOT TO BE?

AND THEN I BEGAN TO FRET ABOUT HOW I COULD MAKE A TRIP TO SEATTLE ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE: MY CAR ACTING UP: ALL THAT TRAFFIC AND NO RADIO TO WARN ME OF TRAFFIC TIE-UPS: NO PLACE TO SLEEP..I FELL ASLEEP ON THOSE THOUGHTS.

ABOUT FIVE I CALLED ABBIE TO SEE IF I COULD GET MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION I'D NEED TO MAKE PLANS. IT SEEMED THAT, FOR SOME REASON, DENNIS HAD TO GO BY YAKIMA TO PICK UP A STOVE AND BRING IT ON HIS WAY OVER: THAT SHE EXPECTED HIM BACK THURSDAY AND THEY WOULD LEAVE SATURDAY. STILL NOT QUITE UNDERSTANDING I MADE A RASH COMMITMENT..WELL, MAYBE I COULD HELP? MIND KIDS OR SOMETHING? I MADE A TENTATIVE PROMISE: I'LL BE THERE! OK, SHE SAID.

I COLLAPSED AGAIN IN MORE TROUBLED SLEEP. LATER, I WANDERED DOWN TO THE CREEK AND WAS STARTLED TO FIND THE PATH GONE. A "WIDOW MAKER" BRANCH HAD FALLEN INTO A BIG SALMONBERRY BUSH AND PUSHED IT DOWN ACROSS THE TRAIL..THE PATH OBLITERATED. SOMEHOW IT SEEMED APROPOS.

TUESDAY, JUNE 16-- THE WEATHER AND PROSPECTS NO BETTER. I WENT TO MONROE..TO SR. CENTER. LOIS WAS GOING TO TRY TO TAKE OVER CLASS. I WOULD GIVE IT A TRY. ON WAY DOWN SULTAN ESTATES WAS DESERTED AND LIFELESS. ONLY CHANGE WAS TWO HALVES OF A MOBILE HOME SITTING IN COMMUNITY PARK..THE NEW CARETAKER?

MY DAY IN MONROE WAS BORING AND UNEVENTFUL. LOIS'S CLASS WAS PATHETIC. NOBODY BUT THE OLD WEIRDO LADIES SHOWED UP. AND ALL SHE HAD US DO WAS TAKE TURNS READING

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FROM SOME OBSCURE, OBSOLETE OLD COLLEGE THESIS SHE'D DUG UP SOMEPLACE. THE REST WAS JUST SILLY, IDLE, SHALLOW PRATTLE AND GOSSIP, THE WOMEN ALL CONVINCED THEY WERE HAVING PROFOUND, MEANINGFUL TALK. I CROSSED THE CLASS OFF MY FUTURE.

THEN BETTY AND PEGGY ASKED ME DOWN TO THEIR DUNGEON OFFICE. AND AGAIN IT WAS GABBLE, GABBLE GABBLE, GETTING ACQUAINTED, EXCHANGING LIFE HISTORIES, GRANDKIDS, ETC. AT MY STORY OF JULIE, BETTY SAID, YOU SHOULD WRITE A BOOK, LORNA! THEY WANTED TO KNOW IF THEY COULD CALL ME EVENINGS AND URGED ME TO CALL THEM. THIS WAS MORE TO MY LIKING AND NEEDS THAN THOSE ASSIGNED CHECKERS THEY'D TRIED TO DREAM UP FOR ME. BUT I WAS ANNOYED AT BEING COOPED UP IN THAT DINGY BASEMENT DURING THE ONLY TIME THE SUN SHONE B RIGHTLY. BY THE TIME I LEFT, ANOTHER STORM AND DELUGE.

IN WHICH I DID MY SHORT AND DULL ERRANDS IN TOWN. THEN HOME. CASE WAS OUT AND I STOPPED ONLY LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO GET ME SOME NEWSPAPERS FOR MY STOVE.

LATER, I TRIED TO CALL CARRIE. I THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO HASSLE THE WHOLE PHONE COMPANY BEFORE I GOT THROUGH TO HER. WE HAD A NICE LITTLE CHAT. THE REST OF THE EVENING WAS RAIN..RAIN..RAIN.

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WED. JUNE 17---RAIN, RAIN RAIN. RADIO MENTIONING THE SUMMER SOLSTICE TO START O N WEEK END. BITTER I WAS: WE HADN""T EVEN HAD ANY SPRING! THE ONLY NOTE OF CHEER ON MY CALENDAR: THE NEXT DAY WE WOULD HAVE HAD TO RENEW OUR BUILDING PERMIT. A GOOD FEELING OF ACCOMPLISHMENT! WE MADE IT IN TIME TO GET OUR SINPECTIONS DONE! WE DID IT!

I SPENT THE DAY WRITING TO CARRIE AND WAITING FOR THE "HELPER'S" CALL. WHEN SHE FINALLY DID CALL, I WAS SO IMPATIENT WITH MORE QUIBBLING AND NIGGLING, I JUST SUGGESTED WE CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF, AT WHICH SHE GOT ALARMED. OH NO! SHE WOULD CALL ME, REALLY SHE WOULD!

A BREAK OF SUN IN THE DOWNPOUR, IWENT OUT AND WORKED ON CAR AERIAL AND GOT IT TO WORKING, BY A RATHER TEMPORARY PROPPING. AN EVENING OF COOKING, FIRE, RADIO, READING, WINE, DISHES AND BED, COZY IN THE RAIN WAS RATHER NICE.

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THURSDAY, JUNE 18--- RAIN, RAIN, RAIN. ALL NIGHT AND FORECAST "NO RELIEF IN SIGHT". ALL DAY IT RAINED. ON AN ERRAND OUT TO CAR, LATER, THE RAIN A TORRENT: THE PATH WAS A LAKE ALL THE WAY..FIRST TIME IT WAS EVER THAT BAD. HOW IRONIC, I THOUGHT: ? LAST YEAR THE HOTTEST, DRIESST SUMMER I HAD TO SPEND MAROONED IN THAT HIDEOUS, STIFLING SLUM IN VANCOUVER: THIS YEAR, FINALLY ESCAPED FROM THAT, I FIND MYSELF MAROONED IN THE COLDEST, WETTEST SUMMER IN SOGGY, BOGGY WOODS. BAFFLING!

I THOUGHT WITH DISMAY ABOUT ATTEMPTING A TRIP TO SEATTLE IN THIS. WOULD THERE BE FLOOD WARNINGS? I WOULD HAVE TO PACK TRIP NECESSITIES OUT TO CAR IN THIS!? MY CAR WORRIES MENTIONED. ONE OTHER PROBLEM WAS THE TENDENCY OF CAR WINDOWS TO FOG OVER IN RAIN SO THAT I UNABLE TO SEE. IT WOULD NOT BE A FUN TRIP: IT WOULD BE RUSHED, GRIM AND DANGEROUS.

HOWEVER, AS I LAY CONTEMPLATING PLANS AND DAY, HOW LUCKY I <sup>felt</sup> THAT EVERYTHING IN CABIN WORKS! THE PLUMBING, THE HEATERS, THE ROOF NOT LEAKING. WHY EVEN THE "DRIVEWAY" CRUDE AS IT IS, IS AS GOOD AS IT IS. IN SHORT, DESPITE A "BUMMER" SEASON I WAS NOT HAVING DISASTERS, LIKE SOME WERE HAVING, FLOODED SEPTIC FIELD AND THINGS LIKE THAT. THE CABIN "UNFINISHED" BUT QUITE ADEQUATE. I FELT THANKFUL.

BRAIN AND EMOTIONS RIOLING, I PACED. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, TO SAY FARE THEE WELL I WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE: WOULD I, COULD I GO? I NEEDED MORE INFORMATION. IT WAS EARLY IN THE DAY TO CALL, BUT "TIME WAS OF THE ESSENCE". I CALLED ABBIE.

WHEN SHE ANSWERED, I BEGAN TO FIRE QUESTIONS AT HER. ALL SHE KNEW WAS THAT DENNIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN TODAY AND GODFREY TOMORROW. GODFREY WENT TO PACKWOOD TO SEE HIS DAD. WHY DID DENNIS HAVE TO GO BY WAY OF YAKIMA AND PICK UP STOVE? OH GODFREY HAS A BAD BACK. HE COULDN'T LIFT ANYTHING. BUT HE'LL HELP YOU MOVE? HE HAS A TRUCK? OH YES! MY BROTHERS ARE COMING FRIDAY NIGHT TO HELP US. (THAT MEANT THERE WOULD BE NO PLACE FOR ME TO SLEEP?) I EXPECT DENNIS ABOUT TWO THIS AFTERNOON ...WELL, HE SAID HE'D CALL ME. WILL YOU HAVE A PHONE?...OH YES, UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE....WELL, I THOUGHTMAYBE I'D COME DOWN, BUT...I EXPLAINED ABOUT THE WEATHER, TRAFFICE, CAR AND RADIO AND ALL.....WELL, WHY DON'T YOU MAKE IT EARLY SATURDAY?...BUT I THOUGHT YOU'D BE GONE BY THEN?..OH DUNNO..HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE.....WELLTHAT WOULD BE BETTER FOR ME, I SAID, SATURDAY TRAFFIC EASIER TO GET BACK IN....THE SUBJECT WAS CHANGED TO TRIVIAS OF MOVING. I WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL GULPY AND ABBIE SEEMED TO BE IN A HURRY. SHALL WE SORT OF COUNT ON THAT , THEN? ..UH..YEAH! OK! THEN, I SAID.

~~ABOUT 2 P.M. I CALLED AGAIN. GOT NOAH. JUST HE THERE..GONE TO DO A WASHING.~~

I READ MYSELF BLIND IN THE RAIN, RAIN, RAIN. AT SIX I CALLED AGAIN. GOT ABBIE. YES, DENNIS AND GODFREY BOTH THERE. DENNIS CAME ON. THEY HAD COME STRAIGHT THROUGH. NOT ENOUGH GAS TO GO TO YAKIMA AND GET THE STOVE. THEY'D HAD THE <sup>Tow</sup> BAR FOR THE JEEP SO THEY PUT IT ON GODFREY'S TRUCK AND TOWED DENNIS" CAR. THE TRAFFIC WAS BAD, HE SAID. WE'LL BE LEAVING SATURDAY MORNING.

I EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS TOO SHORT NOTICE FOR ME TO COME THE NEXT DAY..FRIDAY TRAFFIC AND ALL. WELL, DAMN, DENNIS SAID, HOPED I'D GET TO SEE YOU. MAYBE..NO, NO. WE'LL BE SO BUSY PACKING TOMORROW..NO, DON'T TRY TO COME UP HERE, I SAID. WELL, DMAN. HE SAID. YOU CAN'T COME TOMORROW, THEN? IT HAD BEGUN TO RAIN LIKE HELL AGAIN AS WE TALKED.... NO, NO (MY BRAIN COULD NOT THINK OF A WAY I COULD MANAGE IT.) WELL, HE SAYS, I'LL TRY TO THINK OF SOMETHING AND CALL YOU BACK LATER..UH..AFTER TEN..CHEAPER....OH, I SAID, WELL..OK. MY BED"S RIGHT BY THE PHONE..OR..IF I THINK OF ANYTHING, I'LL CALL YOU!..OK! SURE TOO BAD, HE SAID, RELATING HOW BUSY THEY'D BE. I'D HAVE TO LEAVE AFTER NINE, I SAID, THE TRAFFIC (AND THE PROBLEM OF GETTING GAS). OR WITH THE BIRDS, HE SAID. (BUT I'D STILL HAVE THAT AWFUL TRIP BACK AND NO PLACE TO STAY) WE HUNG UP. ONLY THEN DID I REMEMBER I'D FORGOTTEN TO WISH HIM HAPPY FATHERS" DAY.

THE BLOW WAS ALMOST MORETHAN I COULD BEAR. AFTER ALL THAT WAIT AND PREPARATION FOR ONE LAST VISIT. I DEBATED MAKE THE EFFORT? WAS IT WORTH IT FOR JUST A HURRIED KISS AND HUG? AND MAYBE MISS THEM AFTER ALL? GONE? COULD I DO IT? PACK AND LEAVE HERE AT DAWN SATURDAY? WOULD THEY STILL HAVE A PHONE IF I COULDN'T MAKE IT?

I CALLED AGAIN. ONLY NOAH. THEY'D GONE TO DO A WASH, HE SAID.

I MOONED AROUND. GOTOUT MUSIC ANDPLAYED ALL MY LIFE CRISIS SONGS ON LIL "PIANO". ABOUT 8:30, TIRED OF RESTLESSNESS AND BROODINGAND INDECISION. I'M GOING! WHETHER THEY WANT ME OR NOT! TOMORROW. AFTER THE TRAFFIC SIMMERS DOWN. I WILL SLEEP IN THE CAR ON THE STREET. I WOULD KICK MYSELF THE REST OF MY LIFE IF I DIDN'T SEE THAT EXODUS! AND THE FINAL PARTING WITH ED"S HOUSE.AFTER ALL THATPLACE HAD MORE ASSOCIATIONS FOR ME..MOST TRAGIC..THAN IT DID FOR THOSE KIDS! STAY OR GO.. EITHER WAY MIGHT KILL ME

6/19

I FLEW AROUND..MADE WHAT PREPARATION I COULD.

AT NINE O'CLOCK I CALLED THEM AGAIN. GOT SARAH. SHE ALL EXCITED. WE'RE GOING TO GET A DOG! THEN GODFREY CAME ON..ALL FRIENDLY..UNDERSTAND YOU'RE COMING DOWN TOMORROW? (I AM!? I THOUGHT.HOW DID THEY KNOW WHEN I DIDN'T?) I WANTA SEE YA,HE SAID. AND TOLD ME HE WAS staying all night. WE HAD A NICE TALK. I HADN'T SEEM GODFREY SINCE HE WAS A SCHOOL KID!) HE SAID SUCH NICE THINGS ABOUT THE CABIN AND ~~(NOTES SAY NICE???)~~ SIAD HE WANTED TO COME UP AND SEE IT.

THEN DENNIS GOT ON. YEAH..WAS HOPING YOU COULD COME..NO PLACE TO SLEEP,BUT..OH! I'LL SLEEP IN THE CAR! I SAID,,HECTIC I KNOW BUT... I'LL BE THERE ..OH..MIDDAY... AFTER THE TRAFFIC SIMMERS DOWN! I SAID.

THEY SEEM TO HAVE MADE UP MY MIND FOR ME?

I WENT TO BED EXCITED. GETTING TO SEE GODFREY AGAIN, AND IT ALL SOUNDED LIKE MORE OF A PARTY..A LOT OF PEOPLE..THAN THE PERHAPS TOO TIGHT LITTLE FAMILY ENLAVE I'D THOUGHT IT WOULD BE.

Friday, June 19-----MY WORRIES ABOUT THE WEATHER WERE ALLEVIATED WHEN THERE WAS NO RAIN DURING THE NIGHT. BUT I GOT ALARMED AGAIN CHECKING WITH LATEST REPORTS ON THE RADIO. "RAIN SQUALLS..WEST SEATTLE..EVERGREEN BRIDGE.." THE ROUTE I HAD TO GO. AND, MT. ST. HELENS: NEW NON-VIOLENT ERUPTIONS ON AGAIN." BESIDES DRIVING DIFFICULTIES, THE PROSPECT OF RAIN UPSET ME FOR I WOULDNT BE ABLE TO TAKE PICTURES OF THIS HISTORIC FAMILY EVENT? I BEGAN TO GET READY, CALMING MYSELF BY THE THOUGHT THAT THERE WAS NO HURRY? IF I GOT THERE BY NOON--THEY'D ALL BE SO FRANTIC ANYWAY....

I LUGGED STUFF OUT TO THE CAR IN CART. THE SKY WAS GRAY, BUT IT NOT RAINING, JUST DRIP FROM TREES. BUT WHAT WAS THAT ALL OVER MY CAR? THAT LOOKED LIKE SOOT? SURELY NOT MT. ST. HELENS ASH FALL OUT? I'D HAD ABOUT ENOUGH OF THAT! A TEST RUB SHOWED IT NOT GRITTY, BUT SLIMY LIKE A BLACK MOULD? I FOUND THAT JUST AS SCARY. I CLEANED IT OFF.

WHILE DRESSING, WAS JOLTED BY PHONE RINGING. SURELY NOT DENNIS WITH MORE TROUBLES? IT WAS DON BISHOP, CALLING FROM WORK. WE TALKED HALF AN HOUR: A FUN TALK CATCHING UP ON EVERYTHING SINCE I'D LEFT WORK.

EVERYTHING WAS TURNING OUT ALL RIGHT! AFTER ALL MY ANXIETIES! I ALUGHED, AS JUST BEFORE MY LAST RTIP OUT TO CAR, THE RADIO PLAYED THAT CURRENT SONG: "SHE'S GETTING READY TO FLY AWAY..!"

THE TRIP DOWN

DESPITE HOW LONG IT HAD BEEN SINCE I'D SWEATED THE ULCER-MAKING COMPLEXITIES OF OF THAT ROUTE AND FREEWAYS AND URBAN DRIVING I HAD NO PERSONAL PROBLEMS. THE CAR STARTED ALL RIGHT, THE RADIO WORKED,WELL GOOD ENOUGH, AND I DROVE INTO BRIGHTER AND BRIGHTER SUN THE FURTHER I GOT FROM MONROE. THERE WAS ONLY ONE BAD SCARE:

ON 405 a bummy BIG OLD CAR WITH TWO BUMMY, SWARTHY MEN WEARING "INDIAN" HEADBANDS BEGAN TO "TEASE" AND TAILGATE ME, DESPITE PLENTY OF ROOM TO PASS ME. THEY LAUGHED AND JEERED, SO CLOSE ON MY TAIL AND MAKING ME SO NERVOUS I ALMOST MISSED THAT TRICKY, AND IMPORTANT, OFF RAMP. BUT OTHER THAN THAT IT WAS "SMOOTH SAILING".

I WENT IN VIA HARBOR AVENUE..THE BEACH ROUTE, DEBATING AND THEN DECIDING A "ONE LAST TIME LOOK" AT THE OLD HAUNTS, FOR WHO KNEW WHEN I WOULD BE THAT WAY AGAIN?

PERHAPS MY LAST TRIP TO ALKI? AS I SLOWED NAD GASPED AT SEATTLE AT ITS MOST BEAUTIFUL, A NICE! DAY. SUN! BLUE SKY! WHITE CLOUDS! A GOOD TRIP! THE CAR RADIO PLAYED "FOR AULD LANG SYNE." I PARKED AND SAT FOR AWHILE, DEEPLY MOVED. AND THEN I WENT ON.

THE ARRIVAL

I PARKED IN MY USUAL PLACE BY THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE AND SAT AND SORT OF GATHERED MY WITS. CONTRARY TO WHAT I'D EXPECTED--FLURRY, COMMOTION, UPRAOR , PEOPLE--THERE SEEMED TO BE NOBODY AROUND. ALL WAS QUIET ~~IN THE BRIGHT~~ SUN. IT WAS ABOUT 12:30. THEN HERE CAME SARAH WHEELING OUT AND BY ON HER BIKE. SHE GESTURED (GRANDMA!) AND THEN FLEW BACK INTO THE HOUSE AND DISAPPEARED.

I GOT OUT, WAS HALF WAY TO THEHOUSE WHEN, OUT OF NOWHERE, THIS TALL, VERY BEARDED NAD HAIRY MAN WAYLAID ME AND HUGGED ME. I'M MIKE, HE SAID. (GODFREY). I WAS ASTOUNDED. NOT AT ALL WHAT I'D EXPECTED.(THE GODFREYS, AS I'D REMEMBERED THEM VERY PROPER, NEAT, CONFORMING PEOPLE.)THIS MAN WAS A REAL "HIPPI", ALL BEARD AND HIAR TIED IN A "PNY TAIL" AND "GRANNY GLASSES" ON HIS VERY BEAKED NOSE AND ALL RIGGED UP IN "COWBOY" REGALIA. NOT AT ALL THE RATHER CHERUBIC? LITTLE BLONDE BOY I REMEMBERED. BUT HIS MANNER BELIED HIS ROUGH AND GRUFF APPEARANCE. HE TALKED TO ME GENTLY, FONDLY, LEISURELY..ASKED ABOUT MY TRIP, AND SO ON. WE TALKED SO LONG OUT THERE IN THE YARD, NOBODY ELSE APPEARING I WAAS A LITTLE PUZZLED.

FINALLY, WE WENT IN. ABBIE WAS JUST SITTING AMIDST MANY HALF PACKED BOXES AND JUNK ALL OVER. WHERE DENNIS WAS NOBODY SAID. THE THREE OF US JUST SAT AND BEGAN..REMEMBER? REMEMBER? UNTIL ABBIE DUG OUT AN OLD HIGH SCHOOL YEAR BOOK AND..WELL..ONE KNOWS HOW THAT GOES: LOOK AT MIKE! BEFORE THE BEARD! ETC. ETC.

refug

IT SEEMED A LONG TIME BEFORE DENNIS CAME BACK. OH, OH, DENNIS AND GODFREY KIDDED: GOTTA GET TO WORK NOW! AND THE GUYS BROKE OUT SOME BEER, THE FIRST EVIDENCE I'D SEEN OF ANY REFRESHMENTS OFFERED. NOBODY OFFERED ME ONE, BUT I DIDN'T MUCH CARE. THEY SET TO WORK. I COULD SEE NO EVIDENCE OF GODFREY'S "LAME BACK" AS HE AND DENNIS SET TO WORK CARRYING OUT ALL THAT HEAVY FURNITURE AS IF IT WERE NOTHING. ABBIE WAS BUSY SEALING BOXES WITH YARDS AND YARDS OF TAPE. THE KIDS HAD GONE OFF SOMEPLACE. I FELT "DE TROP" JUST SITTING AS EVERYBODY ELSE WORKED. ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS TO OFFER TO GO GET BEER? FOOD? WHATEVER? NO NO. SOMETHING ABOUT FAMILY--I ASSUMED ABBIE'S COMING OVER WITH PIZZA--LATER. SO I JUST SAT AND WATCHED ALL THE FLURRY AND JUST TRIED TO KEEP OUT OF THE WAY.

MY ONLY ROLE WAS, WHEN THE MAJOR THINGS WERE OUT, AND IT CAME TO DISPOSING OF SOME OF ED'S HOARDED MOMENTOES, LIKE THE CHINESE CHEST, TO TELL THE STILL FUNNY TALES OF OF HOW HE GOT THEM..GRANDMA STORIES.

FINALLY, FEELING USELESS AND TO STAY OUT OF THE WAY I WANDERED OUTSIDE AND COULDN'T RESIST: THAT HORRID OLD RAMSHACKLE "GARAGE" SHED THAT HAD ALWAYS BEEN SO CRAMMED WITH, NOW, THREE GENERATIONS OF CAST OFF JUNK WAS EMPTIED OF ENOUGH OF IT TO GET INTO.

I SET TO WITH A BROOM. MY HANDS HAD BEEN ITCHING TO GET INTO THAT PLACE FOR..MMM.. THIRTY YEARS? ABBIE HAD SAID THAT ED HAD BOUGHT THE HOUSE IN '59. IT WASN'T ED THAT HAD BOUGHT IT..HIS MOTHER...BUT...OH WELL.. SO I JUST STAYED OUT THERE CLEANING AND UNEARTHING FILTH AND LOST, BROKEN, DISCARDED, FORGOTTEN THINGS TO BOGGLE THE MIND. I WAS JUST ABOUT TO GET INTO THE LAST, DARK, ROTTING WOOD, SPIDER INFESTED

CORNER, WHEN DENNIS AND GODFREY CAME CRASHING IN, AND DENNIS BEGAN WILDLY "SALVAGING" THINGS I HAD HOPED WERE TO, AT LAST! FIND A FINAL RESTING PLACE IN THE CITY DUMP. "I MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE THIS SOME DAY...OR THIS!" HE WASN'T THE LEAST INTERESTED IN MY LAMENTS AT THE SHREDS OF HIS SCHOOL TROPHY JACKET OR OTHER "LOOK WHAT I FOUND'S!" HE WENT RACING OUT, INSISTING THAT I QUIT AND COME IN."OH JUST LEAVE IT!"

THEY ALL BEGAN TO INSIST SO, THAT, THOUGH I WAS ALMOST THROUGH, I DID QUIT. BUT WHEN I FOUND OUT THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO BUT WANDER AGAIN, I SNEAKED BACK IN AND FINISHED IT, AS BEST I COULD, STILL A LOT LEFT IN THERE. AND THEN I CALLED SARAH TO COME AND SEE. SHE RAN INTO HER MOTHER: "IT'S GOT A CEMENT FLOOR!" SHE'D NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE!

ABBIE'S FAMILY HAD COME BY THEN, AND DENNIS AND GODFREY HAD GLEANED WHAT THEY WANTED FROM THE GARAGE/SHED. SO WE ALL QUIT, DENNIS COMING IN WITH HIS HAIR ALL PLASTERED TO HIS BROW AND LOOKING LIKE THE PICTURES OF THE WINNER OF THE MARATHON, UTTERLY EXHAUSTED.

WHEN I WENT IN THAT LITTLE HOUSE WAS "WALL TO WALL" PEOPLE, ABBIE'S TRIBE. THEY WERE HANDSOME, ASSURED, GAY, NOISY YOUNG PEOPLE, ONLY ONE OR TWO OF WHOM I'D MET BEFORE. THERE WAS KIDS, CONFUSION, NOISE ALL OVER. BEER WAS FLOWING FREELY BY NOW, CANS AND BOTTLES ALL OVER THE PLACE. BEER WAS PRESSED ON ME, BUT I REALLY DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO ENJOY IT, FOR I WAS BUSY TRYING TO TAKE PICTURES AND, THEN, RUNNING OUT OF FILM, I WENT TO THE STORE.

BY THE TIME I CAME BACK, THE GIRLS WERE PUTTING HUGE, HOMEMADE PIZZAS INTO THE OVEN AND THE FEAST BEGAN. THE WEATHER HAD TURNED OUT SO NICE THAT WE ATE OUTSIDE, THAT LITTLE FENCED IN YARD OVERFLOWING WITH PEOPLE AND KIDS AND SUCH PILES OF THINGS TO BE PACKED THAT THERE WAS NO PLACE TO SIT. WE WERE ONSTAGE TO ALL THE PEOPLE WALKING OR DRIVING BY, EVERYONE LAUGHING AND TALKING AND GUZZLING BEER AND TEARING AT PIZZA WITH OUR BARE HANDS, AND SEEMED LIKE "A MILLION" KIDS UNDERFOOT. IT WAS A "REAL NICE CLAN BAKE!"

THEN THE GUYS BEGAN TO LOAD THE TRUCK. KIDS SCREAMED AND YELLED. PEOPLE GOING BY GAPED. THE WOMEN WENT INSIDE TO CLEAN UP.

FROM THEN ON WAS UTTER CHAOS. I, HABIT FROM SO MANY MOVES? WENT ROOM BY ROOM LAST MINUTE SPOT CLEANING AND CHECKING, DID DISHES AND FILLED INFINITE GARBAGE SACKS BETWEEN TRIPS TO YARD AND STREET WHERE THE GUYS WERE LOADING THE JEEP AND THE TRUCK, ~~AND TAKING~~ <sup>TO TAKE</sup> PICTURES. ABBIE WAS BUSY ON PHONE. ~~THE YOUNG WOMEN WERE BUSY WITH KIDS GETTING CROSS AND TIRED,~~ ALL OF US CLEANING HOUSE, SWEEPING. BROMS FLEW. ONE YOUNG MOTHER WAS SCRUBBING FLOORS WITH A BABY ON HER SHOULDER. THE GUYS OUTSIDE LOADING. IT WAS FUN. EVERYBODY LAUGHING AND JOKING. THE HAPPY CREW. I WAS REMINDED OF THE TV SHOW "LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE".

BUT THEN IT BEGAN TO GET A BIT "TOO". THIS WENT ON AND ON AND ON TILL TEN, TEN THIRTY AT NIGHT. BABIES FELL ASLEEP ON SHOULDERS. BUT THE WORK WENT ON, UNSTIMULATED, AS FAR AS I KNEW, FOR, ASKING FOR BEER THEY SAID IT WAS ALL GONE. EMPTY CANS WERE LINED UP ALL ALONG THE FENCE. BUT THEN I FOUND THEY WERE DRINKING TEQUILA, A DRINK UNFAMILIAR TO MEBELIEVE IT OR NOT! "OH, HAVE ONE, GRANDMA! IT WON'T HURT YOU! IT'S THE VERY BEST TEQUILA!" SO I HAD TEQUILA.

THE LOADING WENT ON. THE GUYS MOSTLY DENNIS AND GODFREY WERE STILL LOADING THE JEEP BY THE STREET LIGHT, LATE AT NIGHT. THEY HAD MATTRESSES PILED ON TOP OF THE JEEP, BUT NOT ENOUGH PLASTIC TO COVER THEM. DENNIS, LATE AS IT WAS, HAD GONE TO BUY MORE ROPE.

I FORFEITED THE PLASTIC I KEPT IN CAR AND WISHED I'D GOTTEN SOME PICTURES WHEN THOSE NUTS, DENNIS AND GODFREY DID A SILLY VEIL DANCE WITH THE YARDS AND YARDS OF PLASTIC. IT WAS AFTER ONE A.M. BEFORE THEY ALL DRAGGED AWAY, CARRYING TIRED BABIES.

BEDTIME. AND BARE ROOMS, BARE FLOORS. NOAH AND SARAH HAD BEEN BEDDED DOWN ON BARE FLOORS IN ONLY THEIR SLEEPING BAGS. AND THEY WERE GOOD SPORTS ABOUT IT. ABBIE WAS WAILING THAT SHE HAD NO PLACE TO SLEEP, FOR THEY ONLY HAD ONE SLEEPING BAG. DENNIS HAD FORGOTTEN TO BRING THE OTHER ONE BACK FROM HIS TRIP. I FELT MEAN AND SELFISH (AND SMART!) AS I WENT OUT TO CAR TO FIX ME A "BED" IN IT. WHERE'S GODFREY GOING TO SLEEP? I ASKED. OH HE BROUGHT HIS OWN PAD AND SLEEPING BAG. (SMART, EH?) ABBIE WAS STILL LAMENTING: NO PLACE TO SLEEP! NO BLANKETS! NO FOOD FOR BREAKFAST! "I BROUGHT SWEET ROLLS, " I SAID. "OH GOOD! I FORGOT!"

I WAS TRYING TO BREAK AWAY, PUT MY TIRED BONES IN CAR. BUT DENNIS WOULD HEAR NONE OF IT. I HAD TO SLEEP IN THE HOUSE. THEN I WAILED (OLD BONES. I CAN'T SLEEP ON FLOOR.) HE PERSISTED. I INSISTED. FINALLY I WENT AND GOT MY STUFF FROM CAR, NOT AS ANXIOUS, IN FACT, AS IDEA TO SLEEP OUT THERE. I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE TRAFFIC, THE STREET LIGHTS, THE PARTIES, THE GOONS ON THAT CORNER. DENNIS HAD PRODUCED A LAWN LOUNGE FROM SOMEWHERE. AND HE SET IT UP IN THE KITCHEN BESIDE THAT GRUESOME MOULDY OLD SINK. AND I MADE MYSELF A "NEDST" THERE.

DENNIS AND GODFREY HAD BOTH TAKEN BATHS. I'D KIDDED GODFREY AS HE CAME OUT OF BATHROOM WITH ALL HIS CLOTHES ON. YOU TAKE A BATH WITH YOUR CLOTHES ON? SURE! THEY WERE DIRTY, TOO! GOOD NIGHT, LORNA. GOOD NIGHT. EVERYBODY BEDDED DOWN. SILENCE. (I STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE ABBIE SLEPT!)

BUT I COULDN'T SLEEP. NOT BE CAUSE OF THE UNCOMFY BED, BUT BECAUSE OF MEMORIES. IT WAS A TURNING POINT. I LEANED ON THE SINK, THE WINDOW SHROUDED BY THAT FUNERAL PINE THAT HAD GROWN SO OVER THE YEARS. IT WAVED GENTLY IN THE EERIE BLUE LIGHT FROM THE STREET LAMP ON THE CORNER. (WOULD I BE SORRY TO HAVE THIS OLD HOUSE, WHERE I HAD EXPERIENCED NOTHING BUT ANGUISH AND WAS NOW IN A SLUM, "BEATNIK" AREA GO OUT OF MY LIFE? NO. NO.)

THEN..I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES! SLIPPING NOISELESSLY IN THAT EERIE LIGHT CAME A MOTORCYCLE..ONE..TWO..THREE.....EIGHT! EACH WITH TWO PEOPLE STRIDE, HELMETED, ALL IN BLACK LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF "STAR WARS"..A CARAVAN..THERE WERE EIGHTEEN OF THEM!

*like a silent funeral procession I always did say that house was haunted!*

I HEARD GODFREY CRY FROM THE LIVING ROOM. AND HE AND DENNIS CAME INTO THE KITCHEN. THERE WERE EIGHTEEN OF THEM! YEAH, I SAW THEM, I CRIED. OH DENNIS! I'M GLAD YOU MADE ME COME IN!

EARLIER, WHEN DENNIS AND GODFREY HAD SPENT SO LONG OUT THERE IN THE DARK, ABBIE HAD ASKED ME: WHAT ARE THEY DOING!? COMING OUT TO JOIN ME WHERE I WAS OUT WATCHING. WORKING ON THE TAIL LIGHT SIGNALS FOR THE JEEP, I SAID. THEY'RE MAKING IT..LEGAL! I HOPE THEY DON'T STOP YOU FOR CONTRABAND, I'D KIDDED THEM. JUST SO THEY DON'T THINK WE'RE THE "RAINBOW PEOPLE", DENNIS HAD SAID." THEY HATE! "RAINBOW PEOPLE" UP THERE!" I NEVER DID FIND OUT WHAT THAT MEANT. DENNIS WAS TOO BUSY, TOO FRANTIC, TOO ASWEAT. [[THIS WAS IN 1981. AT THAT TIME MOTORCYCLE GANGS WERE TERRORIZING THE WEST.]]

WELL. EIGHTEEN! DENNIS AND GODFREY AND I CRIED. ABBIE WAS NOWHERE ABOUT. GOODNIGHT. GOODNIGHT. GOODNIGHT. WE RETURNED TO OUR "BEDS."

LATER. WEE SMA" HOURS. SOME COMMOTION. I ROUSED. DENNIS AND GODFREY WERE GOING

AFTER SARAH. SHE'D TRIED TO SLEEPWALK..GO OUT IN THE STREET IN HER NIGHTGOWN. "SHE ALWAYS DOES THAT," I HEARD DENNIS TELL GODFREY. THEY CAPTURED HER AND BROUGHT HER BACK IN. [POOR CHILD, I'D THOUGHT. A NIGHTMARE? OR..??? FOR I COULD HAVE SWORN THAT WHAT AROUSED ME WAS SARAH FLITTING INTO THE KITCHEN AND OUT, CRYING "GRANDMA!" I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING.

I WOKE AT DAWN, IN THE KITCHEN. TO AN ALARM, A BELL GOING OFF. FIVE A.M. I SAW DENNIS' HANDS TURN OFF THE CLOCK/RADIO ALARM. BY THE TIME I GOT MY EYES OPEN AND MYSELF ORIENTATED ALL HELL WAS GOING ON AROUND ME. BODIES FLYING AROUND. SCURRYINGS AND BANGINGS. ANOTHER BODY RUSHED BY MY COT WHERE I WAS TRYING TO GET BACK TO SLEEP. I MANAGED TO GET UP [WE'D ALL SLEPT IN OUR CLOTHES] AND WENT INTO THE LIVING ROOM TO SEE WHAT IN HELL?

THE THREE ADULTS WERE STANDING, FULLY CLOTHED IN THE LIVING ROOM, SMOKING. AND THEN ALL WAS CONFUSION AND SCURTYING. THEY GOT THE KIDS UP ANDBEGAN TO BOX THE CATS AND KITTENS. ???? I WAS UTTERLYPUZZLED. SO SOON? DENNIS WAS FLYING AROUND LIKE CRAZY, GRABBING THINGS, AND ABBIE WAS PUTTING ASIDE THINGS I'D THOUGHT WE'D SET ASIDE TP PACK. BY THE TIME I'D MANAGED A CUP OF COFFEE AND A CIG, THEY KEPT SAYING "NEVER MIND THAT" AND"LEAVE THAT" AND SO ON. I COULDN'T FIGURE IT. THEYWERE LEAVING HALF THEIR STUFF THERE. [[MAY I SAY HERE THAT THE ONE THING THAT GRRS ME BEING A VISITOR.. ANYPLACE IS THAT PEOPLEDON'T TELL YOU THEIR PLANS. THEY JUST ASSUME! YOU KNOW .]]

*As D&G went out door, bedin,*

I CHASED AFTER ~~DEPARTING DENNIS AND GODFREY~~ TO TAKE THAT LAST ,POSED,I HOPED PICTURE, ONLY TO SEE D AND G START THE TRUCK AND JEEP HITCHED BEHIND AND DRIVE OFF! BUT! I CRIED TO ABBIE, IWANTED TO TAKE A PIX! OH. THEY'RE JUST OGIN AROUND THE BLOCK. SO I FLEW OUT TO ENCOUNTER THEIR RETURN. I WAS AMAZED TO FIND THE STATION WAGON ALL PACKED ADN N. AND S. SITTING IN IT ALL READY TO GO!

I WAS PUZZLED AT ALL THE MESS THEY WERE LEAVING. A. HAD SAID SHE WAS GOING TO VACUUM. BUT THE VAC, HAD DISAPPEARED. BUT..THE REAL ESTATE PEOPLE? I ASKED. OH THEY'RE HAVING OPEN HOUSE HERE TOMORROW, SHE SAID. THAT ONLY PUZZLED ME THE MORE. LEAVING ALL THAT MESS,IT SEEMED AS IF A CYCLONE HAD HIT THE HOUSE AND DOORS WERE BEING LOCKED SO FAST THAT GODFREY HAD TO BEAT ON ONE TO BE LET BACK IN.

THE ONLY CLUE I GOT: SHALL I PUT ALLTHEPLANTS IN THE WASHTUB? I ASKED DENNIS? SURE! I GOT SARAH TO HELP ME. AND WE WATERED THEM, OUT THERE ON THAT LITTLE PORCH. IT WAS THAN I NOTICED THAT THE GARAGE I HAD CLEANED OUT WAS ALL FULL OF JUNK AGAIN, AND THAT THE KIDS" LARGER BUT OBSOLETE TOYS WERE PILED UP OUTSIDE IT.???? I ASKED ABBIE. OH, WE CAN'T TAKE IT ALL, SHE SAID, BLITHELY. WE"LL HAVE TO COME BACK.(????)

YOU READY, LORNA?..OR..YOU! WANT TO LOCK UP? NO NO, ISAID, (THE COMPLEXITY OF FOREVER OVER THE YEARS-CHANGED LOCKS TOO INTRICATE FOR ME.) YOUR STUFF"S BY THE DOOR THERE! THEY SAID. SO I GATHERED IT UP ANDPUT IT ON THE PORCH TO PUT IN THE CAR LATER. ~~AND THEY LOCKED THE DOOR.~~

THEN I HASTENED OUT TO WHERE THEY WERE ALREADY PACKED TO GO WITH THE <sup>camera</sup> ~~BEST OF MY~~ FILM ~~AND~~ SAVED. POSE! THEY DID HURRIEDLY, THE KIDS STAYING IN THE CAR. STICK YOUR HEADS OUT! I CRIED. THEY DID..SORT OF. A FLURRY OF HASTY AMENITIES..HUGS ET AL..AND NEXT THING I KNEW THEY WERE ALL DRIVING OFF, WAVING BACK.

IT WAS ALL SO FAST! SO CASUAL! AT THE TIME I WONDERED WHY I DIDN'T FEEL MORE.

THEN, I WAS SITTING IN MY CAR, AIMLESSLY MOVING THINGS AROUND, MY HIAR WINDBLOWN AND FEELING NOTHING BUT..PUZZLEMENT.IT WAS ALL SO..FAST! I SIGHED. AND WENT TO TO CLOSE THINGS UP, LOCK THE GATE, TAKE SOME PICTURES..MY MIND WAS FULL OF THINGS PAST..MEMORIES, TRAUMAS..ONLY I! LEFT WITH "THIS OLD HOUSE"(I ALWAYS HATED.)

I WAS PUZZLED THEN. I STILL AM, SIX YEARS LATER...AT MY LACK ..EMOTION?... ABOUT THE KIDS LEAVING. I SHOULD HAVE CRIED? WEPT? I DIDN'T FEEL THAT WAY AT LL. ALL I CAN THINK OF NOW, SIX YEARS LATER IS THIS:

I WAS TOO ABSORBED INT THE PAST TO REALIZE MY FUTURE WAS HAPPENING?

OR?

IT WASN'T AN END, JUST THE BEGINNINGS OF CHANGES I KENNED NOT OF..AT THE TIME?

IT WAS 7 A.M. I WAS DIRTY, UNFED. IN THE RUSH, THE ROLLS I'D BROUGHT HAD DISAPPEARED. I WAS, I REALIZED, AS ONCE BEFORE, LOCKED OUT. I'D ONLY HAD TIME TO TAKE TWO PIX OF THE EXODUS I'D SAVED FILM FOR. SO I HAD FILM LEFT TO USE UP.

MY PLAN HAD BEEN TO, AFTER THE EXODUS, TO GO HILLTOP TO THAT SHOPPING CENTER AND BUY SOME MATERIAL FOR AN IDEA I HAD ABOUT FINISHING THE BATHROOM WALLS THAT I COULDN'T GET IN MONROE. THIS LONG PLANNED, A CHANCE I MIGHT NOT GET AGAIN. BUT I REALIZED ONLY THEN THAT IT WOULD BE HOURS BEFORE THE STORES OPENED. I TRIED TO THINK OF WAYS TO KILL TIME..GO DOWN TO THE BEACH AND NAP IN THE CAR? OR MEANDER AROUND THERE? BUT, SO MANY MEMORIES..AND I FELT RESTLESS, DREADING THAT TRIP AND TRAFFIC BACK. I JUST WANTED OUT OF THERE. FIRST..TO FINISH UP THE FILM... SO I WENT AND TOOK PIX OF ALL THAT TRASH LEFT THERE..FOR THE GARBAGE MAN?

DECISION MADE TO FORFEIT MY SHOPPING TRIP AND JUST GET GOING AND GET IT OVER WITH, I STARTED THE CAR AND STARTED UP THE HILL. FOOD WAS NO PROBLEM: I HAD STUFF LEFT IN THE CAR I'D BROUGHT. UP THE HILL..IN MY REAR VIEWMIRROR I SAW ALKI, THE BAY, IN ALL ITS MOSTEST BEAUTY..SUN..BLUE SKY FALL AWAY BEHIND ME. I CAN'T SAY MY HEART ACHED. IT DIDN'T. MY MIND WAS TOO ABSORBED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF WEEK END TRAFFIC AHEAD OF ME,THOUGH LITTLE NIGGLES IN ME LEFTOVER OVER FROM MY QUICK PERUSAL OF PART OF ED'S DIARIES ABBIE HAD FOUND AND GIVEN ME I'D SAT IN THE CAR AND GLANCED THROUGH. SEEMED STRANGE HIS DAILY LIFE THOUGHTS..NOW..I SHRUGGED AND ATTENDED TO MY DRIVING....

HALFWAY UP THE HILL A RED CAR RATHER LIKE DENNIS" AND ABBIE"S CAME BARRELING DOWN TOWARD ME. TOOT! TOOT! IT WAS ABBIE. I DEBATED, MADE AN ILLEGAL U-TURN AND WENT BACK DOWN TO THE HOUSE, WONDERING. SHE WAS PARKED ASKEW, ROLLED DOWN HER WINDOW, YELLED AT ME "FORGOT MY PURSE! JUST LIKE A WOMAN!" AND WAS OFF AND SPEEDING UP THE HILL BEFORE I COULD MAKE A TURN AND FOLLOW. THOUGH I HAD TO TAKE THE SAME ROUTE I DID NOT SEE THEM AGAIN AS I DROVE OUT OF TOWN, SCARED TO HELL.(OF THE TRAFFIC.)

TRIP HOME

WHICH KEPT ME SO BUSY AND DISTRACTED I DIDN'T HAVE TIME NOTE OR REMINISCE OVER THINGS THAT HAD MEANT MUCH TO ME THAT I MIGHT NEVER SEE AGAIN..HIGHWAY JOBS I'D WORKED ON, THINGS LIKE THAT. AND SUCH A BAD SCARE ON EVERGREEN BRIDGE AS SOME IMPATIENT RICHLIY ACCOUTERED YOUNG GUY IN A SLICK LITTLE NEW FOREIGN CAR GESTURED ME OVER INTO ONCOMING TRAFFIC LANE AND THEN GAVE ME THE "FUCK YOU!" SIGN AS HE RACED BY THAT I HARDLY REMEMBERED THE REST OF THE TRIP FRFROM THE SUN, BLUE SKY,

BEAUTY OF MANICURED FOLIAGE AND FLOWERS I'D JUST LEFT INTO THE DARK CLOUDS HOVERING AHEAD IN THE FOOTHILLS. COMING OFF THE FREEWAY SO SUDDENLY INTO THE DESERTED, RATHER SHABBY LOOKING STREETS OF DOWNTOWN MONROE WAS RATHER A SHOCK. I SAT AND OUCHED A BIT. THEN TIPTOED THROUGH SLEEPY SWEEPERS IN SAFEWAY, GOT A FEW SUPPLIES AND WENT HOME.

IT WAS BEFORE 9 A.M.

I SAT A MOMENT IN CAR: TOMORROW IS FATHERS" DAY..AND THE SUMMER EQUINOX..THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER..THE LONGEST DAY IN THE YEAR....

IT WAS A GOOD TRIP. A CHARMED TRIP. EVERYTHING WENT BEAUTIFULLY..SUN BOTH DAYS.. DESPITE THE FORECAST.. GOOD FOOD..GOOD FUN... WITH PEOPLE..GAYETY..BEAUTY..A LOT ACCOMPLISHED.....

.....  
I SAT DOWN AT TYPEWRITER, ONE RED ROSE BEFORE ME THAT I HAD PICKED OUT OF ED"S GARDEN.."IN MEMORIAM"?......AND BEGAN TO TYPE.....

*delete?*

AND TRIED NOT TO GET SIDETRACKED. STILL A TRAUMA FROM THAT CROSSING OVER "EVERGREEN BRIDGE? THAT THE WORST PART OF THE ROUTE. THAT JOB THEY"D HAD ME MAKE A DRAWING FOR: I"D NEVER ACTUALLY SEEN IT BEFORE: "THE SPRAY BARRIER". PROBLEM" SPRAY OVER BRIDGE. LAKE WASHINGTON..SMOOTH ON ONE SIDE, ROUGH ON THE OTHER... THAT! WAS WHERE THAT SMART ASS IN THE BICE COLORED CAR TRIED TO CROWD ME OFF.....

*Insert - 625-A -*

EPILOGUE

AND THAT, MY CHILDREN, IS THE STORY OF THE CABIN. THERE WERE AFTERMATHS, OF COURSE. THINGS DON" T STOP SUDDENLY..WELL SOME THINGS DON" T. THINGS FADE AWAY. THE CABIN NEVER GOT "FINISHED"..IN THE "PROPERTY VALUE" SENSE. I HAD A HUNCH IT WOULDN" T. IT WAS A PRETTY RASH TRY..IN AN ERA NOT CONDUSIVE TO "DREAMS"? SHALL WE SAY? DENNIS AND I WERE KIND OF "BABES IN THE WOODS"? DREAMERS? BUT, IT WAS FUN. AND..INTERESSTING. WE LEARNED A LOT. AND, IF YOU"LL FORGIVE ME SAYING SO, ACCOMPLISHED A LOT. I HAVE STRUGGLED TO RECORD THIS IN THE HOPES THAT SOMEDAY....IT TAKES A HUNDRED YEARS..I"VE NOTED...THAT THIS (ROUGH) EFFORT WILL..WELL..PERHAPS..INTEREST? YOU...WHEN..WE... PERHAPS DEAD AND GONE? PREDICTED THAT A PLASTIC WORLD IS..UNSATIFYING? THAT... ONCE UPON A TIME..THERE WERE! TREES..

I AM VERY GRATEFUL TO "NUMBER ONE" SON (MIKE ANDHIS WIFE) WHO SUPPORTED ME... FINANCIALLY IN ALL THIS. I AM GRA TEFUL TO MY DAUGHTERS-LAW, WHO.. THOUGH NOT PERHAPS, UNDERSTANDING..DID NOT "RUN OUT ON US."

PERSOANLLY, I AM GRATEFUL FOR A RATHER STRANGE? FATE THAT GAVE ME SIX GRANDCHIDLREN TO TRY! AND WRITE THIS FOR. THE "STORY OF THE CABIN" IS AN ATTEMPT TO..GIVE CREDENCE TO..DREAMS? IHAVE PUTTERED..YEARS.. TRYING TO THINK OF A TITLE (IF! I EVER GET IT FINISHED!) HOW ABOUT A TALE? GOD KNOWS IT"S ONLY ONE OF MANY!

OH...

*Grandma Lorna  
July 6, 1987*

*Insert 625-A.*

NEXT DAY

SUNDAY, JUNE 21----- THE FIRST DAY OF SUMMER..THE LONGEST DAY OF THE YEAR...THE FIRST DAY I AM WITHOUT MY KIDS TO GET THROUGH. THE FIRST DAY OF THE LAST DAYS OF MY LIFE. FATHERS" DAY.

THE PREVIOUS WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17..I FORGOT TO CELEBRATE.. I"VE BEEN HERE A YEAR! A YEAR! AND HOW MANY OF THOSE DREAMS I HAD ABOUT THE CABIN HAVE COME TRUE? PICNICS..GUESTS...ARTWORK IN LOFT..HAPPY DAYS WORKING IN WOODS..SWIMMING PARTIES AT POOL..MY PRETTY WOODS A MECCA FOR CITY WEARY FRIENDS AND FAMILIY..AND SO ON AND SO ON.. VERY FEW. VERY FEW. AH, WELL, NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.

AND THE DAYS WILL START GETTING SHORTER..AND MY DAYS START GETTING SHORTER. NO MORE WILL THE KIDS BE DROPPING IN. THEY ARE ON THEIR OWN. I AM ON MY OWN.

I SPENT A LONG, WEATHER DISMAL DAY JUST WANDERING AROUND, SUMMING UP. EVENING. FATHERS" DAY. I TRIED TO CALL MIKE. ALL CIRCUITS JAMMED.

IT BEGAN TO RAIN. IT STARTED TO RAIN.

ADDITIONS, Oct. 25-28, 1986

THE CARPORT STORY

DENNIS AND HIS FAMILY CAME OVER IN JULY AND STOPPED FOR A FEW DAYS ON THEIR WAY TO VACATION ON THE BEACH. WHILE ABBIE AND KIDS WENT ON TO VISIT WITH HER FAMILY, DENNIS STAYED A NIGHT OR TWO WITH ME AND DID SOME MAINTENANCE WORK WOULD YOU CALL IT?

HE WORKED FOR TWO HOURS ON THAT BROKEN WEST WALL HEATER. WAS UNABLE TO FIX IT. HE CUT UP AND SPLIT THAT HUGE TREE THAT HAD FALLEN WHEN I WAS OVER VISITING THEM. WHEN WAS THAT? THAT THING HAD BEEN LYING THERE FOR OVER A YEAR? HE AND I WORKED IN A DRENCHING DOWNPOUR STASHING IT FOR FIREWOOD UNDER THE CABIN. HE DECIDED IT WASN'T AN ALDER, BUT A "BITTER CHERRY".

HE CUT DOWN AND CUT UP OTHER SMALL DEAD TREES. HE REACHED UP AND PULLED DOWN THAT "SPROUT" ON THE NURSING LOG I COULDN'T REACH. HE SPLIT THE CEDAR LOGS STILL LYING FROM THE ORIGINAL CLEARING AND STASHED THEM UNDER THE CABIN. HE MEASURED THE CEDARS FOR THE BOARD FEET IN THEM. DECIDED THAT THEY MIGHT BE WORTH AT CURRENT RATES ABOUT \$8400. EXPRESSED A DESIRE FOR THEM RATHER THAN SEE THEM WASTED. I TOLD HIM HE WAS WELCOME TO THEM, AFTER I WAS DEAD AND GONE. LATER I CALLED MIKE, THE LEGAL OWNER OF THE PROPERTY AND TOLD HIM. MIKE SAID IT WAS OK WITH HIM. HE HAD ME DIG OUT AND GIVE HIM THE "GRANDPA NED" PAPERS. HE READ A PART OF MY ATTEMPTS TO TELL THE STORY OF THE CABIN.

HIS FAMILY CAME BACK AND WE HAD BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR DENNIS' 40TH BIRTHDAY. WHEN THEY LEFT HE SAID HE'D TRY TO GET OVER DURING HIS VACATION IN OCTOBER AND CLEAR AND CUT SOME TREES TO OPEN UP THE CLOSING "CANOPY" AND LET MORE LIGHT INTO MY LITTLE "BLACK FOREST" DUNGEON. HE WOULD BRING NOAH WITH HIM TO HELP HIM. IT WAS HIS IDEA, NOT MINE. TO USE HIS VACATION TO "BRIGHTEN MY LIFE" I MEAN.

CAME OCTOBER.

AN UNUSUALLY DRY, "INDIAN SUMMER" MONTH. IN THE FEW TIMES WE HAD CONTACT, ON PHONE, DURING WHAT SEEMED LIKE A VERY BUSY, DISTRAUGHT-TIME-OF-LIFE-FOR-EVERYONE SUMMER, HE INSISTED HE STILL WANTED TO COME OVER ALTHOUGH I ASSURED HIM THAT..OH HOW CAN I SAY THIS WITHOUT SOUNDING LIKE A MARTYR MOTHER?...I COULD GET BY, AND FOR HIM TO RISK THAT LONG TRIP SO LATE IN THE SEASON AND USE HIS VACATION DURING THE BUSY TIME OF HIS LIFE..WELL, IT WAS NOT ALL THAT NECESSARY. (IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN TO THE YOUNG THE (RESIGNATION? OLD AGE BRINGS.) HE INSISTED HE STILL WANTED TO COME.

MEANTIME...

IN THE FIVE YEARS SINCE I HAVE RESIGNED MYSELF TO LIVE IN AN "UNFINISHED" CABIN.... (DOESN'T BOTHER ME, BUT SURE SEEMS TO BOTHER OTHER PEOPLE) ONE OF THE THINGS EVERYBODY FRET ABOUT IS ..WELL. I WANT TO EXPLAIN HOW COME WE ENDED UP BUILDING A CARPORT! I HAD, IN THOSE FIVE YEARS ACCUMULATED SOME SAVINGS. AND, THE REASON I WAS HOLDING OUT ON A PERMANENT CARPORT VS. THE PLASTIC "TENT" I'D BEEN KEEPING MY CAR UNDER, WAS TO SEE WHAT OUTCOME THERE WOULD BE ON THAT TRICKY, POORLY DESIGNED, PROPERTY CORNER. WELL, "DEVELOPERS" CAME IN AND SETTLED THAT! OK! LET'S BUILD A CARPORT! I! HAVE THE MONEY! DO YOU HAVE THE TIME!? THAT'S WHY I HEADED THIS (POST HOC) CHAPTER "ADDITIONS"!

IT WASN'T EASY! AND "THEREIN LIES ANOTHER TALE"!(WHICH I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO ADD TO MY UNFINISHED REPORT ON THE BUILDING OF AN UNFINISHED CABIN.)

trying to set a date WHEN DENNIS COULD COME OVER BECAME VERY COMPLICATED. HE HAD THINGS TO TEND TO THAT MADE HIM UNABLE TO GET AWAY OR BE ABLE TO SET A DEFINITE DATE. FINALLY, ON OCT. 10, I CALLED HIM AND OFFERED TO HELP FINANCE HIS TRIP OVER. HE AGREED, SAYING HE'D TRY TO FIGURE OUT A DATE HE COULD GET AWAY AND CALL ME THE NEXT WEEK. FIVE DAYS LATER HE CALLED ME. "DIDN'T YOU SEND ME ANY MONEY? I WAS COMING OVER THIS WEEK END!" "BUT YOU SAID YOU'D CALL ME AND LET ME KNOW." I HAD BEEN WAITING TO HEAR FROM HIM. "OH. GUESS I FORGOT". IT WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING. WE HAGGLED A LONG TIME OVER SOME MEANS BY WHICH I COULD SEND HIM SOME MONEY IN A HURRY BEFORE THE WEEK END. THERE WAS NO WAY, SINCE THEY HAD CLOSED THEIR BANK ACCOUNT AND I COULD NOT TRANSFER FUNDS AS I ~~USED~~ TO DO. and all the means there used to be, WIRING, ETC.! NO MORE. I'D FOUND OUT HOW IMPSSIBLE IT WAS TO SEND MONEY QUICKLY FROM MONROE WHEN I'D TRIED TO SEND SOME TO CARRIE. FINALLY DENNIS SAID, "WELL I'LL CALL YOU THIS WEEK END. MAYBE WE CAN FIGURE SOMETHING OUT BY THEN."

NEXT MORNING I TRIED TO CALL HIM TO SAY I'D PUT A CHECK IN THE MAIL. NO ANSWER. I CALLED AGAIN THAT EVENING AND ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE ON MY PARTY LINE, A WOMAN CUSSING, SCREECHING, YELLING SO LONG WE COULD NOT HEAR EACH OTHER. I MANAGED TO TELL HIM I'D PUT A CHECK IN THE MAIL. HE SAID HE'D TRY TO FIGURE OUT IF HE COULD GET AWAY AND WOULD CALL ME THAT WEEK END. "THIS TIME I'M WRITING THAT DOWN!" I SAID.

NEXT DAY I HASTENED DOWN TO SULTAN AND MAILED HIM A CHECK.

THAT SUNDAY, NOT HEARING FROM HIM, I CALLED HIM. HE STILL INSISTED HE WANTED TO COME SATURDAY..WOULD HAVE FROM SATURDAY TO TUESDAY..NOT SURE..AN IMPORTANT MEETING HE SHOULD ATTEND. AND HE'D SEE IF ONE OF THE KIDS COULD COME TO HELP OR AT LEAST KEEP HIM COMPANY ON THE TRIP, BUT THEY VERY INVOLVED IN SCHOOL ACTIVITES.

Tuesday i called him again. WE WERE TALKING AND LAUGHING AND MAKING PLANS WHEN SCREECH! AND ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE UN PHONE AGAIN, MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO TALK FURTHER. HE SAID AAS FAR AS HE KNEW HE WOULD COME SATURDAY.

SO THAT'S ALL I HAD TO GO ON. NOTHING REALLY SETTLED AND HIS TIME SO SHORT THERE WAS A LOT I SHOULD DO ARRANGE for things we'd need TO GET ALL THOSE THINGS NPLANNED DONE IN THE SHORT TIME HE HAD. BUT I WAS UNABLE TO NEGOTIATE WITH HIM FURTHER, FROM THAT CALL ON MY PHONE WAS DEAD, ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T DISCOVER IT TILL THURSDAY, so. added TO ALL THE LAST MINUTE SHOPPING AROUND I'D HAVE TO DO, not KNOWING FOR SURE IF WE'D EVEN NEED THE STUFF, I HAD TO GO THROUGH THAT INFURIATING BUSINESS OF TRYING TO CONTACT THE PHONE COMPANY WITH NO ACCESS TO PHONE I COULD USE. (THE NEW PEOPLE THAT HAD MOVED IN AROUND ME HAD CAUSED ME SO MUCH TROUBLE THAT WE WERE NOT ON FRIENDLY TERMS.)

RECALLING I'D SEEN A TELEPHONE TRUCK ON THE ROAD, I JUMPED INTO CAR, AND SURE ENOUGH, A MAN WORKING AT FOOT OF STREET. HE SEEMED PUZZLED THAT MY PHONE NOT WORKING: SAID IT DID FROM THE BOX THERE, AND THAT THE FACT THAT THEY WERE PUTTING IN A NEW PHONE SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT, BUT THAT HWE OULD HAVE IT WORKING BY EVENING. IT WAS NOT. NEXT DAY, IN MONROE, I CALLED ON PAY PHONE TO THE EVERETT OFFICE NAD, AFTER BEING MADE TO LISTEN TO MUSIC INDINITELY AND BEING PASSED AROUND TO ABOUT SIX PEOPLE, I GOT THAT SAME ASININE ANSWER THEY ALWAYS GIVE ME! "WELL CALL US AND LET US KNOW IF YOUR PHONE DOESN'T WORK!" AND SO ON AND SO ON. IT WAS FRIDAY EVENING BEFORE THAT NICE, SMART MAN THAT PUT IN THE PHONE ORIGINALLY CAME OUT AND GOT IT WORKING.

CARPORT III--1986

MEANTIME, I TOOK A GAMBLE ON DENNIS" COMING AND WENT FRANTICALLY SHOPPING AROUND THE AREA FOR THINGS HE"D NEED, RENT A LONG EXTENSION LADDER, AND, SINCE THE TIME SEEMED TO HAVE COME TO PUT UP THAT CARPORT HE"D WANTED TO DO FOR SO LONG, LOOK FOR DESIGNS, MATERIALS, TAKE MEASUREMENTS..THINGS LIKE THAT I FRANTICALLY COMBED THE AREA FOR. GRAVEL WE"D NEED. IT HAD BEEN SO LONG SINCE I"D DONE THESE THINGS, I HAD TO DO MUCH DIGGING OUT OF PAPERS AND TRY TO FIND WHERE I COULD GET SOME DELIVERED ON A WEEK END. FOUND RECORD ON WHERE WE"D GOTTEN SOME BEFORE, BUT HAD A FRUSTRATING TIME TRYING TO CONTACT THE GUY. NEVER DID BEFORE I CALLED DENNIS FRIDAY NIGHT, !AFTER THE PHONE FINALLY FIXED.

YES, HE WAS COMING STAURDAY, WOULD ARRIVE PERHAPS ABOUT THREE.HE DIDN" T MENTION WHETHER HE"D BE ALONE OR NOT. HE ONLY HAD UNTIL TUESDAY, SO I, WELL KNOWING THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING ANYTHING OPEN OR WORKERS WORKING ON WEEK ENDS ASDED HIM IF I SHOULD GO AHEAD AND ORDER THE GRAVEL? YES!

ENSUED A FRANTIC TIME OF TRYING TO FIND THAT GRAVEL MAN. FINALLY GOT HIM. THE BEST HE COULD DO WOULD BE MONDAY MORNING, WHICH MEANT ONE DAY! TO BUILD A CARPORT! THAT NEW RENTAL PLACE. I SESERVED A LADDER DENNIS WOULD NEED TO FIX THAT LEAK AROUND SKYLIGHT.. WE COULD PICK IT UP SUNDAY MORNING. THAT LEAK WAS MY PRIORITY JOB I WANTED DONE. THE LUMBER FOR CARPORT DENNIS WOULD HAVE TO BUY. IDIDN" T KNOW WHAT HE NEED. BUT I SPENT MUCH TIME FIGURING AND DESIGNING HWAT I"D LIKE ..NEEDED..IN A CARPORT ALONG WITHALLTHE OTHER CHORES TODO, GET FOOD IN, BEDS READY..FOR I KNEW NOT HOW MENY GUESTS. THINGS WERE CLOSING IN, GETTING PRETTY FRANTIC. BUT I GOT IT ALL DONE. I HAD ALSO FOUND AND BOUGHT \$50 WORTH OF PLASTIC FOR DENNIS TO PUT UP AS A HEAT HOLDER DOWNIN LIVING ROOM. WHAT I"D PUT UP BEFORE A TEMPORARY JOB.

FIX ROOF LEAK,REDO DRIVEWAY, BUILD CARPORT, DENNIS WANTED TO PUT DAMPER IN STOVE CHIMNEY, CUT AND GET ME SOME FIREWOOD IN, PUT UP THE PLASTIC (I! WANTED), ALL THESE WINTERIZING AND MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT JOBS I COULDN T DO..NOT TO MENTION A FE W LITTLE OTHER THINGS I WOULD HAVE LIKED HIM TO DO..IF! HE HAD TIME..ALL TO BE DONE IN TWO DAYS,ONE OF THEM A SUNDAY!

OCTOBER HAD BEEN AN UNUSUALLY DRY "INDIAN SUMMER" MONTH. THAT FRIDAY NIGHT IT BEGAN TO RAIN.

DENNIS DID ARRIVE BEFORE THREE, ALONE, IN THE RAIN. AND IT RAINED, AND RAINED,AND RAINED ALL THE TIME HE WAS HERE, UNTIL JUST BEFORE HE LEFT. "DID YOU REMEMBER TO PICK UP THE GOOP TO FIX THE SKYLIGHT WITH?": "OH, I FORGOT." "LET" S GO SHOPPING!" WE MADE NOT-MUCH-CHOICE DECISION. SO, TIRED AS HE WAS, WE HOPPED IN HIS CAR AND WENT TO MONROE, TO DUNBAR" S LUMBER, WHERE DENNIS DECIDED, "TO SAVE TIME" HE MIGHT AS WELL PICK UP SOME LUMBER THEN. FRANTIC BUYING: DUNBARS ABOUT TO CLOSE FOR WEEK END. FRANTIC LOADING AND BACK TO CABIN IN RAIN AND DARK. IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DO ANY WORK THEN,, WE SAT AND DRANK BEER AND TALKED AND, LATER, ATE THE "GRANDMA STEW" I HAD FIXED.

I WAS QUITE TOUCHED AT LITTLE MOMENTOES HE BROUGHT:A SMALL PUMPKIN THEY"D GROWN THEMSELVES THAT SARAH HAD PAINTED A FUNNY FACE ON WITH A "HAPPY HALLOWEEN" NTOE ON IT. MY FIRST (AND ONLY) TOUCH OF HALLOWEEN. I PUT IT ON THE LEDGE OF BATHROOM WINDOW ON PORCH. LATER, A SLUG? OR MOUSE? OR ? ATE HALF THE NOTE AWAY. A JAR OF HOME MADE PICKLES AND A "SPATULA" THAT DENNIS HAD HALF FORMED FROM WOOD OF MAPLE HE AND KIDS HAD CUT DOWN ON FORMER VISIT. (HE TOOK IT HOME WITH HIM TO FINISH.)

DENNIS WENT OUT TWICE, WITH FLASHLIGHT, DURING THE EVENING TO UNLOAD HIS CAR AND BRING THE LUMBER IN TO PUT UNDER CABIN OUT OF RAIN. THIS STARTED AN INSANE UPROAR FROM THE NEIGHBOR'S UNCONTROLLED DOGS THAT HAD BEEN MAKING MY LIFE HELL SETTING ON <sup>surveillance</sup> ME (OR BEING SET ON ME?) SO THAT I'D BEEN UNABLE TO EVEN OPEN MY FRONT DOOR WITHOUT THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD BEING ALERTED. THE SECOND TIME HE WENT OUT, IT OBVIOUS THAT IT WASN'T THE LIL' OLE LADY ALONE, BUT A BIG MAN AND A SECOND CAR THERE, THE DOGS WERE SHUT UP..FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!

SUNDAY MORNING, WE WERE UP EARLY..IN THE RAIN. IT WAS NICE TO HAVE SOMEONE GET UP AND START A FIRE. WE HAGGLED AND ARGUED AND WENT OUT AND STUDIED THE SITUATION IN THE POURING RAIN ABOUT THE CARPORT, OUR IDEAS DIFFERING, MY EXPEDIENT "5 YEAR PLAN" VS. DENNIS' PERMANENT "20 YEAR PLAN", (AND OTHER DIFFERENCES). DENNIS DECIDED HE'D NEED SOME MORE LUMBER, WHATEVER. DESPITE THE RAIN HE COULD PREPARE THE PIECES FOR ASSEMBLY LATER. ALL THIS UNTIL ABOUT 9 A.M. WHEN IT WAS TIME TO GO PICK UP THE LADDER. "WHERE COULD WE GET MORE LUMBER ON SUNDAY?" DENNIS ASKED. "I DON'T KNOW," I SAID. S&C'S RIGHT NEXT DOOR TO RENTAL PLACE. LET'S GO SEE." WE SET OFF TO GET THE LADDER, EVEN THO THE IDEA OF HIS GETTING THAT ROOF LEAK JOB "OVER WITH" UNTIL HE COULD START ON THE CARPORT" IN THAT DOWNPOUR FILLED ME WITH ALARM.

THEY HAD NO LADDER. SOME GUY HAD NEGLECTED TO BRING IT BACK WHEN SUPPOSED TO. I WAS FURIOUS/HYSTERICAL. DENNIS WAS PATIENT/ AMUSED. WE WASTED TIME IN WHICH WE COULD HAVE DRIVEN TO SNOWBUSH TO AS THE THREE PEOPLE THERE, A WOMAN, AN OLDER MAN AND A YOUNG FAT ONE KEPT US WAITING, WAITING, WAITING AS THEY WENT THROUGH HYSTERICAL, AND USELESS, ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. IT WAS A COMEDY. WE WENT OUT IN THE DOWNPOUR WITH NO LADDER. BY THAT TIME WE HAD NEITHER THE MEANS NOR THE TIME TO SEARCH FURTHER AND THE LUMBER STORE NEXT DOOR WAS CLOSED FOR THE WEEK END. WE GAVE UP ON THAT. AND WENT TO SEARCH MONROE SOLUTION TO THE STOVEPIPE PROBLEM. 3-4 HARDWARE STORES LATER--THEY WERE EITHER CLOSED OR DIDN'T HAVE ONE. ONE MEANING, MOSTLY, A 6" DAMPER. THE LAST PLACE THAT NEW "FIREPLACE SHOPPE"--"everything you need for stoves!" AH, YES INDEED! OH WHOOPS "WE JUST! SOLD THE LAST ONE!" ALL THIS IN THE DOWNPOUR. WE WENT HOME.

*I called friends about a ladder. Either not home or not have one.*

"UH..I'LL GO DOWN TO THE STORE AND GET SOME BEER" I SAID, AS DENNIS BEGAN TO SET UP A MAKESHIFT AND INCONVIENT WORK SHOP ON WEST PORCH, WHERE THE RAIN WAS NOT SO BLUSTERY. AND BEGAN, BY HAND--NO POWER TOOLS--(HE'D FORGOTTEN HIS..OR? I FORGET.) TO PREPARE THE LUMBER FOR INSTANT ASSEMBLY."..AND GET ME THE SUNDAY PAPER!" HE CALLED. WEEL, I WENT TO MUCH TROUBLE TO GET CHANGE TO BUY THE PAPER..AND FORGOT. IT WAS THAT KIND OF A DAY.

[[I WAS UNABLE TO KEEP NOTES DURING THAT WILD, WILD WEEK END. SO. WHEN AND WHERE DENNIS FINALLY FOUND THE STOVE DAMPER, I DO NOT REMEMBER. BUT SEEMED TO ME HE SPEND DAYS TRYING TO PUT THE STOVEPIPE TOGETHER AFTER HE GOT THE DAMPER IN. SAID HE'D FORGOTTEN: HAD A HELL OF A TIME WHEN HE'D FIRST INSTALLED IT, THAT COLLAR NOT FITTING. HE FINALLY SOLVED IT BY TURNING THE TOP, OF THREE SECTIONS, UPSIDE DOWN. WHEN ALL THAT WAS, I DUNNO. HE BUILT A FIRE IN STOVE SUNDAY MORNING! THE REST OF THE TIME THE STOVE BUILT A FIRE IN HIM

SO. REST OF SUNDAY, FRUSTRATED AND FURIOUS WE BOTH WERE..DENNIS FOUND HE'D MADE MISTAKES IN LUMBER CALULATIONS AND HAD TO REDESIGN CARPORT? WE EACH TOOK AN I'VE- HAD-IT! REST BREAK. AND THEN, THAT EVENING, I COAXED? HIM INTO PUTTING THE PLASTIC UP. HE DID A GOOD JOB, BETTER THAN I EVER COULD HAVE. AND WE HAD AN HYSTERICAL LAUGH: IN SMOOTHING THE PLASTIC HE CREATED STATIC ELECTRICITY, WHICH MADE ALL HIS HAIR STAND ON END! "MORE HALLOWEEN IMPS!" I GIGGLED.

THAT SUNDAY NIGHT WAS OUR NADIR. EVERYTHING LOOKED IMPOSSIBLE. DENNIS HAD TO BE BACK TUESDAY.. A MEETING. THAT GAVE HIM A DAY AND A HALF TO BUILD A CARPORT. WE HAD MORE OR LESS CONCEDED TO EACH OTHER OVER THE POSITION OF IT. EACH GRUDGINGLY. DENNIS WANTED TO TAKE OUT AND MOVE THE SO-SWEATED FENCE I'D HAD PUT IN.

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his idea WAS TO PUT THE CARPORT WELL WITHIN THE PROPERTY WHERE THERE'D BE NO QUESTION OF HAVING TO MOVE IT, LATER. I HAD NO QUARREL WITH THAT. BUT MY MAIN CONCERN WAS EXPEDIENCY: THIS MIGHT BE THE ONLY CHANCE FOR ME TO GET A CARPORT BUILT AND I FIGURED HE JUST DIDN'T PLAIN HAVE TIME TO MOVE THE FENCE, TOO. TO ME, IT WAS NOW OR NEVER. AND IF, MORE THINGS WENT WRONG, I MIGHT BE LEFT WITHOUT ANY CARPORT OR FENCE. I ALSO HAD STRONG DOUBTS THAT GUY WOULD SHOW UP WITH THE GRAVEL, ON WHICH ALL DEPENDED. MY EXPERIENCES WITH UNDEPENDABLE WORKMEN IN THE AREA AND HE'D SOUNDED DRUNK AND MADE WILD PROMISES WHEN I HAD FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH HIM AT A FAMILY PARTY. HE HAD PROMISED TO COME AT 8 THE NEXT MORNING. IF HE DIDN'T--ALL WAS LOST.

DAYLIGHT SAVING. ALL WE NEEDED WAS TIME CONFUSION. I BATTLED RESETTING MY FOUR CLOCKS AND THE CLOCK RADIO, WHICH TAKES ME DAYS! TO GET RESET RIGHT. "WE HAVE AN EXTRA HOUR" I SAID TO DENNIS, CYNICALLY, AS WE BOTH GRUMPED INTO BED. GOD KNOWS WE'D NEED IT! TIME WAS "OF THE ESSENCE"!

THE NEXT MORNING DENNIS WAS UP EARLY PACING, PACING PACING. IT WAS STILL RAINING, RAINING, RAINING. I WAS IN KNOTS WONDERING HOW I'D GET A HOLD OF THAT GUY IF HE DIDN'T SHOW. "WELL, NOT A DAMNED THING WE CAN DO TILL WE SEE IF HE DOES," I SIGHED.

SUDDENLY DENNIS DUG OUT HIS HARMONICA AND STARTED PLAYING <sup>merely</sup> LOPING AROUND THE CONFINES OF CABIN LIKE A CAGED ANIMAL, ~~BUT MERRILY~~. "HEY! DO YOU KNOW "AMAZING GRACE"? I'VE BEEN TRYING TO PINPOINT THAT SONG.." "NO, HOW DOES IT GO?" "I! DON'T KNOW!" I DUG OUT MY MUSIC BOOKS.. COULDN'T FIND, BUT DENNIS AND I AND OUR CELTIC HANG UP WE GOT OFF ON THINGS CELTIC. "WHAT'S THAT?" ? WHAT'S THAT?" WE BOTH ALERTED. SOUND OF A GRAVEL TRUCK COMING! IT WAS BEFORE 8 A.M.

"HALLOO! HALLOO!" A BIG GRAVEL TRUCK THUNDERED IN, AND A LITTLE TROLL OF A MAN WITH A VOICE LIKE A CLARION JUMPED OUT. "COULDN'T FIND YOUR A-FRAME!" (AMAZING GRACE!) FROM THEN ON THINGS CHANGED.

DENNIS RAN OUT AND HE AND THE DROLL TROLL SHOUTED AND LAUGHED SPEWED GRAVEL HERE AND THERE ALL OVER THE PLACE FROM THAT BIG OLD NOISY TRUCK. I SAUNTERED OUT, AGAIN AMAZED AT THE <sup>working</sup> CAMERADERIE OF MALES. I WAS MORE CONCERNED WITH GLOATING ABOUT HOW THE NEIGHBOR HOOD LIKED BEING DISTURBED BY WORLD CHANGING JUGGERNAUT NOISES AT SUCH AN EARLY HOUR, AS THEY HAD BEEN DOING SO OFTEN TO ME OF LATE. DENNIS AND THE MERRY TROLL GOT ALONG FAMOUSLY AND SO DID I WITH HIM WHEN HE BOMBASTED IN TO GET HIS CHECK AND RAVED ABOUT THE CABIN. THAT, OF COURSE, PLEASED ME, BUT I WAS MORE PLEASED THAT, AT SOME QUESTIONS FROM ME HE TRUMPETED OUT FOR ALL TO HEAR WITHIN MILES ABOUT THE SEANIGANS OF CORPORATE RAIDERS IN THE AREA THAT I HAD SUSPECTED. HE WAS SO FUNNY, HE LEFT DENNIS AND I LAUGHING OUR HEADS OFF AT THE WAY HE TOLD HIS TALES. I WISH I COULD DESCRIBE HIM: HE WAS SUCH AN ANTITHESIS TO THE SULKY, INSOLENT MACHOS THAT I'VE HAD TO DEAL WITH IN THIS AREA. GOHR HIS NAME WAS, AND HE LOOKED IT: A DROLL TROLL FROM "THE BLACK FOREST" AND HIS PET PEEVE WAS THE FIORITO BROTHERS, NOW MILLIONAIRE MOGULS FROM THE RAPE OF THE LAND AROUND HERE, "WHILE I SIT IN MY OLD TRUCK AND WONDER IF I'VE GOT THE PRICE OF A CUP OF COFFEE!" HE SAID. I LAUGHED AND NODDED: WE HAD DEALINGS WITH THE FIORITO BROS. AT THE HIGHWAY DEPT.

AFTER HE LEFT THINGS MOVED SO FAST THEY REMAIN A BLUR IN MY MEMORY. DENNIS REVVED UP HIS CHAIN SAW AND BEFORE I KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING ABOUT FIVE ALDERS BEGAN CRASHING DOWN OUT THERE.

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'here, mom!' dennis cried, "TAKE THE CHAIN SAW AND FINISH THAT CUT WHILE I PUSH THAT (CUSS WORD) AWAY FROM THE WIRES!" "DENNIS!" I WAILED (ME! AND A CHAIN SAW?) AND HE WAITED IMPATIENTLY WHILE I RAN IN AND GOT MY TREE SAWS. THEN HE CUT WHILE I PUSHED. CRASH!

NEXT THING I REMEMBER, THE DRIVEWAY WAS IMPENETRABLE WITH FELLED TREES. "LITTLE" ALDERS SUDDENLY BECAME BIG ALDERS WHEN THEY'RE ON THE GROUND!..AND I WAS WHACKING AWAY WITH HATCHET DE-LIMBING THEM. "DON'T!" DENNIS YELLED. "THEY'RE EASIER TO MOVE WHOLE!" "I'LL EXPLAIN LATER!" I YELLED AND HAD TO MOVE FAST TO GLEAN SOME BIG LIMBS FROM DENNIS TO FILL IN THAT HOLE OFF THE CUL WHERE THE DOGS AND PEOPLE INVADE AND HAVE ACCESS TO THE NORTH SIDE OF OUR LOT. IT SEEMED ONLY "MINUTES" UNTIL DENNIS HAD PUT THE FELLED TREES INTO THAT HOLE THE DEVELOPERS HAD MADE IN MY PROTECTIVE <sup>on E. side</sup> SCREEN, BUCKED UP THE TREE TRUNKS, CARRIED THEM BACK TO CABIN FOR FIREWOOD AND WAS SIGHING ABOUT MOVING ALL THAT GRAVEL.

"I'LL HELP!" I CRIED, AND WENT TO WORK ON SOMETHING I'D BEEN WANTING FOR YEARS: FILLING IN THAT "SWALE" FROM CUL INTO DRIVEWAY THAT "IMPRIONS ME " IN WINTER WEATHER, WHILE DENNIS WORKED ON THE HEAVIER JOB FOR CARPORT. I FELT LIKE AN AMAZON! "GEE, " I QUIPPED, NEVER KNEW I'D BE DOING THIS! WHEN 71 YEARS OLD!" BUT IT WAS FUN!

AN INCIDENT IN HERE THAT WAS IMPOROTANT TO ME, BECAUSE OF NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONSHIPS: THEY AROUSED BY NOW AND "SNOOPING" IN THEIR OWN PECULIAR WAYS, WHICH INFURIATED ME BECAUSE OF THINGS PAST. I SCUTTLED, FROM HABIT, WITH MY RAKE BACK OUT OF SIGHT. DENNIS, NOT KNOWING, CHIDED ME, BUT SOLVED IT INADVERTENTLY? BY OFFERING TO FINISH THE RAKING FOR ME.

WE WERE WORKING IN SUCH A FRENZY THAT I HAD ONLY A MOMENTARY TWINGE AS WE BEGAN THE DRASTIC, TO ME, TASK OF DISMANTLING MY YEARS OF WORK ON MY TARP AND BRANCHES AND TWINE "CARPORT" I'D HAD ANCHORED TO THOSE TREES SO INSTANTLY CUT DOWN. ALL THOSE TRILLIONS OF KNOTS I HAD EVOLVED..SLASH!

IT AMAZED ME HOW SOON ALL THAT WAS DONE. "NOW", WE SAID AS WE CHANGED OUR DRENCHED CLOTHES, "LET'S GO GET THE LUMBER AND STUFF!" THIS TIME SMITH & CARLSON'S WAS OPEN. "GO AHEAD", I TOLD DENNIS. "GET WHATEVER YOU NEED." SO HE BEGAN GIVING THEM HIS ORDER. IT WAS FUN! TO HAVE ENOUGH MONEY NOT TO EVEN FRET IT. THE MOOD BECAME GAYER AND GAYER AS THEY CAUGHT ON THAT THIS WAS A SERIOUS ORDER. THE FRIENDLY LITTLE FAT WOMAN AND I BEGAN CHANGING LOCAL GOSSIP STORIES..ABOUT THEIR BEING ROBBED, ETC. AND SHE WAS QUITE GENEROUS ABOUT MY HELPING MYSELF TO THE HALLOWEEN TREATS PROFFERED-- CANDIES, PENCILS LIKE NAILS--"TO SEND TO MY GRANDKIS" I SAID. SHE AND DENNIS ROAMED OFF TO CHECK ON THINGS HE WANTND, AND I JUST ROAMED AND WAITED. THEN DENNIS WENT OFF WITH THE MEN. WE WERE THERE QUITE A LONG TIME. WHEN IT CAME TIME TO WRITE THE MA CHECK SHE ASKED, "ID THIS FOR HER?(ME)" "YES". "THEN YOU GET A 10% SR. DISCOUNT." WE WHOOPED AND JOKED. AFTER AWHILE I SOUGHT OUT DENNIS AND THE MEN WHERE THEY WERE LOADING THE CAR BELOW IN THE LUMBER YARD. IT ADDED TO THE ALMOST FESTIVE MOOD THAT THERE WAS THE FIRST BREAK IN THE INCESSANT RAIN. WE SET OFF HOME, HEAVILY LADEN.

THE REST OF THE DAY WAS A FRENZY OF DENNIS BUILDING. I HAD LONG SINCE LEARNED MY ROLE: DON'T ASK QUESTIONS: DON'T TRY TO TALK. JUST STAY OUT OF THE WAY AND FETCH AND CARRY. "GOT THIS? GOT THAT?" I GOT OUT THE REMAINDER OF THE OIL STAIN I'D USED ON PROCHES

and tried to keep ahead of him AS HE GRABBED THE LUMBER FASTER THAN I COULD STAIN IT. AND I WAS STILL STAINING ALMOST IN THE DARK AS HE CAME BACK WITH MORE PIECES HE'D GONE DOWN TO GET. IN FACT, I SAT AND HELD THE FLASHLIGHT FOR HIM AS HE FINISHED THE LAST OF THE FRAMEWORK AS DARK FELL. I WAS AMAZED AT HOW FAST THAT THING WENT UP AND PUZZLED AS TO HOW HE WAS GOING TO DO CERTAIN THINGS, BUT DIDN'T DARE ASK. DURING THIS THE WEATHER BROKE AND THERE WAS A NICE SUNSET. WE WERE BOTH GLEEFUL. I DID MANAGE TO GET ONE PICTURE (I HOPE) BEFORE THE SUN SET. "I'VE NEVER BUILT A CARPORT BEFORE," DENNIS SAID, PERCHED ON THE FRAMEWORK AND SURVEYING HIS DAY'S WORK. AND THEN, "HOW COME I BUILT IT SO TALL?" WELL, WHEN HE'D BEEN MEASURING, AND I'D BEEN GIVING HIM THE MEASUREMENTS I'D USED, HE'D SAID, "WELL I'M NOT GOING TO BUMP MY HEAD!", LATER, WHEN I LOOKED AT THAT RATHER SOARING STRUCTURE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A MOUSE GETS A GIANT TO BUILD FOR THEM, I THOUGHT.

DARKNESS DROVE US IN. ALL EVENING DENNIS KEPT FRETTING AND GOING OUT TO CHECK AND ALERTING AT NOISES FOR FEAR THE PEOPLE WHOM HE'D SCOFFED AT ME FOR BEING UNDULY FEARFUL OF WOULD STEAL THE REST OF THAT LUMBER LYING OUT THERE. I FELT VINDICATED.

THE NEXT DAY, TUESDAY, THE DAY DENNIS HAD TO GO HOME AND TEND TO HIS LIFE. HE GOT UP EARLY AND PACED AND PACED. HE HAD TO FINISH THAT CARPORT, HE SAID. IT WAS ALL DONE EXCEPT THE ROOFING, AND, HE'D MISCALCULATED, OR SOMETHING, WOULD HAVE TO GO GET SOME MORE SUPPLIES. SO OFF HE WENT AGAIN. THIS TIME I GAVE HIM MY GAS CREDIT CARD: "WILL SAVE TIME IF YOU GAS UP AND NOT HAVE TO RETRACE TO GO EAST". I FILLED IN THE TIME HE WAS GONE WITH PREPARATIONS FOR HIS LEAVETAKING. FIXED HIM SOME ABLE-TO-EAT-WITH-ONE-HAND ~~WHILE~~-DRIVING FOOD TO TAKE, PACKED UP, AS FAR AS I COULD, HIS STUFF, PUT TOOLS AND THINGS HE MIGHT FORGET HANDY FOR INSTANT LEAVING. CHECKED THE TARP I'D PROMISED TO GIVE HIM..HOLES IN! TRADED IT FOR BETTER ONE...OH LIL "GRANDMA" TASKS.

THE WEATHER, MEANTIME, HAD CLEARED. "BACK ~~OR~~ STORM BROKEN"? DENNIS AND I HAVE A STANDING JOKE: ONE LOOK AT YOU@! AND THE "WOODS GODS", WE CALL THEM, POUR IT ON! COME: IT RAINS! GO! IT CLEARS. WHATEVER...

DENNIS CAME BACK. AND FINISHED THE CARPORT. HE HAD TO LEAVE, HE FIGURED BY "NOON" THAT LONG DRIVE HOME. (THE STOVEPIPE PROBLEM: WAS IT THEN HE SHOWED ME? "FOUND ONE!" 6" damper I ONLY REMEMBER, (NOW MORE THAN A MONTH LATER.) HE FOUGHT THAT STOVEPIPE UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT!) [[MAY I TELL THIS FROM MY VANTAGE POINT?]] WELL, I SHIGHED, PREPARING MYSELF FOR THE LEAVETAKING (DON'T CRY!) (ZIT! ="THIS IS IT!") "we.e11" HE SAID, "GUESS I HAVE A MINUTE OR TWO". WE WENT ON A TOUR OF HALF ACRE. SPEAKING OF ACHERS..WE BOTH LAUGHED. "YOU PICK IT UP! NO YOU!" WE WERE BOTH SO CRIPPLED UP, MUSCULARLY, NEITHER OF US COULD STOOP TO RETRIEVE SOMETHING ON FLOOR.

WE WENT ON A LAST MINUTRE "INSPECTION TOUR" OF HALF ACRE. "THAT TREE..THIS ONE"?? ETC. AND MUSHROOMS ALL OVER THE PLACE! "LOOK AT THAT!" I CRIED AND ~~blew~~ <sup>Kicked it</sup>..AND WE BOTH LAUGHED "PUFF BALLS" THEY CALL THEM. "NICE PIECE OF LAND HERE" DENNIS SAID, LOOKING AROUND.

WELL IT WAS TIME TO GO. PARING TIME. I USHERED HIM BACK IN (EAST DOOR) (CRAZY HOUSE TURNED AROUND! THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FRONT DOOR!) "OH. WHILE WE'RE HERE" I SAID "THERE IS A KEY..HIDDEN HERE..IN CASE.." I SHOWED HIM. ((OH NO! YOU! DON'T GET TO KNOW WHERE IT IS! A SECRET!) FIND THE "KEY" YOYOURSELF!))

CARPORT REPORT--VIII 1986

"WELL," DENNIS SAID, GETTING READY TO LEAVE, "I DON'T KNOW WHEN I'LL BE BACK." HE SIGHED, "IT'LL BE DARK WHEN I GET HOME." "WILL YOU CALL AND LET ME KNOW IF YOU MADE IT ALL RIGHT?" "OH..YEAH."

HE PACKED UP HIS CAR AND I PUT MY WASHING IN MY CAR AND FOLLOWED HIM DOWN TO THE HIGHWAY. WE WAVED AT EACH OTHER AND HE HEADED FOR THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS AHEAD. I WENT TO DO MY WASH.

I SPENT THE REST OF THE AFTERNOON LEVELLING OUT THE GRAVEL IN MY NEW CARPORT AND PUT THE CAR IN!

LATER THAT EVENING DENNIS CALLED AND SAID HE'D HAD A FAIRLY EASY TRIP HOME. "I'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT DAYLIGHT SAVING"! HE SAID.

IT WAS A VERY MELODRAMATIC WEEK END!

AS TO DENNIS' REACTIONS TO THE CHANGES IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, HE HURT MY FEELINGS WHEN HE FIRST CAME. "I'M TIRED OF THE CABIN" HE SAID. LATER, WHEN I REFERRED TO THAT REMARK, HE QUALIFIED, "I MEANT I'M TIRED OF WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND HERE!" ANOTHER TIME HE SAID, REFERRING TO ALL THE PEOPLE SO CLOSE NOW, "I DON'T THINK I COULD TAKE IT ANYMORE. I'M USED TO HAVING SPACE AROUND ME." (HIS EIGHTY ACRES.) I SIGHED. SO WAS I!

AND THAT'S THE CARPORT REPORT.

THE LAST ADDITION.

*Rough draft*

# THE FENCE

APRIL - 1988 (1)  
Dennis visit  
April 4-8-

**F**ENCES are as American as Tom Sawyer, who spent a legendary Missouri day whitewashing one, and Robert Frost, who recommended good ones between neighbors. American politicians are said to spend a lot of time mending them, while people who are noncommittal sit on them. Quiet, often recessive elements in American yards and fields, fences have entered both the dictionary, as idiomatic expressions, and the culture, as lore.

Traditionally designed to keep people or animals in or out, or to mark boundaries and establish territory, fences today have gone beyond the purely functional. They may also be symbolic and

*\* Expression of a place, a people, a time*

FOR FOUR MONTHS I TRIED TO GET A FENCE BUILT HERE. DENNIS CAME AND BUILT IT IN FOUR DAYS.

THE NEED FOR A FENCE..OR SOMETHING..BECAME MORE APPARENT AS MY NICE, QUIET, PRETTY, WOODSY RETIREMENT PLACE BECAME ALL TOO RAPIDLY ENCROACHED UPON BY WHAT WAS TURNING INTO A CITY SLUM, OVERCROWDED WITH SCOFFLAWS AND RIFFRAFF THAT PROCEEDED TO MAKE MY LIFE SHEER HELL, I, <sup>WHO</sup> TRAPPED ~~AS I WAS~~, IN THE CUL DE SAC AT END OF THE STREET THEY TOOK OVER. THE LAST STRAW WAS WHEN, IN NOVEMBER, I CAME HOME TO FIND WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE REALLY TROUBLESOME PEOPLE MOVED IN PRACTIACLLY ON MY DOORSTEP.ON THE STREET SIDE. ANOTHER DINGY OLD EYESORE TRAILER HOME. SO FAR THE OTHER THREE SIDES OF THE LOT STILL FORESTED.

MONEY I HAD FOR A FENCE. IF FENCE WAS WHAT IT HAD TO BE SPENT ON. FOR FOUR MONTHS I TRIED TO FIND SOMEBODY (TRUSTWORTHY) IN THE AREA TO COME AND BUILD ME A FENCE. MEANTIME, MY LIFE BECAME SHEERER HELL, IF THERE IS SUCH A THING, FENDING OFF AND FIGHTING THEIR NOISE, THEIR TRASHING, THEIR THREE BIG, UNCONTROLLED DOGS, THEIR INSOLENCE AND THEIR APPARENT ASSUMPTION OF LIBERTY TO MAKE FREE WITH WHATEVER SURROUNDED THEM, INCLUDING OUR HALF ACRE OF WOODS.

I LET THE PROBLEM SLIDE INTO WINTER MONTHS, THINKING I HAD A DEAL <sup>with a local fence builder</sup> GOING "WHEN HE HAD TIME". NOT SO. HE JUST "FADED AWAY" SO TO SPEAK. THIS IS NOT MEANT TO BE A DETAILED SAGA ABOUT BUILDING A FENCE. ALL THAT I have written elsewhere. IT IS SIMPLY A REPORT ON HOW THE FENCE FINALLY GOT BUILT, THE FENCE RATHER A CODA ON THE MAIN STORY OF BUILDING THE CABIN; AN AFTERMATH.

DENNIS, WHEN FINALLY MADE AWARE OF MY DECISION TO TRY A FENCE VERSUS OTHER ALTERNATIVES, WAS WILLING TO BUILD ONE. BUT HE IN A LIFE CRISIS AND CHANGE OF HIS OWN. AND HE HAD NO "WHEELS"..NO WAY TO COME OVER. WE LEFT IT TO TRY FOR "IN THE SPRING", WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT I WOULD PAY HIM WHATEVER IT WOULD COST ME TO HIRE, APPARENTLY UN-AVAILABLE, LOCAL LABOR.

Rough  
draft

## THE FENCE

2

I SPENT THE FOUR MONTHS DAY-DREAMING THE FENCE, UNABLE, FOR REASONS RELATED ELSEWHERE TO DO ANYTHING MORE PRACTICAL ABOUT IT. IT ENDED UP IN A PATTERN THAT SEEMED SINGULAR ~~TO~~ THE WHOLE EVOLVEMENT OF THE CABIN.

*the whole cabin and all additions to it were done in hard-pressed scrambles. We had to work under pressure, head long, hard pressed. Decisions had to be made on spur of moment - suddenly. Slapdash. Hasty plunges. On short notice. There was always a sense of rush and urgency - a forced march toward our goal.*

I MADE UP PLANS THE BEST I COULD AND SENT THEM OFF TO DENNIS AND WE HAD TO NEGOTIATE BY LONG DISTANCE PHONE AND GRAB WHATEVER CHANCE MIGHT ARISE TO EFFECT THEM. HE TOLD ME WHAT LUMBER HE ESTIMATED MIGHT BE NEEDED. I MANAGED TO ORDER IT AND GET IT DELIVERED BY THE TIME HE GRABBED A CHANCE FOR A RIDE OVER AND BACK WITH A FRIEND WHO WAS BRINGING HER KIDS OVER ON A FAMILY VISIT. HE HAD FOUR DAYS.

*women's* THE CAR SMALL AND CROWDED, HE WAS UNABLE TO BRING HIS OWN TOOLS. THE WEATHER WAS UNUSUALLY AND UNSEASONABLY NASTY FOR DRIVING OVER THE PASSES. THE MORNING OF APRIL 4TH AS I WAITED FOR THEM, OUR FIRST AND BIGGEST SNOWFALL OF THE SEASON BEGAN!  
*much or*

I WENT OUT IN IT AND UNCOVERED THE \$600 WORTH OF LUMBER I'D "BABY SAT" ALL WEEK END, BEING WARNED OF VANDALISM. I HAD SPLURGED AND GOTTEN CEDAR, NOT AT ALL IMPASSIONED BY THE PROSPECT OF SLAPPING ON "POISONOUS PRESERVATIVE" ON A BARRIER THAT WAS ALREADY FOSTERING POISONOUS RELATIONS (FOR WHO KNEW HOW MANY DAYS).

THEY CAME AROUND 3 P.M., DROPPED OFF DENNIS AND WENT ON.

THE SNOW HAD TURNED TO RAIN. IT RAINED STEADY, COLD DOWNPOUR PRACTICALLY ALL THE TIME DENNIS WAS HERE. HE HAD TO WORK IN THAT. HE ALSO, HAD NO FOOTWEAR EXCEPT SOME TENNIS SHOES (WE USED TO CALL THEM) SO RAGGED HE WAS NIGH BAREFOOT.

SO, WE SET OFF IMMEDIATELY THAT FIRST AFTERNOON ON A LONG, (AND FUTILE) SEARCH FOR SIZE 13 BOOTS THAT WOULDN'T DENUDE HIM FINANCIALLY: AND TO RENT A POST HOLE DIGGER SO HE COULD GET STARTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THE NEXT MORNING.

WE WORKED, AND WORE OURSELVES OUT, IN SUCH A FRENZY THOSE FOUR DAYS THAT I WAS UNABLE TO KEEP CONSECUTIVE NOTES. SO, FROM NOW ON, THESE ARE SCATTERED AND RANDOM NOTES.

SUFFICE IT TO SAY, AS A BARE OUTLINE: THE NEXT DAY, HAVING BEEN TIED DOWN TO "BABY SITTING" THE LUMBER, I WENT TO GROCERY SHOP AND GET SOME MONEY.

.....AND WHEN I CAME BACK, THE POSTS WERE UP.

THE NEXT DAY, (NOAH'S BIRTHDAY) BY THE TIME I GOT HOUSEWORK AND FOOD TASKS DONE

.....THE RAILS WERE UP.

THE NEXT DAY, BY THE TIME I GOT BACK FROM SOME FINANCIAL JUGGLING AT THE BANK, AND RETURNING THE POST HOLE DIGGER, AND SHOPPING FOR A FEW MORE FENCE BOARDS..

.....THE BOARDS WERE UP.

NOT ALL THAT SIMPLE, OF COURSE. I SHALL TRY TO FILL IN DETAILS AS TIME AND OPPORTUNITY PERMIT.

Rough draft

## THE FENCE

3

THERE WAS, ALSO, AN OBLIGATO STORY RUNNING ALONG WITH ALL THIS. BUT, SINCE IT, TOO, WAS SORT OF A CODA (WHERE AM I GETTING ALL THESE MUSICAL TERMS?) TO MY ORIGINAL BUILDING OF THE CABIN SAGA, I SHALL TRY TO WORK IT INTO ITS SECONDARY, POSITION IN THIS FENCE STORY.

BEFORE AND DURING DENNIS'S VISIT LOGGERS HAD SUDDENLY MOVED ON<sup>TO</sup> THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST WOODS BORDERING OUR PROPERTY. FORMER INVESTIGATIONS I'D DONE HAD ASSURED ME THAT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE NO DEVELOPMENT OR CLEARING THERE IN MY TIME IN CABIN. MY DISMAY AND SHOCK AT THIS SUDDEN SWITCH WAS INFLAMED BY MY NEW NEIGHBOR SMUGLY INFORMING ME THERE WAS GOING TO BE A BIG DEVELOPMENT AND ROAD RUNNING RIGHT BESIDE MY CABIN. HE HAD ENOUGH PERTINENT DATA TO SEND ME OFF ON A DESPARATE AND NECESSARILY TOO INCOMPLETE INVESTIGATION AT SNOHOMISH COUNTY COURTHOUSE. THERE I UNEARTHED ENOUGH TO SUSPECT THERE WAS SOMETHING NOT QUITE LEGAL GOING ON.

WHATEVER, THE NERVE-JARRING DIN THEY WERE MAKING ON THAT SIDE WITH THEIR JUGGERNAUT MACHINES AND THE HEART WRENCHING THUNDER OF FALLING TREES ADDED TO THE EQUALLY NOISY NEW INVASION ON THE OTHER SIDE OF<sup>ne</sup> THAT TRIGGERED THE NEED FOR A FENCE HAD ME NIGH HYSTERICAL.

IT UPSET Dennis VERY MUCH, TOO. He, with his CONTACTS, EXPERIENCE, KNOW-HOW AND ENVIRONMENTALIST CONCERNS ABOUT FORESTRY WAS FURIOUS AND CURIOUS. HE KEPT RAGING THAT HE WAS GOING TO HIKE OVER THERE AND TALK TO THOSE GUYS AND FIND OUT WHO THEY WERE AND WHAT THEY WERE DOING THERE.. HE DID MAKE TWO? THREE? HURRIED CRASH-THROUGHS IN THAT COLD POURING RAIN AND WAS ONLY MORE FURIOUS AT THEIR TERRIBLE DESTRUCTIVENESS. BUT HE NEVER DID MAKE CONTACT WITH THEM, A THING WHICH PUZZLED ME AT THE TIME.

I UNDERSTOOD THAT HE HAD NEITHER THE TIME OR THE RIGHT CLOTHES TO WOODS <sup>HIKE</sup> IN DOWNPOURS. ONLY LATER, AFTER TALKING TO OTHER MEN WHO'D HAD FORESTRY SERVICE EXPERIENCE DID I GET THE CONNECTION WITH OUR SHOPPING FOR BOOTS. A STATUS SYMBOL WITH MEN: HE COULD NOT APPROACH THEM IN HIS (QUITE OFFICIAL) CAPACITY AS FORESTRY EXPERT COMING CRASHING OUT OF THE WOODS LOOKING LIKE A BAREFOOT, BEDRAGGLED BUM. SO WE NEVER DID FIND OUT.

WHAT STRUCK ME ABOUT THIS SIDE OF THE FENCE BUILDING STORY WAS THE IRONY OF IT. THEY WERE APPARENTLY HARVESTING CEDAR ILLEGALLY TO PUT ON THE BLACK MARKET AT INFLATED PRICES ON ONE SIDE OF US, WHILE WE WERE GOING OUT AND BUYING, PERHAPS, WHO KNOWS, EXACTLY THE SAME CEDAR TO BUILD A FENCE ON THE OTHER SIDE TO PRESERVE INROADS ON OUR LITTLE STAND OF CEDAR! IT WAS WRYLY FUNNY: A SILLY LITTLE CIRCLE OF FUTILITY!

((CARTOON NEEDED HERE.))

Rough draft.

# THE FENCE

(notes.)

④

FRIDAY, APRIL 9. THEY LEFT AT 10 A.M. JAN, DENNIS' FRIEND AND HER KIDS JUST STOPPED AND GOT DENNIS AND THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY. THE FENCE IS UP. ALL WENT AMAZINGLY WELL. AND THEN.. THAT NEAR TRAGIC ENDING.

THURS.

THAT LAST EVENING. DENNIS AND I SAT DOWN, THE "LAST FAREWELL" EVENING, THE WORK ALL DONE, DENNIS SHOWERED AND IN CLEAN, FRESH CLOTHES, AT LAST, THE FOOD ALL READY TO EAT, TO HAVE, I HOPED, A LAST BEER SESSION AND GLOAT AND TALK IT ALL OVER. AND THEN (WE'D HAD NO TROUBLE AT ALL WITH THOSE NASTY NEIGHBORS, MY MAIN REASON FOR BUILDING THE FENCE.) THE LOUD MUSIC STARTED. IT STARTED AT SEVEN P.M. AND WENT ON FOR FIVE HOURS! I TIMED IT. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME DENNIS HAD ACTUALLY HEARD IT. AS FOR ME, ... I CHECKED MY RECORDS LATER.. I HAD BEEN SUFFERING IT EVERY SINGLE WEEK END.. AND OTHER TIMES, SINCE OCT OR NOV.. WHEN THEY MOVED IN.

the music

I HAD TRIED EVERYTHING TO COMBAT IT.. EVERYTHING, COPS AND SO ON AND SO ON. DECIDED, FINALLY, THAT IT WAS BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE A MAN AROUND TO.. TELL "EM OFF. WHEN DENNIS COMES, I'D THOUGHT... WELL, DENNIS WAS THERE, AND THE MUSIC WAS BLARING, BUT, FOR SOME REASON BEYOND MY COMPREHENSION, DENNIS REFUSED TO GET UPSET OR DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. HE JUST BEGAN MILD EXPLANATIONS AND REASSURANCES THAT IT WAS NOT MEANT AS PERSONAL HARRASSMENT AGAINST MME.. "THAT THE GUY WAS JUST UNHAPPY ANND HAD PROBLEMS, ETC". WHATEVER, OUR NICE, LITTLE LAST FAREWELL PARTY I'D HOPED FOR WAS COMPLETELY RUINED. WE BEGAN TO FIGHT AND BICKER. *about nothing, really - an effect of noise stress that I found my papers on only too late later*

IT GOT TO BE TOO MUCH FOR ME. I JUST GRABBED MY BEER AND FLED TO THE LOFT AND... WHAT WOULD BE CALLED.. SULKED, I GUESS. I PRETENDED TO READ, BUT DIDN'T FALL ASLEEP UNTIL THE MUSIC.. SO CALLED.. WENT OFF FIVE HOURS AFTER IT STARTED.

(THE NEXT MORNING WE MADE UP. AND ALL WAS OK.) FRIDAY MORNING, BEFORE DENNIS LEFT. WE HAD ONE HOUR TO WANDER AROUND ON OUR HALF ACRE AND CONTEMPLATE THE TREES, THE RAIN HAVING FINALLY EASED OFF ENOUGH TO DO SO. WE HAD SPENT THE WHOLE "WEEK" SAVING THE TREES! TRYING TO FIGHT OFF THOSE GYPPO LOGGERS ENCRROACHING ON THE NORTH AND WEST SIDE OF OUR PROPERTY. TO FIND SOME WAY TO CATCH OR STOP THEM. A SAVE OUR CEDARS! LITTLE... CRUSADE? FENCING OFF (WITH CEDAR, YET.. WHICH STRUCK ME WRYLY) THE BULL DOZERS AND LAND RAPISTS ON THE EAST SIDE WHILE....

I HAD SAVED AND SHOWN DENNIS THAT CLIPPING ABOUT WEYERHAUSER GETTING THE BIGGEST FINE EVER FOR (ILLEGAL) FORESTRY PRACTICES IN VANCOUVER, WA. WE CAME IN FROM OUR STROLL AROUND OUR LITTLE THREATENED GROVE OF TREES. DENNIS SAT DOWN AND PICKED UP THE PAPER. LOOK, HE SAID. HUGE HEADLINES...

"WEYERHAUSER IS MOVING INTO MONROE!"

WE JUST LOOKED AT EACH OTHER.

FRIDAY. AFTER DENNIS LEFT I FELL INTO AN EXHAUSTED LONG STUPOR SLEEP. I AWOKE TO FIND THE SUN SHINING, FINALLY! AFTER FOUR DAYS OF WORKING IN THAT HORRID WEATHER. A BEFUDDLED FEELING.. WHERE WAS I? OH.... "DE-FENCE"! AS I HAD BEGUN TO CALL IT,

ABOUT 4:30 DENNIS CALLED AND SAID THEY HAD MADE IT OK!

*running*

the loggers

Random notes -

The Fence Story -

5

FENCE BUILDING: LUMBER: TUESDAY, THE FIRST FENCE WORK DAY. THE PROBLEM AREA: CLUMP OF ALDERS RIGHT ON THE LINE. DENNIS RAN INTO DIFFICULTIES <sup>there</sup> ON. HAD TO RE-THINK <sup>it all</sup>. RESULT: WE WHIPPED DOWN TO SULTAN HARDWARE THE NEXT MORNING AND MANAGED, BETWEEN US AND TOYOTA TO BRING BACK 2 TEN FOOT 2x4's (DESERVES A SKETCH!) THAT, AS WE KNOW.. ONE CHANGE LEADS TO ANOTHER TO ANOTHER, ETC. ENDED UP BY GIVING US SOME EXTRA LUMBER, WHICH FITTED RIGHT INTO DENNIS' DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE THE FENCE BEYOND WHAT I'D ASKED FOR, CLEAR ACROSS CREEK TO END OF PROPERTY LINE (WHICH NEVER GOT FINISHED. HE GOT THE FRAME UP, BUT..) IT NOT IMPORTANT, ANYWAY, JUST AN ADDED BONUS. BUT ALSO, SOMEHOW, EXTRA LUMBER, WE ADDED AN (UNPLANNED) "WRAP AROUND" ENDING BY CARPORT..WHY I WAS OUT SHOPPING FOR MORE BOARDS.

DENNIS AND LUMBER: HE WAS ALL "GUNG HO" ABOUT USING CEDAR HE'D FELLED IN BUILDING CABIN. WHICH I WENT ALONG WITH, TOO. SO HE DID SPLIT THOSE HALVES HE'D CHAINEDSAWED IN HALF ONCE BEFORE AND <sup>made</sup> ~~MAKE AND USE~~ SOMEPOSTS OUT OF THEM (USED ON EXTENSION ACROSS CREEK) SPLIT MOST PRIMITIVELY, MAY I ADD. HAD NOPROPER TOOLS. HE ALSO TRIED SPLITTING <sup>some</sup> "GRAPESTAKE" SIZE AT MY REQUEST. SCOFFED AT AS IMPERFECT, AND JUST LEFT FOR ME "TO PLAYAOURND WITH".

DENNIS AND TREES: THE TWO ALDERS I <sup>by drawing</sup> WANTED OUT OF ~~DRIVEWAY~~..IN WAY..SINCE I HAVE TO "MOVE OVER" AND GIVE NEW NEIGHBORS THEIR "RIGHT TO" (USELESS TO THEM) PIECE OF PROPERTY WE "BORROWED" AND USED AS PART OF OUR DRIVEWAY FOR 8 YEARS. ((HEY! DOESN'T THAT CONSTITUTE "PUBLIC DOMAIN" OR SOMETHING?)) WHATEVER. DENNIS SAID HE COULDN'T. TOO BIG, TOO DANGEROUS. WOULD NEED STRONGER MUSCLES THAN MINE TO HELP HIM WITH. A DISAPPOINTMENT TO ME: ME AND MY WRY NECK <sup>car</sup> (BACKING OUT) <sup>problems it was</sup> BUT WHAT I WANTED TO KNOW. <sup>if could be done</sup>

STORM FALLEN ALDER: MY FREE FIREWOOD FOR THIS YEAR, I 'HINTED' I BUSY HOUSEHOLD TASKS. CAME OUT. ALDER "BUCKED" SPLIT PILED. UNDER CABIN.

HELP: A SMALL THING, BUT ADVANTAGES OF HAVING A TALL SON: KIND OF LIKE A "SELF EXTENSION"? ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT DONE? OH...WOULD YOU MIND? THAT CEILING PLASTIC CORNER, FALLEN DOWN. DONE! TWO MINUTES. WOULD HAVE TAKEN ME..WELL..ASK ANY SMALL PERSON....A MAJOR! PROJECT. <sup>ladder etc</sup> ANYTHING ELSE? OH...NO...SHOWER...NEW ONE SOMEDAY..BUILD YOU NEW ONE! LIKE I BUILT OURS!.. OH.. STUDIO WORK TABLES.. <sup>he</sup> SCRAMBLES UPSTAIRS..HEY! NOAH AND I..BUILD YOU..... <sup>he had lots of ideas of things he'd like to do around the cabin</sup>

FOOD: FEEDING HIM WAS EASY. <sup>He</sup> NOT "FUSSY". (SOMEONE RAISED HIM RIGHT?) HIS MOTHER "DIDN'T APPROVE" OF HIS NOT EATING BREAKFAST. BUT..UNDERSTOOD: <sup>he</sup> AWAKE. PACE PACE PACE. BITCH BITCH BITCH. OUT WORKING IN THE COLD AND DARK AND RAIN "BEFORE BREAKFAST". BUT..MADE UP FOR IT LATER..WOLFING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT, WHEN DAY'S WORK GOAL DONE.

Random notes  
(to edit)

# The Fence Story

6

~~MICROWAVE? (HAVEN'T ONE AND DON'T WANT!) "JUST LIKE MAW USED TO COOK?..."~~  
~~WHAT? FROZEN? CANNED? MEGOPOLIS MARKET "FRESH"? WHAT IN HELL TO FEED EM?...~~  
~~I COMPROMISED. BEANS! DAMMIT! BEANS! THE WEST WAS BUILT! ON.. BEANS! (AND A BIG FART!)... I CHEATED A LITTLE.~~

~~HAD TO SIT AND SIBBY SIT\$ THAT LUMBER. (VANDALS! BEWARE!) SO I GOT A HUGE! CANO~~  
~~CAN O' BEANS. AND BUILT A FIRE AND PRETENDED "HOME COOKED" AND GOT ALL THE~~  
~~TRADITIONAL "GO ALONGS" BROWN BREAD.. SLAW.. ETC...~~

~~AND FARTED MY WAY THROUGH THE NEXT WEEK OR SO AFTER DENNIS LEFT, TRYING TO~~  
~~GET RID OF THOSE... BEANS!~~

FRIDAY: AFTER DENNIS LEFT. PLACE A MESS, BUT I EXHAUSTED. RACED DOWN TO STORE  
Coming back was FIRST CHANCE TO TEST EFFECT OF FINISHED FENCE. BACK. IT WAS  
A JOY TO BE ABLE TO UNLOAD CAR AND NOT HAVE ALL THE VOYEURS LINED UP WATCHING ME.

WHICH THEY WERE. LATER. THE WHOLE MOB, WHOOPIN" AND HOLLERIN" SO MUCH DOWN IN THAT  
"HOLLER" THAT I STEPPED OUT ON MY BALCONY-LIKE EAST PORCH TO SEE WHAT ALL THE  
COMMOTION WAS ABOUT. I ALSO, QUITE NORMALLY CURIOUS TO SEE THEIR REACTION THIS  
THEIR FIRST CHANCE TO SEE THE NEW FENCE AFTER ALL THAT RAIN AND THEIR ABSCENCE,  
AT WORK, I PRESUMED. EVEN THOUGH USED TO THEIR UBIQUITOUS SPREAD <sup>Wg</sup> OF THAT TIGHT  
LITTLE NEIGHBORHOOD, I WZS STUNNED AT WHAT MET MY EYES.

IT WAS LIKE A BREUGHEL? PAINTING.. "THE PEASANTS" FESTIVAL" ..OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.  
THERE MUST HAVE BEEN, SAY, TWEENTY PEOPLE, LAUGHING, SHOUTING, DANCING, WHOOPING  
IT UP. DOGS ALL OVER! AND MEN CARVORTING WITH THEM, TOSSING THINGS IN AIR... LIKE A  
VILLAGE CARNIVAL... A CELEBRATION. THE ONLY ONES MISSING WERE MY ADJACENT NEIGHBORS,  
MR. MUSIC, SHALL WE CALL HIM, AND HIS STRANGE CONSORTS. I REGRETTED THIS, FOR I WAS  
MOST OF ALL INTERESTED IN THEIR REACTION, THEY THE CATALYSTS IN THE FENCE DECISION.

I WATCHED THEM, FEELING LIKE THE LADY OF THE MANOR WATCHING HER FIEFS AT PLAY, OR  
AS IF AT THE PERFORMOANCE OF A "RUSTICANNA" OPRA FROM MY LOGE-LIKE PORCH. MY DIM  
EYES I WAS EVEN USING MY BINOCULARS, AS IF OPERA GLASSES? THIS REVEALED THAT THEY  
WERE ALL FACING TOWARD ME AND LOOKING MY WAY, SO, RECKLESS WITH WINE, I CALLED OUT:  
"HOW D"YA LIKE MY SNOB/SLOB FENCE?" MEANING IT MERRILY IN THE SAME FESTIVE MOOD  
THEY SEEMED TO BE IN. I WASN'T SURE IF THEY COULD SEE OR HEAR ME UNTIL ONE OF THE  
WOMEN, WHO ALWAYS ACTS AS RING LEADER ALERTED THEM THAT I WAS WATCHING BY INSOLENTLY  
IMITATING MY BINOCULARS AT EYES.

AT THIS THEY BEGAN TO DEFLATE AND SIMMER DOWN AND BEGAN TO TRAIL OFF INTO THEIR  
HIDEY HOLES., UNTIL THEY WERE ALL GONE. SOMEHOW THAT SCENE GAVE ME NEW INSIGHT INTO  
THE QUANDARY. THEY WERE ALL SO JUBILANT! FESTIVE! FREEDOM FROM THE OLD WICH UP ON  
THE HILL!? AND THEN THEY SUDDENLY REALIZED THEY WEREN'T FREE, BUT PENNED IN!

WHEN DENNIS CALLED, I WAS ABLE TO TELL HIM ALL OK: ALL QUIET, FOR... IT WAS.







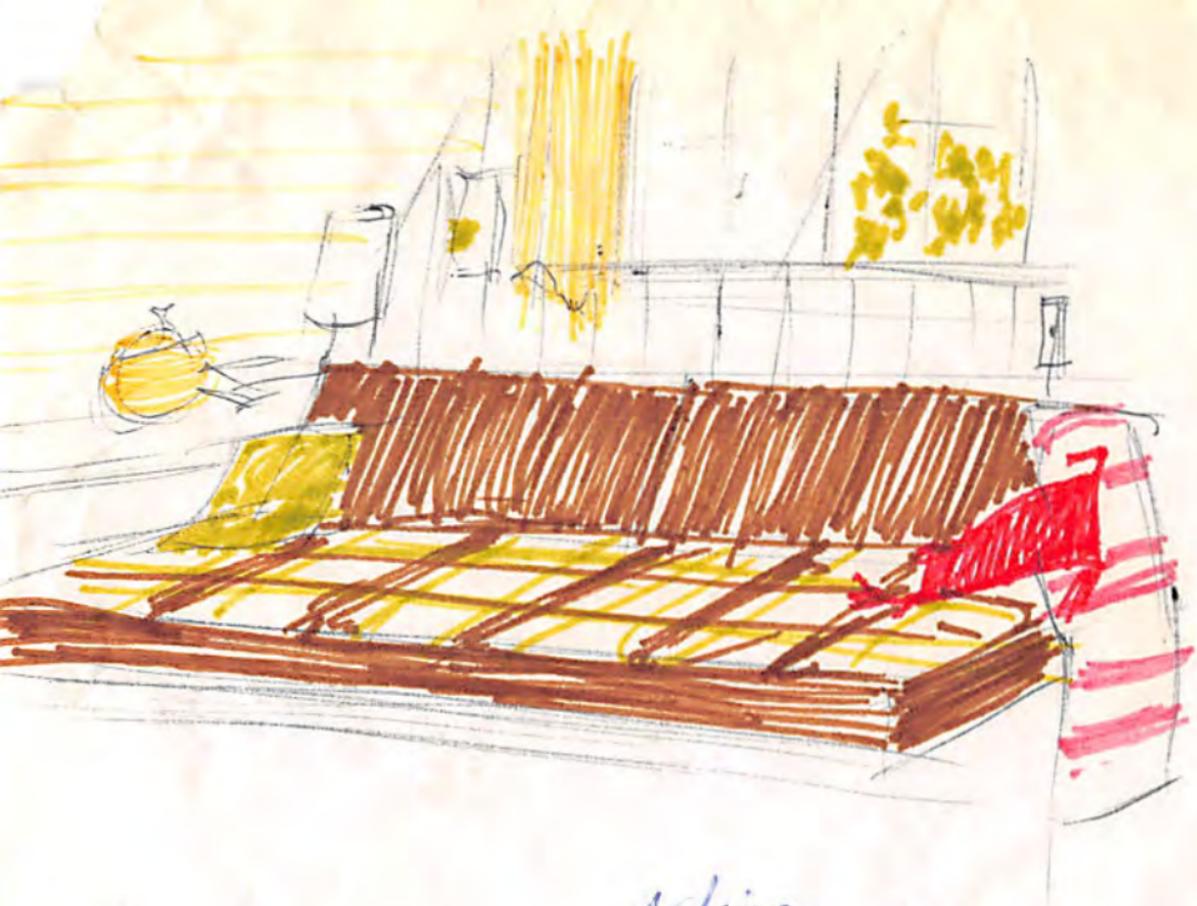
"Shurber" #2



Well - I could do a 'Michael-Angelo'  
+ crawl out on a  
joist, I guess.  
\* Grot \* in fun - Grandma.



July 3, 1984



Cabin-  
living room -  
1982?

# Winter '83 Disasters

- Sept. 28  
Wed - <sup>grand car dynamo</sup> Wash out end of st. I've called Co. to fix, never come. I go fix. Neighbors no help.  
**Water off all day** - can't find out why - on 6 p.m. = can't get it - P.D. - etc.
- Oct 1 - Sat - <sup>briefly</sup> water off - I call caretaker. Trouble with pump.  
**Carrie calls - wants \$300 right away!** - Can't do till Monday (Lant, Pa)
- Oct 2 - Sun - **Cold weather starts**, I start stove.  
No hot water - Call caretaker - get changed at hot water ok  
**Best thermostat heater goes out!** Some. I call Electrician.  
**GFIC - not work.** (Safety fuse) Try to call Carrie. Tel. trouble.
- Oct 3 - Mon - Battle to find way to send \$80 to Carrie. Mail. Call her. Call Electrician.
- Oct 4 - Tues. (Other heater starts acting up?) Electrician comes. **Takes good heater - says 2 weeks!**
- Oct 7 - Fri. Neighbors make big ruckus - cars!
- Oct 14 - Wed. 2 weeks on heater. Need it - Cold. Using up wood. Call Elect. no answer.  
Other heater acting strangely.
- Oct 22 - Sat. **Terrible electrical storm - eve!** Lightning hits house nearby as I on path coming home.  
Booing! S.S.
- Oct 23 - Sun. neighborhood uproar. men with guns!
- Oct 28 - Fri. **Power off.** P.D. working on lines. I can't find out why. Phoea Elect. Hasn't heard "will call" -  
Big climb-down near path. Earthquake in Idaho near Carrie.
- Oct 31 - Mon. Elect. brings heater - all ok! (Halloween)
- Nov 2 - Wed. **Mysterious car + guy prowling cul-de-sac + into woods.**
- Nov 3 - Thurs. - **There again - I call cops.** They come. Chase off. Stalk guy. Phoney story I call names of woods.
- Nov 6 - Sun. **Big thunder storm**
- Nov 8 - Tues. Letter from friend **His wife gravely ill.**
- Nov 10 - Thurs. **Terrible storm! Power off 12 hours!** + tree down across road to store. **Power out all over with trees down**  
tree fell <sup>end</sup> over street - took all wires down. P.D. fire 7:30 pm.
- Nov 11 - Fri. Try to call Aunt Angela. No luck.
- Nov 12 - Sat. Brother calls and says **Aunt Alice had a stroke.** <sup>bad</sup>
- Nov 13 - Sun. Sister calls and says **Aunt Angela died Monday.**  
I hear of 2-3 - local acquaintances (men) terminally ill.  
Rain + gloom all week.
- Nov 19 - Sat - **Big Wind Storm - loud rain.**
- Nov 21 - Mon - Dennis calls. **They can't make it over for Thanksgiving, has to work.** I'd cleaned house, spiced up cleaned beds - 2 weeks.
- Nov 22 - Tue - I call + break Chiropractor appt. Just too much.
- Nov 24 - Thurs. **THANKSGIVING TAX - TERRIBLE STORM - Whole State - Power out - phones tied up.**  
**DISASTER!** Branches crash outside. I stay + spend TH. alone

II

Nov. 25 Fri, Cousin calls - Aunt Alice just died. - calls again. Funeral Time out.  
Many, many family tel. calls from here on - (adding up to \$100 bill)  
Tel. trouble. Connections bad. Can't get thru, Cal. tel. out - storm.  
eve. get phone call with only maniacal laughter. !!??

Nov 28 - Nov. Dilemma @ funeral. Call + reserve motel, payally. Call off Doc. appt.

Nov 29 - Tues. Arrive Payally. Phyllis invites thru. Cancel. Motel - Funeral

Nov. 30 - Wed. Hassle @ Post Will etc - I stay to help.

~~Dec. 1~~ Thurs. I drive home. SNOW starts!

Dec 2. Fri. SNOWS - You snowboard.

Dec. 3 - Sat. <sup>thaw but</sup> still mired. Roads too slushy to venture down hills -

Dec. 5 - Mon. SNOW again - Friend calls + cancels lunch date. Sick

Dec. 7 - Wed. Storm, rain + wind.

Dec. 10 Sat. Son phone - His father-in-law died.

Unable to contact Carrie - wrong

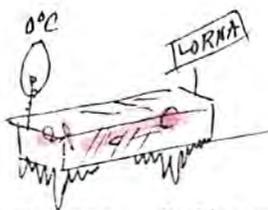
~~Dec. 11~~ Sun. Call PVD,

III

- DEC. 29. Thurs - SE. ing's calls. "Water will be off till 6<sup>PM</sup> - Repairs" (not on till 8:20 PM)  
Rain freezes - a "Silver thaw" all ice coated - marooned. "Stay of roads"  
Huge limb falls on utility wires - (but all ok!)  
"Carport" smashed + broken by storm - have to keep propping up -
- DEC 30 - Fri. Big Explosion - neighborhood - water off-temp. (?!?!)
- DEC 31 - Sat NEW YEAR'S EVE - Spend alone.  
asleep. Grand threat call phone - 2 a.m. - trip? fall - knocked out/  
blood. - cut by eye - crawl to bed.
- JAN 1 - Sun. NEW YEAR'S DAY - Black eye - concussion symptoms - bruised  
No nausea/vertigo - sleep all day - try to look N.Y. dinner 400 ft - burn -
- JAN 2 - Mon - Holiday. - Spend <sup>whole</sup> day - in valid - sleep -
- JAN 3 - Tues - Call off Doc. appt.
- ↓  
Jan 5 - Thurs - marooned - nursing concussion.

III

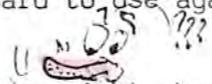
Weather - Cold starts - Heater out - 3 weeks - storms - 1/1/1 - Snow - 111 - Snow  
Ice-pipes frozen - Wind - Silver thaw -  
Prowler - - phone call. harasses -



Dateline--Now!

Dear---Everybody--

Where have I been? In Deep Freeze. Quite an experience! Thought I'd then everything, but was never so glad in my life to thee that thaw! Nothing wrong with ME; Just find my tongue hard to use again after six days of being buried alive.



Well. GUESS I was alive. That one night when thermometer plummeted to 9° and power was off and fire was out and--for some reason--there seemed to be no water and a bitter, unusual, wind howled outside and, despite cocooned in every blanket and "furry" thing I could lay my (freezing) hands on huddled in bed and I was still freezing and could NOT get warm, I realized I was in a GRAVE situation and began to compose "clever" epitaphs--like (Oh well, 73 years is enough--and it WAS fun, wasn't it? WASn't it--?)



It took thirteen days before Balmy-Bikini Seattle won out over MachoAlaska on a revenge kick from being regulated to second place after all those "Golden" (Gold Rush) years?



A few days of (icy) respite and then they were at it again: Alaska with a FURY of icy, unusual winds pulled out of a shiver-quiver someplace and Seattle lashing back with her usual torrent of tears, called rain.



Was all rather exhausting when THAT SPAT was over. Even the moon hid her face in broad daylight: an eclipse, they said.

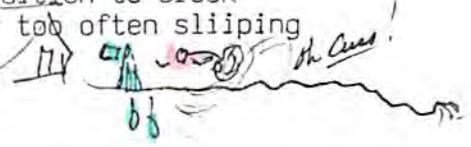
Oh, pioneers! I thought during that first five days when I was snowbound and marooned in 6" of snow--a lot for Seattle! At first, kinda fun: so PRETTY! and kinda fun, I always stocked up--ten years experience here, for Seattle kind snows--the longest I've recorded five days. Playing pioneer: wood stove, shoveling path, and so on. But the next day, when I found NO water, without warning--try it some time! no washing; no "comforting cup o'tea"--herb or otherwise;no--TOILET flush! My FACE flushed with shame, as I realized, first time ever, that I, too, just a SHITTIN' ANIMAL!



And then the power went off. Not just once, but twice: the first time, an hour. The second SEVEN hours! and no way to know when it'd be on again. And all the time a freezing gale wind moaned and shrieked, making it impossible to venture out down to creek for water under those cracking, SQUEAKING, tossing trees. I began to clean the snow off porches, not from neatness, but to MAKE WATER! Ever try it? One bucket of snow makes a bare cup of water. THAT kept me busy: KEEPING the fire going to melt, boil and strain.



Which continued the next day, when I managed an Artic Expedition to creek and--oh pioneers!--lugged buckets of water up hill in snow too often slipping on ice and spilling it just as to door. Was interesting-- "Clean Air Act"? Must be some undefiled snow left SOME place in world?



By this time I was getting just a WEE bit, shall we say..CROSS? All my supplies were dwindling fast--water--wood--food--YAY! even cigarettes! I HAD TO GO WITHOUT! Even the dumb woodpile was frozen!



The next day, the sixth of this, I was getting just a WEE. desparate. Mind you-- all this time the weather stayed (new idea it had) below freezing so that the six inches of pretty, soft snow had become an equal amount of nice, dirty ICE. But--oh pioneers!--I took a crowbar and shovel and began to chip a maybe? route out for car to the still ice-packed road, wondering all the time what the symptoms of a heart attack were...10...20....30...feet....

I had two shovelfuls to go when my (male) neighbor whose shenanigans have long since put us on a no-speak basis clambered through snow--SMOKING A CIGARRETTE!--and said, "Oh! let ME do that for you!" (How sweet! I thought, handing over the shovel: it takes a BLIZZARD to break the ice!?)

So HE went to the store for me. And the next day our (new) neighbor scared the hell out of me by circumventing the fence, and banging on door, and beer-can armed and reeking "ashed me if i wash a'right 'n' nennything he could do fer me?" So I was quite the spoiled kid, for two days. They kept bringng me nasty, cold beer which they insisted I needed though my "kiddleys" were screaming for WATER! which I made them bring me bottles of, after the store re-stocked on. Seems everybody's pipes were frozen--for some reason.

There was another irony in all this: the air pressure was so unusually high that there was an "air pollution alert" out: "no burning of wood stoves." Ho hum.

It was all very INTERESTING. I'd never been in a blizzard before. Even in my (first) mid-winter trip back to the midwest. On the ninth day, the weather warmed and it began to thaw.

And then Phase # 2 began. Water running! Water running! I woke with joy! Three days and five burst pipes later I paid the luckily-happened upon plumber. I sat and rather tearfully communed with my poor storm-battered cabin: We both just---burst into tears, didn't we?

The rest of the month was--"easy": just trying to dig out from the wreckage and catch up with things not able to get done during all this "Glaciation of Seattle" as some weather-worn weather man quipped. Oh, what was another wild wind/rain tantrum between Ms Puget Sound and Mr Alaska? or a sun eclipse? few little things like that? It was over--almost spring.

And then, on the first of March, we had a NEVER-BEFORE RECORD! snowfall. 9 inches here in my woods. And--it started all over again.

Well, not QUITE so bad. Never knew how DELIGHTFUL pouring rains could be. But I WAS surprised when they said the other day: it was, officially, the first day of spring. It--was?--is?

And, how are YOU? Do you know that Easter is the earliest this year since 1951--and won't be this early again until year 2008?

See you then! now that I know how to SURVIVE!

Lorna



John Wainright

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— it took time, it took  
patience, but pride & a  
peculiar sort of love went  
into the building and  
it showed " —

Ruchwald —