

the tugwell years

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SELECTED LETTERS OF BARRY MACLEOD
1978-1986

Edited by Doug Lang and Pam Woodland

Introduction and photography by James R. Page

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Barry Macleod, 1942–1986

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foreword

Doug Lang

Every time Macleod wrote a letter he published himself. Those who received his letters kept them. When news of this project circulated after his death in October 1986, the response was immediate and affirmative.

For me these letters are wayward bus stations on a cold night, a warm place to pause for coffee, directions, good company, and free refills—and a traveler's salvation, ketchup soup for the solitary road ahead. With Macleod at my table!

It is a glad moment to have so much evidence of his generosity and character pressed between the flaps of a book. Had Macleod not started writing so late, and died so early, it's possible he'd have reached this juncture in his own time. Possible, but unlikely. For we are not talking here of a writer in the professed sense, but of a natural witness, a commentator on the struggle to be alive. Artifice was foreign to him; he took his whiskey neat, and regularly. Certainly he'd be uncomfortable holding this book in his hands, and would pronounce it an indulgence, an act of extravagant ego. Such was his sensibility, his profound humility. Such was the extent of his wound.

So why the book then? Precisely because of that sensibility, that humility, that wound. As compensation for the limits such qualities assigned him, also, as a way for the affections he earned to be expressed. I venture to guess that, beyond Macleod's initial wince and curse at seeing a book devoted to his own words, there'd be a brief yet telling grin. Surrender... in realizing he'd been outvoted.

Those who knew him most consistently throughout his last decade are those he didn't write to, his neighbours at Tugwell Creek. They had him in the flesh, the daily round of the real. This is for them. Because what they didn't get, as often is the case when you live near someone, are these archipelagoes of person that Macleod bridged in the solitude of his wind-wracked cabin, when he stoked not only his stove but also the furnace of his mind. The receivers of his letters gladly forward them now, to complete the circle.

The ordering and selecting of letters, in whole or in part, is based loosely on chronology, but also, on occasion, according to the relativity of subject. We have not intended at any point to explain Macleod. He did that in the course of living, and while his circumstances were his own, his commentaries are an open invitation to all who engage in the full range of living.

Macleod entered each of his relationships with such an individual bent that each of us knew him in a unique way. During the collecting and reading of these letters this was clear, and often disorienting. For as the tendency since his death has been to find the clearest way to remember him, it has proved an unsettling enjoyment to discover that we each knew only our part of the story. The enjoyment being that it's as though Macleod had planned it this way, as an extension of his presence, a last laugh.

Acknowledgment is given here to Barry's parents, Margaret and George Macleod. While not entirely in favour of such a project, they have provided more motivation and assistance than they are likely aware of. It's our sincere wish that they, too, discover more of Barry in the course of these writings.

"I figure if you can make them laugh and make them cry, you've got it made, because that's what life is all about . . . the laughter and the tears." Macleod delivered enough of these. The sweet part is that with this book he goes on delivering them. To such an extent that those of us who may have felt we'd lost him, can see now we're still coming to know him.

Here, then, are the collected letters of Barry Macleod, 1942–1986, no postage due.

—dl/march '87

thanks and such

Pam Woodland

My gratitude for the generous sharing of letters from Al, Andrea, Bill, Don, Doug, Eileen, Gerry, Jan, and Jim is immense.

This book was originally bootstrapped into a rough form with the help of revenue from the sale of the *Tugwell Turd Calendar*. This daily calendar of quotations collected by Macleod over the years was produced and distributed by Jan and Mary Johnson.

Doug Lang and I collected the letters, and collated and sorted them into some initial order. Many revisions later they have settled into the shape you see here.

About the form: the three sections more or less correspond to where Macleod lived at the time of writing: the cabin on the beach at Tugwell Creek; his homeless period when he travelled back to Saskatchewan to visit friends and family and later, when he stayed at Jan Johnson's house for few months, deep in the westcoast rainforest; finally, the second cabin he rented down the beach from Tugwell Creek.

The letters are generally, but not exclusively, in chronological order. Doug and I received copies, not originals, of the letters, most of which were not dated. And there were few envelopes. A couple of the letters I knew to be dated later are placed at the beginning of the book because, in them, Macleod provides his own context of place, character, and intent in writing.

Prior to the first edition of this book in 1989, I had never produced one on my own, let alone something as editorially tricky as a collection of letters. I made some decisions then that I would not make now.

Primarily typographical edits of punctuation. I did not alter his words. Since I no longer have the originals it's not possible to undo the changes I made. I hope the contributors found, and find, these edited versions acceptable.

Portions of some letters were written to more than one person and only one version has been included. Versions were selected partly with the aim was to have the contributors represented as evenly as possible. I'm not sure when Barry reconnected with Andrea, a very important person in his life. We received few of Macleod's letters from her estate, but they are among the most heartfelt. She died of cancer about two weeks before Barry's own death from non-hodgkins lymphoma.

I excerpted portions of the letters that were treated as vignettes or stories that were also included in a collection of writings that Macleod had intended as part of his own book project. Barry titled those items and I set them off typographically from the letters themselves.

Jim Page scoured his archive of photographs and contributed almost all of the images included here. He also wrote an introduction for this edition that helps provide a context for readers unfamiliar with Barry or BC politics. A huge thanks for this.

Within the text, the photos are placed more in the spirit of what's written rather than in chronological order; I've arrange the two photo divisions in linear sequence, however. For the most part.

More thanks to Page: it was through him that I met Macleod in 1976.

Jim also introduced me to another friend of his, Bob Harwood. What a treasure this man is! His all round encouragement and support of this project has been critical in my getting this revised volume of Macleod's letters into proper book form.

Three people who are vital to the letters are no longer with us. Andrea Walker, Wayne Carson (Sundog), and Gerry Brydon are well and lovingly remembered here.

Who knows what Macleod's response to this collection would be? He'd have some complaints, I'm sure. No doubt about it, if he were still around, it would be a very different book. And he sure wouldn't have all these pictures of himself!

—pjw/march '09

introduction

James R. Page

With the passage of time, it may be prudent to attempt to place these letters in their proper social and political context, for the era is quickly fading from memory. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the deeply polarized politics that characterize British Columbia had taken a strong swing to the right. Recession stripped the economy of jobs; even the middle classes began to feel the pinch. The right wing Social Credit government under Bill Bennett—son of party founder W.A.C. Bennet—ran the province’s economic and social policies for the entire decade and then some. That meant hard times for those who fell outside the mainstream conservatism of the day, who could not compete in a “free enterprise” system defined and controlled by those in power. In other words, things were pretty much as they have always been, with a few more hurdles and roadblocks for the underclasses.

These letters begin approximately four years before Barry Macleod lost his longtime job when he tried to unionize the workers of Safety Supply Company in Victoria, BC. Macleod, who once said that he had been fired from every job he’d ever had—quite a statement, considering his long and convoluted career path—was always a conscientious worker, well liked by his fellow employees and even some of his bosses. But time and again, employers found excuses to get rid of him: Human Resources in Saskatchewan, for contacting the media about managerial abuses within the welfare system; the Post Office in Vancouver, for his failure to fake submissiveness in front of hard line, unreasonable managers.

Those postal supervisors, many of them former military careerists, peered into his eyes and saw something that frightened them, and his fate was thus decided. It didn't matter how hard he worked; they told him he had a bad attitude. "What kind of disease is a bad attitude?" he asked me at the time. I just snorted. I had a bad attitude too, but kept it more under wraps and thus survived the periodic postal purges longer than Macleod did. Read his reminiscent letter to me about our time at the Post Office. It sounds like exaggeration—who would believe such insanity might exist there? But it did.

That was in the pre-Tugwell days, when we met under postal supervision and developed a friendship that endured for twelve years, until his death in 1986. In those days Macleod was living in a rented house in Vancouver, with cardboard and newspapers stuffed into holes in the walls as a buffer against the traffic noise on Knight Street. The landlord dropped by only to collect the rent, never to participate in repairs or renovations. Barry began to think of Vancouver Island as the next logical step in his personal westward migration, and within a year he moved to Victoria, and eventually to windy, wave-battered Tugwell Creek, west of Sooke, on the exposed southwestern coast of Vancouver Island, where literally and figuratively he made his last stand.

The Sooke Road into Victoria is twisty and treacherous, and would become Macleod's daily, hour long commute. He used to rant to me about incompetent drivers braking on every curve, never getting out of second gear. He would, of course, take those turns at top speed, and as far as I know he never lost it, never hit another vehicle or a deer. Pushing the envelope, getting way out toward the edge without falling off, was one of his talents.

At the time I couldn't grasp the extent of his isolation out there, especially after he lost the job at Safety Supply. Whenever I visited him, there were always people around, although admittedly sometimes only two (him, and me). We spent more than one grey Christmas together, sitting at his round table gazing through the cabin window at the shifting panorama of water, clouds, and distant mountains. Good companionship. Days that would never end.

I have to say a word about The Game. Cosmic Football is mentioned more than once in these letters. This was a board game, formally known

as Photo Electric Football and marketed by Cadaco (Chicago) in the 1950s, that Barry had played as a child. He liked it, but put it away when he reached a certain age—and then resurrected it in university, after he and his friends had discovered marijuana. Now the game assumed cosmic proportions, and he played it a lot, but left it in Saskatchewan when he relocated to Vancouver in 1973.

One night when he was raving about the game to me and how great it was, I told him I really wanted to try it out, and this culminated in his phoning a buddy at 3:00 a.m. asking him to put it on the next Greyhound to Victoria. The call was not appreciated, but the game did arrive: battered, tattered, and fully functional. I have to say that next to chess it was the greatest game I'd ever played. Soon after that Barry and I formed the Cosmic Football League, purchased a trophy, enlisted Jim Keefer and Doug Lang as our official opposition, and won the first Cosmic Bowl in 1977 in a marathon best-of-five series.

Alas, it was the only time we'd ever beat them for the trophy. When they defeated us to take Cosmic Bowl II, Barry had an engraver inscribe their names on the little plaques provided: J. Reefer and D. Lung. We laughed and laughed. It was a Cosmic joke—the best kind.

The universe, of course, always has the last laugh, and here we are more than three decades later, and he's gone. This is what remains, the wonderful outpouring of his great mind. Stirring up echoes for those who knew him, and offering more than a hint of the man behind them for those who didn't. There's plenty here to delight and provoke; the words still hold their charge. In the old days—before email—a letter from Macleod was a treat. When one arrived, I would rip it open and immediately read it aloud to whoever was present. We'd laugh and laugh. Have I already mentioned this?

So tear open the envelope, pull up a chair, and get ready for a blast from the past that feels eerily like the present, except with different players, hair styles, and music. But it's real life, not a commercial presentation, not some concocted bullshit story about an imagined time and place: it's real. Tugwell exists. And Macleod, who always knew that it mattered, wrote it down and got it right.

—jrp, april/09
Victoria, BC

contributors

The following people kindly contributed the letters in this collection.

Don Anderson, Regina, SK

Gerry Brydon, Winnipeg, MN

Eileen Cristine, Fairview, AB

Jan Johnson, Sooke, BC

Doug Lang, Vancouver, BC

Al Maxwell, Sointula Island, BC

James R. Page, Vancouver, BC; Gold River, BC; Whitehorse, YK

Andrea Walker, Regina, SK

Bill Watson, Saskatoon, SK

Pam Woodland, Vancouver, BC

THE TUGWELL YEARS

part one
A STATE OF MIND
AUGUST 1978 - MAY 1983



a state of mind

“And where is this tugwell creek place anyway?” they ask. Well you just point at the rainbow and say, “See this rainbow?” “Yeh, yeh, we see it.” “Well do you see anything at the end of the rainbow?” “No, we can’t see anything.” “Well, that’s where it is....”

Andrea,

Got your letter today, a drizzle drip fresh wet green Friday, rain slick radials winding curve sssshHH to the post office and back, and then in the mid-day gray damp tar-paper shack I read your love and tears letter, no-name black fluff lying on my chest, and I re-read it giving the cat a prrrttt pet for you and it gave a mumble rumble purr back for Andrea, and I’m pulling for you, kid, fingers crossed, toes crossed, heart in a knot, and I could be wrong but I was sure that boing boing even crossed her purr for you.

“AND WHERE IS THIS TUGWELL CREEK PLACE ANYWAY?” they ask. Well you just point at the rainbow and say, “See this rainbow?” “Yeh, yeh, we see it.” “Well do you see anything at the end of the rainbow?” “No, we can’t see anything.” “Well, that’s where it is....”

... a state of mind, surrounded by a landscape of lunatics. It’s the place dreams go to retire, probably the only place on the planet where you don’t participate in life and are not punished for it. A secret place, where the years cease to exist; a place with seasons so subtle that each shift is like turning over on your other side when you’re sleeping, a

land of radios, all the video productions are done in the old fashioned way, inside your head. A place where friends aren't other people, they're spirits, they're the essence of all the little nuances in life that give you a little smile when you come across them. You find them after a few years of walking the beach, like seashells that catch your eye, and you pick them up and keep them.

And they never change. And they never compromise, so you always have them just the way they are. And every once in a while someone from outside will arrive with a new hairdo and new clothes and three promotions and two house flips and tell you all about it, their eyes doing a sociological frisk, and after they've left you try to remember if they really had a beanie with a propeller on top of their head or if you just imagined it.

Page,

Your humble correspondent has recently completed a trip abroad. Three days of cloud and rain ... twenty-four beer and three packs of Decade (buy two ... get one free!) but I bought them because it was so close to Decadent. The subtlety of advertisers eventually ensnares the best of us. Nonetheless five milligrams of tar is not enough for my cancer-demanding soul. The summation of the trip was soap boxed on the deck of the "Evergreen State" ... huge transport of Winnebagos, campers, fat people with cameras, freckled blue-eyed kids, and funny little rats that bark. The scene ... no the summation. My young companion (a snide reminder that even at thirty-five it's possible to have re-runs) exclaimed in a loud voice to all in attendance that "my idea of fun is not standing around with a bunch of Gawd-damn Fat Fucking American Pigs!" I nodded with embarrassed nonchalance and we retired to the cafeteria where we sat bitterly drinking Olympia Beer from paper cups.

WAS OUT VISITING GORDIE AND JUNE A FEW WEEKENDS AGO. He's been doing carvings on the beach and leaving them there. They are signed Aguyin BC. He goes under this name now, adding a mystical Indian connotation I thought, carvings by Aguyin. Also presented

were long insane soliloquies reminiscent of Peter O'Toole in *The Ruling Class* only funnier, more real, and with a touch of hysteria lurking beneath the surface. This was interspersed with puzzling anagrams such as "I came to Sooke to die!" A week later the tap started dripping and Gordie couldn't stop it. The next day when June came home from work he was gone.

Mother's Day

I PAID MY RENT MONEY TO FRANK THIS AFTERNOON. He's such a weathered grizzled old fart that when his face crinkles into a thousand lines, it's like a pat on the back.

It looks like the rent is going to be a \$125 a month forever. I've often thought of sending him away to landlord school.

When we finished transacting our business, we sat around and bullshitted. I told him the only bummer living out here was driving that West Coast Road.

Those tight winding curves, the ups and downs, the cars in front constantly braking at every little curve.

Frank laughed and said, "You know what the worst day of the year to drive it is? It's Mother's day! They're all out there taking their Goddamned mothers for a drive!"

*The first human who hurled a curse
instead of a weapon was the
founder of civilization.*

—Freud

Pam,

Goddamn son of a bitch fuck-faced motherfucking scumbag cocksucking cuntlapping piece of shit!" screamed the founder of civilization; a million years ago and forever unrecognized:

Telephone — Alexander Graham Bell

Electricity — Thomas Edison



“It looks like the rent is going to be a \$125 a month forever. I’ve often thought of sending [Frank] away to landlord school.” [1979]

Civilization — ?

? And we owe him the most, don’t we? We groom. We huddle together in groups. We sit on our own stool. We try not to offend. We pee in secret and never admit to peeking at our own shit in the bowl, although I did this morning, and if you’re interested it was a reasonable shade of brown with no blood flecks, a civilized shit, not a wet porridge shit, a through a screen never hit a wire shit, not a pale yellowish half sized turd laying limp in the bowl wrinkled from the effort of crawling half dead through the escape bung hole, but a civilized shit, a shit my parents could be proud of if they’d only lower their sights a bit, a decent porcelain framed working class shit, a superior North American shit, using more water to drop into than an Ethiopian gets to drink in a week, the same texture of shit that civilized people eat every day at the office, by the spoonful, or the handful, the proud ones putting a plug of it inside their mouth next to the gum and letting it dissolve there, they don’t want to be seen chewing. This is called compromising. It is a civilized act. And our unemployed

French brothers in Quebec were told a few years ago by our leader, the head shit, to “mange la merde” and they did, French shit, it looks like croissants, and being French they smack their lips after they eat it; they’ve been doing it for centuries except for a brief period when they went on a diet with Rennie until they caught him sneaking a brown one from the bowl recently, it’s hard to stay away from, the withdrawal is worse than cigarettes or junk, you become cranky, your friends don’t like you as much, you get into trouble at work, with your family, you begin to withdraw, and you resent the reminders, “Did you eat your shit today, dear?” or “Excuse me, you didn’t eat all of your shit. Are you not feeling well?” or a pulsating rock beat booming from your TV screen encouraging you to “chew poop” and for the kiddies “Cabbage Patch Shit,” little imaginary droppings just for the kids to snack on, it’s like smoking licorice cigarettes, getting in training for the real thing later on, and when you’re not busy eating it you can listen to it, and watch it, or read about it, “The Browning of America,” “Future Shit,” “Mega-shit,” “The Holy Shit,” “The Shit Manifesto.” Steaming heaps of it everywhere.

All right. OK. Never mind. I think that was what could be called a false start. Bear with me. Just a second. It’s hard to wind down. Doo-doo, ca-ca, what’s the matter with me? Nothing. “You’re a good shit Macleod.” I’ve been told that, you know. “You think your shit doesn’t stink?” I’m proud to say that I’ve never been accused of that. I know it stinks. I even poke it with a stick. Now that I think of it I figure I’ve had 20,000 shits in my life. 20,000 times. What if I would have done anything else 20,000 times? Played 20,000 musical notes, written 20,000 poems. Or begged forgiveness 20,000 times. My sweet mulch. Hell-a-lew-ya. And I haven’t filled my will out yet because I’m afraid if I do, I’ll die.

AND SPEAKING OF DEATH, I’m pulling out of the shit trip now, an old friend of mine died a violent death last year, an old friend from the neighbourhood, my background, the thing I’ve never been able to rise above, I must have been too sensitive and didn’t know it. But the thing of interest about his death is that I mentioned it to another old neighbourhood buddy whom I’d known since I was six years old, and he said, “Yeh, they say the good die young. But in Vic’s case they made an

exception.” And we both burst out laughing and I remember thinking at the time, Jesus, so that’s it, that’s his epitaph. His memorial service. A quip. A burst of laughter. And we’d been to war together. All of us. Drunken fathers. Street fights. Car thefts. All sorts of adventures. We went through life without love and kept our spirit, spit in its eye, there was a bonding there, I still felt it when I went back, and yet there it was, a quip, a cheap laugh, in recognition for a life.

AND THE WATER IS WARM NOW BUT MY DRINK IS STILL COLD. So, Doug writes me and gives me shit for not writing. How does he know what I’m doing? So I’ve, in guilt, because what is my life worth anyway, in guilt I’ve decided to attempt a book. A real book. I have to overcome my tendency to write non-stop for a day or two and say that’s good enough. I have to sit down and take a year, to painfully construct everything slowly, like building a house, with no lessons, no hints, no courses, and it was only the other day that it occurred to me to draw up an outline, a plan, character sketches; I’ve always just sat down and written something and it just ended and that was it. The time that is wasted in vacuum land is incredible. I know the same thing is happening to Richard with his art. You spend years wasting your time because you have no direction. What a simple thing. An outline. Lesson one in writing class. I just thought of it two days ago. But the book will be about the Tugwell years. I have file folders full of notes, and stories, and incidents. I will use a composite for the characters, and with your permission will use a character called “the Lady of a Thousand Faces.” So Betty will get into the book but will be called by another name, and will be a composite anyway, partially her, partially you, partially others, and the Lady of a Thousand Faces will change depending on circumstances or events, when you wake up in the morning another person is lying there, the early morning light casting shadows on her cheekbones creates a changeling, or in the lamplight at night, or when talking or gesticulating there are subtle changes, or depending on the mood or dress, and then finally her eyes change colour; that’s when you know she’s leaving you, when her eyes change colour. She will be famous for her cryptic comments and independent attitude.

And the artist, a Creek Elf, who has been pushed further and fur-



“So Betty will get into the book but will be called by another name, and will be a composite anyway, partially her, partially you, partially others . . .” [With Betty Rumble, 1977]

ther from life over the years. He has the appearance of a French peasant and is totally immersed in his work and when he comes out he is a frantic philosopher of life, “It’s bullshit! It’s bullshit!” and then he can’t stand it and immerses himself in his art again, and anything more than poverty is a sell-out, and I am going to dump all of my prejudices on this character, who is Richard, so I will have the freedom to get it all out and not feel like a reactionary, dump it all on his shoulders, make him the buffoon, I chuckle to myself when I think of it. He will have a hatred of “Yankee wetbacks” and the “menstrual mafia” and on and on. I love it. I will purify myself by destroying his character, but he will be blustering amusing, and the artist’s woman, English working class, a rock of strength and caller of his bullshit, although with a dark side, and of course Aguyin Bornashit, a mad genius, a creative suicide, a tragi-comic character with a gentle side, a fragile flower, a creator of fantasies to the point where he loses touch with reality, paranoia sets in. I think I will have him commit suicide in



“And the artist, a Creek Elf, who has been pushed further and further from life over the years.” [With Richard MacKenzie, 1980]

the book, and his long suffering wife who becomes destroyed by the role change, working to keep things going while he cleans, cooks, etc. But she becomes beaten with her bank job, worn out, all she ever wanted was a little house with a white picket fence. And a supporting cast like Sundog, from the last century, makes everything right down to his own nails, with a philosophy of life that stands as a counter-balance and is wise in its Indian-like simplicity; and a farm welfare mother, dotty type, working on a science project that will explode myths about the gravitational pull on the earth, and she takes sightings on hill tops at dawn on certain days of the year, all her calculations are done by pencil and paper, she lives in a constant hub of activity, Flash the wonder horse, dogs, cats, giant suppers on special occasions; and a six-foot-eight homosexual called Omar Chiffon, modeled after Brydon because he told me never to write about him, and the Poet Lady, and all the other characters that I have notes about here, and we are all at the furthest point west, each individual ending up here for their own reasons, all looking at our ticket stubs, and the contacts with reality will be through UIC interviews, Aguyin’s inter-



“... And the artist’s woman, English working class, a rock of strength and caller of his bullshit, although with a dark side...” [Pia Carroll, 1979]

view at welfare when he had no teeth, Sundog having a kid and raising it to be a poacher so he can take care of his old man. All this in the computer age, the wagons circle, Aguyin saying, after a walk on the beach, “You know if I lived in Russia man, I’d have something to do when I got back home.”

AND RADIO COMMERCIALS FROM REAL LIFE like the one I heard the other day: “When I drove to work the other day I just couldn’t stop thinking about whether I’d turned off the iron or not. Well now I’ve bought a new Sunbeam self-adjusting iron and it turns itself off if I forget.” And so on. These are real things, they will be counter balanced in the nether world of Tugwell Creek. I want a gritty tragic-comedy storyline. I have to make copious notes as to an outline, and work out a style and transitions. My instinct is to write like I write letters, free and flowing and not stilted like the shit I submit for publication, but I may have to reach a happy medium, and also I don’t know how to deal with the first person character of myself or whatever. But I might as well give it a try and if I don’t have the discipline or talent, let’s find

out. Let's call in the markers. And if I do, I'll pull out of here and press on with it, soak it up, even if it goes against my grain, because there is nothing here anymore except to sit alone on dark nights with nothing to read but labels—"Let art and the science of the distiller come together in making this premium Canadian Rye Whiskey. It is distilled from choice rye grain and aged naturally in the old fashioned way, creating a smooth whiskey for Canadians with discerning taste."

Well I wouldn't like to be thought of as a Canadian with discerning taste now, would I?

signing off
 from reality
 free Tugwell
 the land of
 alienation
 honour
 madness
 and
 Sunday
 night
 hot
 bath
 water

Anthropological Digs

I WAS SITTING ON THE BEACH THIS AFTERNOON with the wind whipping through the pages of my library book. It was called *The Horizon History of Africa*.

There was a photo of a cave drawing from 2000 BC drawn by pre-historic Saharan bowmen. It was not primitive, but almost Picasso-like and the rhythm and excitement of the drawing was heightened by the greatly exaggerated stride of the archers.

It was not just a cave scratching. It was art.

The person who did those drawings could have been my friend Richard who lives by the creek and does drawings on rocks, then leaves them in tidal pools.

Or Aguyin, who carves faces in fish floats and leaves them lying on the beach.

Three thousand years ago a filthy long-haired man with a sloped forehead who didn't like hunting stood scratching the wall of a cave.

A man just like my friends.

The greatest happiness is to scatter your enemy and drive him before you, to see his cities reduced to ashes, to see those who love him shrouded in tears, and to gather to your bosom his wives and daughters.

—Genghis Khan

Pam,

Doug was over the other week for three days. He hitchhiked out and arrived silently at the door, the smell of the road still on him, it gave him a bit of an edge that is covered up by the noisy blare of the city.

We were like two film editors talking about cutting movies, talking writing, the reality, being true to the presence of the subject, all the little things that can be left out to make it cleaner, etc. We sat up until 5:00 a.m. the first night, then acted like authors the next day, drinking at a ringside table in Buffy's watching the fights from Atlantic City on the colour TV, leaning back in our chairs working on a glow, eating peanuts between expert asides," the black kid is quick but he doesn't like to get hit... "then more writing talk, more drinking, and the next morning a mushroom walk to Kirby Creek playing stickball with rocks and wooden beach bats, broadcasting our own game like I used to do when I was a kid, "AND NOW BATTING FOR MUDVILLE ... NUMBER 18 ... ELI WALLACH ... WALLACH..." Then more talking and picking up the conversation the next morning first thing just where it left off the night before, the interaction, bouncing the ball back and forth with someone who knows what you're talking about without you having to explain it.

So four years of writing school in three days because I want to get to the point, what I'm trying to say, who I am, I don't need exercises,

homework, someone's theory to follow. And after two hours of listening to all of Doug's new songs, one of which is about me called "Blue Barry," anyway after two hours of his new stuff ... "I just can't get enough of myself," he said. And I handed him the Tugwell book, about thirty pages so far, and he read my stuff lying on the couch sipping whiskey, set it down and said, "It's crap." "Come on. Be honest," I said. We both laughed. I knew it was wrong because I couldn't feel it. Like music you know. But I was planning on spending a year on it, maybe more, and the characters change and evolve and more fiction comes into it as they take on a form of their own, but Doug prefers the clean hard hitting day to day vignette reality style stuff, and I understand that too. And when it gets down to it we're both right but I think what I have to do is just write it to suit myself in whatever style appeals to me and forget about what the publishers want and wait for someone to come along who likes it and let them publish it.

But whatever it is, whenever, if ever, one thing I know for sure and that's to make them laugh and make them cry, because that's all life is about anyway. The laughter and the tears. All the rest of it is just the shit part—working, saving, buying, cooking, cleaning, sewing, sleeping, comparing, sighing, lying, flying, farting, belching, puking, shitting, flushing, marrying, cloning, divorcing, speeding, needing, bleeding, graduating, constipating, contemplating, tv, rv, cb ... maybe....

Remember the old adage "The best things in life are free?" Well, there's got to be some truth to that, otherwise the assholes would have it all, and we know deep down inside that they haven't.

LAST SUNDAY AT 3:00 A.M. THERE WAS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. It was a woman about six-foot tall, with a motorcycle helmet under her arm and tears streaming down her face. She said, "I'm pregnant and I'm having labour pains. I was riding my motorcycle to the hospital and it broke down. Do you have a telephone?"

Unreal. "How close are the pains?" I asked trying to remember the book on obstetrics that I'd read in the stock room when I worked for the Medical Care Insurance Commission. Should I boil water? Do I bite the cord? As it turned out she calmed down once I told her that I'd help her. It's amazing how much mileage you get when you're gray

and sound like you know what you're doing. Look at Pa Cartwright. Watch Page when he gets older. As it turned out, I think she was experiencing false pains, living alone down at Muir Creek missing her mama, and so on. She was expecting twins. I figure she should name them after me. Barry Barry.

I HAVE A NEW FRIEND NAMED ANNE who lives on Otter Point in a cabin overlooking the ocean, high up on some rocks. She has a kid and a fuzzy little dog named Ben. Ben leaves little doggie droppings around the cabin. I named them Bennetts. Even a little dog has the BC spirit.

REMEMBER SUNDOG ON GORDON'S BEACH? Last month his right side went numb. From his head to his toes. Half his face. Half his penis. He went to Painless Patterson, the doctor in Sooke, and had tests. And later he went to Victoria for a milligram. They couldn't find anything wrong.

One morning some people arrived at his door. An Indian was with them. The Indian asked if those were his boots outside the door. Sundog left his boots outside the door because his feet sweat and he liked to air them out. The Indian said, "Don't you know that you should never leave your boots outside because someone can put a spell on you through them." Sundog looked at him and didn't say anything. "I'll bet you have a numbness in your body," the Indian said. "Well... uh... yeah..." "I can cure you," the Indian said. He went outside and brought the boots into the cabin. He held the boots in his hands and then set them down. He closed his hands into fists and held them over the candle. When he opened his hands the candle flamed. Then he washed his hands in the basin. And left a black ring around it. In the bottom of the basin was a ball of mucous like substance. He pulled it out and showed it to Sundog. "This is what was causing your problem. Now you have to purify yourself."

They went outside and the Indian stripped and waded into the icy cold ocean. He told Sundog to do the same. Sundog stripped and put one foot in the water. It was unbearably cold. The Indian told him to come right in and Sundog walked into the water up to his waist. The Indian told him to submerge himself and hold onto a rock at the bot-

tom. Sundog did, and when he grabbed the rock, there was no longer any cold.

That afternoon the Indian left.

The next morning, Sundog's numbness went away.

IT'S MIDNIGHT, THE FOGHORN IS BLOWING, a damp chill is coming in off the water. The stove is crackling, cedar popping, humming with heat. Moments like this I forget that I don't fit. I think the key is to get into a position where I'll never be reminded of it, shack, stove, crackle, pop, foghorn, radio blowing some funky CBC clarinet from the corner, glass of cheap wine on the table, soft white Sally Anne socks on my feet curled under the chair like a pair of sleeping cats, sitting here laughing and crying, typing this letter.

The Nobel Prize

THE NOBEL PRIZE CAME TO TUGWELL CREEK TODAY.

Richard was telling me that when he was walking on the beach this morning, he suddenly thought of an invention.

"What was it?" I asked.

"I don't know. You know how sometimes you think of an invention but it doesn't come all the way out, so you don't know what it is. It started to come out and I got so excited that I frightened it. So it went back in."

F. Stop Fitzgerald

PAGE ARRIVED IN HIS RUSTED OLD CAR with the tattered maroon seat covers, carrying a giant backpack that could have housed a family of three.

And kleenex. Boxes and boxes of kleenex.

Ever since I've known him the kleenex has been there. He must get hay fever from life itself.

But he's easy to allow for.

He needs extra sleep.



“When he left, all I said was, “See you around,” because I didn’t know how to tell a person with all women friends and a runny nose that I’d miss him.” [Jim Page at Barry’s, 1979]

He gets cranky for small intervals and when he gets really bored he just walks away and comes back later when things have changed.

We spent four days sitting at the kitchen table looking out the window at the gray. A gray Christmas. We had a Christmas bowl football game, and a game of chess that he bullied me into. At dinner I had to drink his bottle of wine, too.

We talked about his new-found love from Whitehorse.

I gave him the benefit of the doubt because I respect his opinion, but she seemed too straight.

When he left, all I said was, "See you around," because I didn't know how to tell a person with all women friends and a runny nose that I'd miss him.

So instead I'll just wait to see the migration of the wide-angle lens through the caribou herds, and that first northern flower reaching through the tundra, searching for spring.

Dear Nearly Normal [Page],

Well, WAC finally bit the dust ... God pulled on his bootstraps. What can I say? If I were a public figure I'd eulogize him as the man responsible for making BC what it is today. However, speaking as a faceless mass it would seem like good common sense to drive a stake through his heart.

I understand that an empty taxicab pulled up to the funeral home and Bill Vander Zalm got out ... heh! heh! ... I'm only partially joking.

BETTY CONTINUES TO LAVISH ME with adoration and affection ... I have a theory that it's because in my long underwear and a dim light I remind her of her father. She in turn accuses me of "sapping her youth."

As for the likes of you and I ... Conrad summed it up when he observed of life that "the individual intensifies his essential being and rides it to his doom."

Dear Doug,

Was taking in the sun today, very idle, reading, when some very high flying sea gulls flushed their little feather toilets. For the first few seconds I tried to understand how it could rain from a clear blue sky. For the next few hours I wondered what a man's life has come to when seagull shit feels like rain drops. Successful, I suppose.



“The bowl did not and never will live up to the cosmology of the pre-bowl games. Think back. The best games were individual games. The Zen puzzle has been destroyed by the creation of the Cosmic Trophy.” [With Jim Keefer, Doug Lang, and the Cosmic Trophy, 1979]

RE: THE COSMIC MARSHMALLOW ... Richard and I achieved higher levels of cosmology in preparation for the bowl. We lived every emotion at every level. During the bowl game we duplicated these emotions, only on a superficial level. There was no pressure, merely a superficial pressure. There was no cosmic feeling, merely a superficial feeling.

I suppose on an earthly level the imposition of pre-season games would build a familiarity of animosity. The bowl did not and never will live up to the cosmology of the pre-bowl games. Think back. The best games were individual games. The Zen puzzle has been destroyed by the creation of the Cosmic Trophy. There is no point in winning it. It has to be won again and again and again. It was my fault. I created the false god trophy, but we all played our parts—to the hilt. Page became the first Philistine to be stoned to death. Keefer even became the heavy, lurking in a darkened doorway, his cigarette a dull glow...

Well, I know how to make it right again. The trophy must be won back, one more time. It will then be melted down into a gnarled little cosmic frisbee. It will still be a trophy, but it will look like a cosmic hubcap. You know the one. It rolled off the front wheel of God's Rolls Royce when he turned a corner too fast one day, long ago.

And once in a while during a game, you and Keefer will reminisce about the cosmic bowl, like two tired old Nazis trying to relive the glory days of the Third Reich. Whenever that happens, we will bring out the little cosmic hubcap, no name, no nothing, maybe a little stand of twisted baby deer ribs. We will have a one game series, anytime, just like the Grey Cup or the Super Bowl, except it will be a higher calibre of play, quieter too, just like a cosmic frisbee cutting through the air ... here, want to throw it?

'Twas the Night Before Christmas

I WENT UP TO AGUYIN'S TODAY. He was sitting in the dim kitchen light drinking. He said it was because he was excited about Christmas. He poured me a drink and like Charles Dickens began to tell me about his Christmas dream.

I HAD A CHRISTMAS DREAM LAST NIGHT. It took place on Christmas Eve. All of the hungry people, the sick, the poor, the unemployed, were all summoned from their shelters toward a light streaming from the western sky. They left their cardboard mattresses. They came from under their newspapers. They came from the abandoned cars. Some even came out of the basement suites. They gathered under the light and peered up as they clutched their worn tattered rags to their shivering souls. But their hearts were warmed as they were bathed in the blinding light. Suddenly their bodies began to glow and they gradually started to rise until they became multi-coloured tapeworms. Some were colours that had never been seen before. Then they were interwoven into a prayer mat of mystical patterns. It floated away and slowly disappeared into the darkening sky. There are some people that believe they went to heaven. But on Christmas morning do you know where

it was found? On the doorstep of the Minister in Charge of Welfare!
And all that Christmas day you could hear him greeting his guests
with “Merry Christmas! Come on in. And be sure to wipe your
feet!”

*I saw forty
turn Aguyin*

Dear Nearly Normal [Page],

Aguyin had number 4-0 on Thursday April 2nd. Born a day late and a dollar short . . . Richard and I decided to buy an ad in the personal column of the Victoria paper—“Happy Birthday Aguyin, the last one is always the best, love Orville Wright.” At the time we felt that Orville Wright was probably his closest spiritual affiliate. We laughed, but didn’t do it of course, because the pleasure is in the thought and not the action—a typical Tugwell gift.

Later in the evening the gift-giving fantasies began to twist. I decided to buy him a bottle of Pinch. We would sit and drink in the kitchen of his Alcan Time Capsule, the bottle would go around, my revolver would be in the middle of the table, one round of .50 magnum ammunition would be in the chamber. At any time during the evening Aguyin would be allowed one spin of the chamber, he would cock the pistol, hold it to his temple, and pull the trigger, the ultimate birthday present for Aguyin, a chance to buy it.

Richard was much healthier about the whole thing. He wanted to take Aguyin to Seattle on the jet foil, first class all the way, take him to a nice bar and buy drinks all evening. Then later on, he would get up and go to the bathroom, and slip out the back door leaving Aguyin there, drunk and broke in a bar in Seattle for his birthday present.

The reality of the situation turned out to be reasonably wholesome though. A friend of Aguyin’s from Victoria baked a cake and left it at work for me to deliver. I talked Pia into checking her candle stock and we dug out forty of the little wax reminders. I kept Aguyin away from the door as Richard fired them up in the porch of the trailer. I hit the



“Aguyin had number 4-0 on Thursday April 2nd. Born a day late and a dollar short....” [With Aguyin on the deck of the cabin, 1980]

lights ... Richard and Pia entered ... the glow from those forty candles was breathtaking. The heat alone was impressive. They set it down. Pia asked him to make a wish, he looked at June, then his little gray head bent over the cake. The candlelight flickered on his wrinkled face, his sunken cheeks filled with air, and Whooshh!! ... Out they went. But he didn't die.

LATER I WAS RECOVERING FROM THE PREVIOUS EVENING'S festivities through casual periodical reading, when there was a knock at the door ... halfway through *Mother Jones*. My God! It's Keefer!! It's been nearly a year since he's come out here. He's drunk; he has a mickey of Bacardi and two illegal marijuana cigarettes. His explanation, “Had to get out of town man, and this was the only place I could think of.”

Sure. We light up, drink up, and digress into a pseudo-philosophical discussion, showing our concern about the human situation.

Keefer keeps using words that I don't understand but he still hasn't wised up that I'm not hip to them, the momentum of his thoughts carries him through.

I expound on my concerns; Keefer presses me for concepts. I don't have any, anymore. I feel that I've shot my best wad intellectually years ago. I've lost interest. I try to explain it, he shows disappointment, I clarify, he misinterprets, we knock off, drink, return to it. He leaves in a 1981 huff for a midnight drive back to Victoria in search of a Big Mac, and the truth, I assume.

Guess Who's Coming for Dinner

I WAS WALKING IN THE DARKNESS TOWARDS MY CABIN. Richard stepped out of the shadows, "Hey Macleod, want to have supper with me? Pia's going out." Sure, why not? It's cold, his stove is already going.

Richard and I sat around the stove and talked about death. He showed me a library book that he was reading called *Death: The Hidden Meaning*. I went berserk. "Bullshit! I don't care how well it's presented. It's the end and if you're not ready it's a drag because it's over. No heaven. No hell. No coming back as an animal. No new life. No ghosts. Nothing man." Richard kept stressing that death was an artistic expression but soon fell under my onslaught. Then he lost his temper too, and ended up throwing the book in the fire.

"You killed Death!" I screamed at him. He laughed.

Later we had chicken for supper. It had been killed and came back as a full stomach.

Saturday Night Fever

THIS WEEKEND I WAS SITTING OUT FRONT WATCHING A TUG pull a log boom out of Muir Creek.

Wally's wife walked by on the other side of the sea grass; she stood watching the tug for a while.

Then she turned and saw me sitting against the cabin.

She waved.

I waved back.



“Then she turned and saw me sitting against the cabin. She waved.” [1979]

She said, “Jesus, good thing I wasn’t taking a piss or something, eh?”

I laughed.

She laughed.

She left.

I smiled to myself. Not a bad Saturday night.

Neighbourhood Watch

AGUYIN AND I WALKED OVER THE TUGWELL CREEK bridge on the way down to my cabin. Something flashed in the moonlight by the side of the road. We walked over to see what it was. It was part of a truck bumper.

Aguyin said, “Hey! Maybe somebody went off the bridge.”

“Aw.... Nobody went off the bridge. Let’s go.”

We got to my cabin and I started breaking up some kindling for a fire. Aguyin paced up and down.

He said, “I’ve got to go out and check the bridge. Where’s your lantern man?”

I told him that it was on top of the fridge and he grabbed it as he hustled out the door. I got a fire going and turned the damper down on the stove. I was looking in the fridge for something to eat when Aguyin came bursting into the cabin.

“There’s a truck in the trees,” he gasped, breathing hard, “On its side. It went right over the side, man. I’ve got to phone the cops.”

“No! What do you have to phone the cops for? Don’t phone them man.”

He walked over to the phone and picked it up.

“Hey! Come on man. Don’t phone them.”

It was useless. It was yet another one of Aguyin’s faces. One that no one but Richard and myself had seen. It was the face of the concerned citizen. The original neighbourhood watch. There was one thing that Aguyin could always be depended on doing and that was to observe and report.

He phoned the RCMP in Sooke and we went out onto the road and waited for them in the dark. They arrived in about twenty minutes, their flashing lights kaleidoscoping on the treetops. We flagged them down and they pulled over to the side of the road.

There were two of them. They got out of the car but left the flashing lights on. I let Aguyin handle everything, since it had been his idea. We climbed down the embankment, the RCMP slipping with their city shoes, going slow, trying not to get their pant cuffs muddy. I led the way with my lantern.

When we got to the truck, they pulled out a flashlight and began shining it around inside the cab of the truck. I couldn’t believe their flashlight. The lens was cracked and the batteries were so low that they could only cast a dim yellow softness onto the scene. In comparison my lantern was like a car headlight. I wondered why they didn’t have proper cop equipment.

Inside the cab were a few broken beer bottles and not much else. Obviously the guy had been drinking, missed the curve on the bridge and left the scene so that he wouldn’t get an impaired driving rap.

One cop reached through the shattered back window and said, “I’ve found a driver’s license here Bob.”

“What’s his BCDL number, Ken?” replied Constable Bob.

I wondered what they were talking about and then realized that BCDL stood for British Columbia Driver's License number. I fleetingly wondered if Constable Bob realized I had cracked their code.

We climbed back up to the road and Aguyin began recreating the accident, showing them the skid marks, estimating the speed, lining up the trajectory.

Searching in the bushes, he found more parts that had broken off the truck and gathered them up to take home for his own personal evidence. Constable Bob and Constable Ken were transfixed as Aguyin walked up and down the road, gesticulating and lecturing. He was on stage with the flashing lights from the police car providing special effects for him.

Constable Bob finally dismissed us with a "Thanks a lot, fellows."

We started back to the cabin, following the lantern light.

Aguyin turned to me and said, "Did you smell Constable Bob's after shave?"

"No. I didn't get that close."

"Gee . . . he smelled just like a whore," Aguyin said.

*The social representation
of boredom is Sunday.*
—Shopenhauer

Sweet Kay and Crazy Al,

Last night there was a giant black ant in the tub. Not an ordinary black ant, but one of the big ones we get out here once a year when it gets hot. I picked him up and squashed him between my fingers, then dropped him into the toilet bowl. Suddenly, I felt something on my ankle. I looked down. It was another big black ant. I grabbed him before he could bite me and threw him into the toilet bowl. He had two feeler type things and he began swimming in a doubled over side-stroke style. I watched for a while. He didn't seem to drown but kept himself barely afloat with this bent over sidestroke. I flushed the toilet and the dead one went down the drain but this one swam even harder.

Then the flush was almost over and the round sucking swirls at the end of the flush pulled him around and around like a whirlpool and then down out of sight. Then as the water came back up again so did the ant. He made it to the surface and went back into his bent over feeler waving sidestroke again, but much weaker than before. I guess when your brain is that small, you can't think of a reason not to live.

Shoes for Industry

YESTERDAY I DROVE PIA INTO SOOKE. We passed a couple of garbage bags beside the road.

Pia turned to me and said, "I went through those you know."

"Oh?"

"Yes. I found one red shoe. Size seven. But I couldn't find the mate. Damn!"

Jesus, they come over from England and just go crazy.

There's so much here, for everyone.

Soon there will be red shoes for all of us.

The Seminar

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR WOKE ME UP LAST NIGHT. I looked at the clock. It was 2:00 a.m. I looked outside. It was pitch black. I went back to bed.

A rabbit had been eating from Richard's garden for the past two weeks. No one had tried to touch him or scare him away, so he'd become part of the scene.

This afternoon Richard and I stood in a misting drizzle, talking. The rabbit walked around our feet, its nose tweaking.

Richard said, "I dropped some acid last night and knocked on your door."

"What for?"

"I thought you might want someone to talk to."

I smiled and looked down at the rabbit.

He said, "I guess you weren't home"

I didn't reply. He shifted position. The rabbit hopped nervously to the side.

Richard peered at me, "How many mistakes do you think a person makes in a day?"

"I don't know. How many?"

His eyes darkened. "A lot. I've been counting them lately. You see, a mistake can be anything. Whatever. I was watching Pia this morning. How many mistakes do you think she made?"

I thought, oh no, the guy drops one tab of acid and spends the rest of his life counting mistakes.

I shrugged, "How many?"

"Twenty-five! She made twenty-five mistakes, man."

I felt compelled to come to her defense. "How many mistakes did you make?"

A sad look came over his face.

He looked down at the ground for a moment, then looked up and said, "Eighty-six."

We nodded at each other, turned and went back to our cabins.

The rabbit hopped back to the garden and disappeared behind a large lettuce leaf.

First you do it for your own enjoyment. Then you do it for a few friends. Eventually you figure, "What the hell, I might as well get paid for it."

—Irma Kalish, comparing writing to the world's oldest profession

Page,

I have taken a box in town to avert the horror of commuting. Corner of May and Moss, cherry blossom trees, two blocks to the ocean, old block, old people, quiet, dim, reasonably depressing. Merely moved my books and mattress in. Thought I'd spend my extra time writing a short story, "Waterfalls Are for Losers." An existential autobiography... it took three pages to get the loser out of bed and into the street, haven't looked at it since. Decided that I can't do anything if



“The rabbit hopped back to the garden and disappeared behind a large lettuce leaf.”
[1980]

I have to work; that conveniently makes it “their fault,” which it might be anyway.

2:30 A.M., FITFUL NON-DRUGGED SLEEP, stage three, when GNAW!
ECHO! GNAW! reverberates from the bathroom. Please God, let it be
the radiator cranking up. I pad into the bathroom, that familiar re-
frain is coming from under the tub. I return to my mattress, my eyes

remain open, CRUNCH! CRUNCH! CRUNCH! from behind the kitchen cupboards. I began to wonder about myself.

Next day I report the sound of rats to the caretaker, or the dangling puppet of May Enterprises, depending on your politics. He informs me that there are no rats in Victoria and I was either (1) imagining it, (2) or it was the radiators cranking up. I pressed him for his service record, number of rat attacks, duration, weapons used, etc. As suspected the pompous little snot had never seen a dropping in his entire life, other than his own of course. I launched into a fairly sane, if disjointed monologue, summarizing my rodent credentials. He looked at me with revulsion. No action.

To thwart what I felt was a possible slide into the valley of the damned, I began to tape the late night gnawings. It took a week for the rats to break through, into the kitchen cupboard under the sink. That very night Daddy Warbuck's toady presented me with a rent increase. How did he know the rats had broken through? I confronted him with the large hole in the wall. He suggested it might have been sawed through. I suggested that rats do not use saws, but what had actually happened was I had chewed through the wall myself to make it look like rats had sawed through. He didn't understand. I immediately switched satire for rage ... he began to understand. I painted a picture of a rat-infested nightmare, little old ladies with their faces eaten off, every wall a symphony of gnaws.

He promised to check with his masters for permission to do something then tried to regain his dignity in a strange manner. He said he felt sorry for his masters because they couldn't raise the rent higher. Not enough return on their investment; rent controls are causing the rental shortage and so on. Standing under my Karl Marx poster (in colour) I corrected his every fault for one and a half hours. I finally dismissed him with a yawn just before turning my back on him forever. Karl was smiling at me.

I SEE A GIANT BILLBOARD STRETCHED across the highway. It reads DEPRESSION II ... the ripping of cloth ... and Macleod drives through ... a honk of the horn and a hearty fuck you ...

The only problem is, every time I buy a new car I lose my job ...

Twice lucky?



“... a state of mind, surrounded by a landscape of lunatics.” [1980]



“Aguyin saying, after a walk on the beach, “You know if I lived in Russia man, I’d have something to do when I got back home.” [With Aguyin, 1980]



“Betty continues to lavish me with adoration and affection ... I have a theory that it’s because in my long underwear and a dim light I remind her of her father. She in turn accuses me of ‘sapping her youth.’” [Top, with Betty Rumble (checked shirt) and Pam Woodland, 1980; below, on the beach with Pam (left) and Betty, 1981, (right) 1980]



“Remember the old adage ‘the best things in life are free?’ Well, there’s got to be some truth to that, otherwise the assholes would have it all, and we know deep down inside that they haven’t.” [Above, at the Sooke Mall, 1980]

“Aguyin’s been doing carvings on the beach and leaving them there. They are signed Aguyin BC.” [Left, 1981]



“The beach between Frank’s place and the creek is gone now. Gravel trucks have been coming every day for a week with fill to save his cabin from being swept into the sea.” [With Aguyin, looking out at the storm damage, 1981]



“Tonight yet another storm rages. My barricade is gone. My windows are fragments of tape and glass and stone chips.” [1985]