A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sky is a pale yellow, and the water reflects the light, creating a shimmering effect. In the foreground, there is a white, scalloped edge, possibly from a window blind or a piece of paper. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

the casual thirst of many summers

wet in heat and taken by the sea.

**Some places are forever afternoon.**

Across the road and a short field

there is the river, split and yellow

and this far down affected by the tide.

(11 Places for Richard Hugo)

**Wayne Horvitz**

A dramatic landscape photograph of a grassy field under a stormy sky. Dark, heavy clouds fill the upper two-thirds of the frame. A bright rainbow is visible in the center, arching from the horizon towards the top. The foreground is a lush green field with a wooden fence line running across it. In the distance, low mountains are visible under the storm clouds.

Wayne Horvitz

Eric Eagle


Peggy Lee

Keith Lowe

Ron Miles

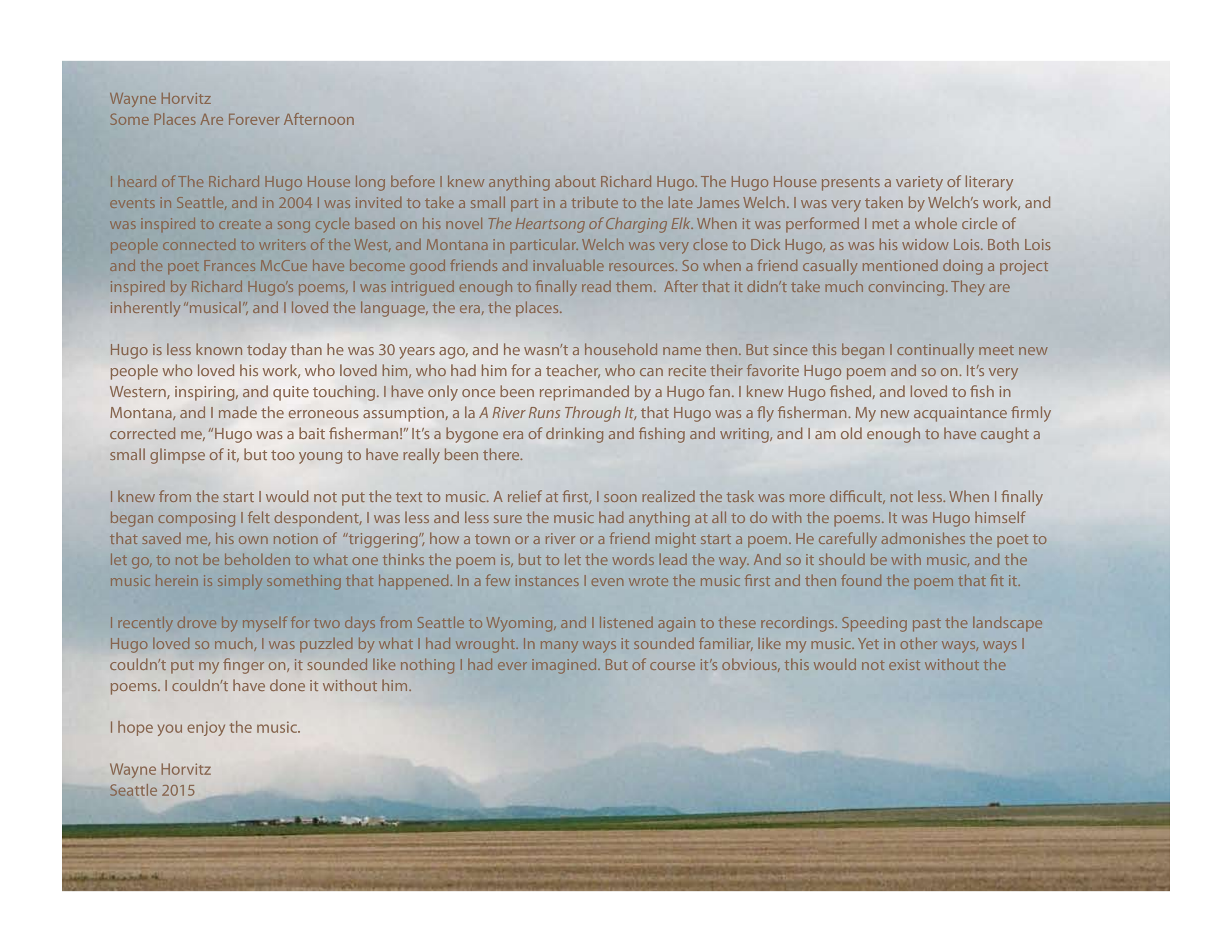
Sara Schoenbeck

Tim Young

- 
- |   |                                  |       |
|---|----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Money or a story                           | (The Milltown Union Bar)         | 3:34  |
| 2. those who remain are the worst             | (Three Stops to Ten Sleep)       | 4:22  |
| 3. you drink until you are mayor              | (Dixon)                          | 4:44  |
| 4. Nothing dies as slowly as a scene          | (Death of the Kapowsin Tavern)   | 3:42  |
| 5. all weather is yours no matter how vulgar? | (Fairfield)                      | 5:06  |
| 6. the beautiful wives                        | (Missoula Softball Tournament)   | 5:55  |
| 7. for Jim and Lois Welch                     | (Cataldo Mission)                | 2:18  |
| 8. in some other home                         | (The Only Bar in Dixon)          | 5:17  |
| 9. The car that brought you here still runs   | (Degrees of Gray in Philipsburg) | 10:27 |
| 10. last place there                          | (for Richard Hugo)               | 3:28  |
| 11. You must have stayed hours                | (Driving Montana)                | 4:14  |
| 12. Some places are forever afternoon         | (West Marginal Way)              | 4:13  |

58:13





Wayne Horvitz  
Some Places Are Forever Afternoon

I heard of The Richard Hugo House long before I knew anything about Richard Hugo. The Hugo House presents a variety of literary events in Seattle, and in 2004 I was invited to take a small part in a tribute to the late James Welch. I was very taken by Welch's work, and was inspired to create a song cycle based on his novel *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*. When it was performed I met a whole circle of people connected to writers of the West, and Montana in particular. Welch was very close to Dick Hugo, as was his widow Lois. Both Lois and the poet Frances McCue have become good friends and invaluable resources. So when a friend casually mentioned doing a project inspired by Richard Hugo's poems, I was intrigued enough to finally read them. After that it didn't take much convincing. They are inherently "musical", and I loved the language, the era, the places.

Hugo is less known today than he was 30 years ago, and he wasn't a household name then. But since this began I continually meet new people who loved his work, who loved him, who had him for a teacher, who can recite their favorite Hugo poem and so on. It's very Western, inspiring, and quite touching. I have only once been reprimanded by a Hugo fan. I knew Hugo fished, and loved to fish in Montana, and I made the erroneous assumption, ala *A River Runs Through It*, that Hugo was a fly fisherman. My new acquaintance firmly corrected me, "Hugo was a bait fisherman!" It's a bygone era of drinking and fishing and writing, and I am old enough to have caught a small glimpse of it, but too young to have really been there.

I knew from the start I would not put the text to music. A relief at first, I soon realized the task was more difficult, not less. When I finally began composing I felt despondent, I was less and less sure the music had anything at all to do with the poems. It was Hugo himself that saved me, his own notion of "triggering", how a town or a river or a friend might start a poem. He carefully admonishes the poet to let go, to not be beholden to what one thinks the poem is, but to let the words lead the way. And so it should be with music, and the music herein is simply something that happened. In a few instances I even wrote the music first and then found the poem that fit it.

I recently drove by myself for two days from Seattle to Wyoming, and I listened again to these recordings. Speeding past the landscape Hugo loved so much, I was puzzled by what I had wrought. In many ways it sounded familiar, like my music. Yet in other ways, ways I couldn't put my finger on, it sounded like nothing I had ever imagined. But of course it's obvious, this would not exist without the poems. I couldn't have done it without him.

I hope you enjoy the music.

Wayne Horvitz  
Seattle 2015

## The Milltown Union Bar

*for Harold Herndon*

*(Laundromat & Cafe)*

You could love here, not the lovely goat  
in plexiglass nor the elk shot  
in the middle of a joke, but honest drunks,  
crossed swords above the bar, three men hung  
in the bad painting, others riding off  
on the phony green horizon. The owner,  
fresh from orphan wars, loves too  
but bad as you. He keeps improving things  
but can't cut the bodies down.

You need never leave. Money or a story  
brings you booze. The elk is grinning  
and the goat says go so tenderly  
you hear him through the glass. If you weep  
deer heads weep. Sing and the orphanage  
announces plans for your release. A train  
goes by and ditches jump. You were nothing  
going in and now you kiss your hand.

When mills shut down, when the worst drunk  
says finally I'm stone, three men still hang  
painted badly from a leafless tree, you  
one of them, brains tied behind your back,  
swinging for your sin. Or you swing  
with goats and elk. Doors of orphanages  
finally swing out and here you open in.





### Three Stops to Ten Sleep

Ho. The horses can water. We are miles ahead of schedule thanks to cool weather and a strong wind at our backs. Ahead are the mountains where we plan to build our city. Our bank will be solvent. Our church will serve all faiths. We will pass tough laws against fragmentation. Anyone threatening unity will be sent to the plains to wander forever. The plains have snakes and wolves and much of the water is poison. Have the women make dinner. We camp here. Tomorrow we should be close to the forest, and the next day we will find our place to live as destined.

Stop. It is farther than it seemed. No doubt an illusion created by light off high snow. Then, the wind changed and discouraged the horses. They don't like wind full in their eyes all day. I urge you to stop this bickering. Remember, our city will be founded on mutual respect. I urge you to accept this necessary rationing of food. Above all, remember, every time you frown the children see it. Several already have been crying and saying there will be no city.

Wait. The mountains are never closer. What is this land? We lost too many last night in the storm and those who remain are the worst, the ones we hesitated to take when we started back at the river. You remember? That town where we first formed? Those saloons and loose women? Let them grumble. We are going on. Indians know the right roots to eat and there's water in cactus. Even if we fail, wasn't it worth the trip, leaving that corrupting music behind and that sin?



### Dixon

Light crawls timid over fields  
from some vague source behind the hills,  
too gray to be the sun. Any morning  
brings the same, a test of stamina,  
your capacity to live the long day out  
paced by the hesitant river. No chance  
you might discover someone dead.  
Always you curse the limited goods  
in the store and your limited money.  
You learn to ignore the wind leak  
in your shack. On bad days in the bar  
you drink until you are mayor.

On neutral days you hope the school  
is adequate though you're no father  
and your wife left decades back  
when the train still ran. You look  
hours down the track. Perhaps a freight.  
Only the arrogant wind. You think  
the browns are running, hitting bait.  
You have waited and waited for mail,  
a wedding invitation, a postcard  
from New York. You reread the book  
about red lovers one more time,  
pages torn and the cover gone.

On good days festive cars streak by.  
You laugh and wave. Sun on blacktop  
whirrs like ancient arrows in the sky.  
Cattails flash alive the way they did  
when lightning told them, die.  
You catch the river in its flowing  
never flowing frozen glide.  
The small clear river jitters on  
to join the giant green one lumbering  
a definite west, a lake released.  
Your heroes go home green. Bison  
on the range are reproducing bears.





### Death of the Kapowsin Tavern

I can't ridge it back again from char.  
Not one board left. Only ash a cat explores  
and shattered glass smoked black and strung  
about from the explosion I believe  
in the reports. The white school up for sale  
for years, most homes abandoned to the rocks  
of passing boys – the fire, helped by wind  
that blew the neon out six years before,  
simply ended lots of ending.

A damn shame. Now, when the night chill  
of the lake gets in a troller's bones  
where can the troller go for bad wine  
washed down frantically with beer?  
And when wise men are in style again  
will one recount the two-mile glide of cranes  
from dead pines or the nameless yellow  
flowers thriving in the useless logs,  
or dots of light all night about the far end  
of the lake, the dawn arrival of the idiot  
with catfish – most of all, above the lake  
the temple and our sanctuary there?

Nothing dies as slowly as a scene.  
The dusty jukebox cracking through  
the cackle of the beered-up crone –  
wagered wine – sudden need to dance –  
these remain in the black debris.  
Although I know in time the lake will send  
wind black enough to blow it all away.





## Fairfield

*"A guy I used to know – he taught me all about the sky."  
Humphrey Bogart in High Sierra*

I wanted it depressed, one dusty road  
and two cafés both with 'help wanted' signs.  
Where I ate, the waitress was too in love  
with the cook for things I wanted to say.  
The canal passed through town ripe green  
and grain, I had to admit, grew assured.  
A dog slept fat on warm gravel. No trouble foreseen  
raising funds to build the new gym.

I'd expected hurt, the small town kind everyone  
knows and ignores, a boy who tried and tried  
to leave home, sobbing his failure alone  
at the mirror back of the bar, still wearing  
his '39 letter sweater, still claiming  
the girl who moved to Great Falls will return.  
I wanted to honor him in this poem,  
to have the sky turn dark as I drove off  
the town in my rear view mirror  
huddled with fear white in black air.

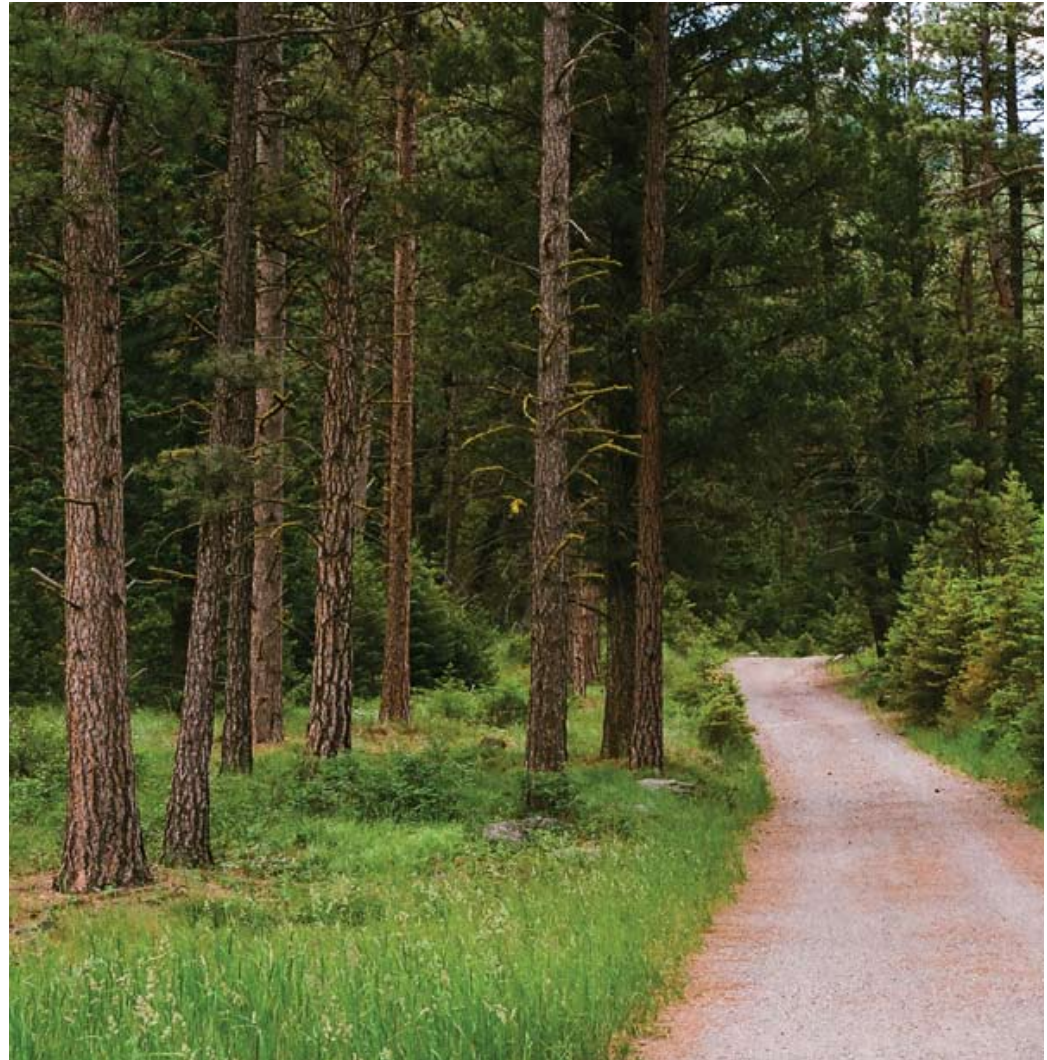
The drunk I saw seemed happy. I drove empty away.  
What if Fairfield sent signals to Mars  
and signals came back saying all weather is yours  
no matter how vulgar? I imagined cruel sky  
left every bird orphan. When I passed  
Freeze Out Lake I saw herons accepted that refuge  
as home, and I knew the water was green with sky,  
not poisoned green with resolve.



### Missoula Softball Tournament

This summer, most friends out of town  
and no wind playing flash and dazzle  
in the cottonwoods, music of the Clark Fork stale,  
I've gone back to the old ways of defeat,  
the softball field, familiar dust and thud,  
pitcher winging drops and rises, and wives,  
the beautiful wives in the stands, basic, used,  
screeching runners home, infants unattended  
in the dirt. A long triple sails into right center.  
Two men on. Shouts from dugout: go, Ron, go.  
Life is better run from. Distance to the fence,  
both foul lines and dead center, is displayed.

I try to steal the tricky manager's signs.  
Is hit-and-run the pulling of the ear?  
The ump gives pitchers too much low inside.  
Injustice? Fraud? Ancient problems focus  
in the heat. Bad hop on routine grounder.  
Close play missed by the team you want to win.  
Players from the first game, high on beer,  
ride players in the field. Their laughter  
falls short of the wall. Under lights, the moths  
are momentary stars, and wives, the beautiful wives  
in the stands now take the interest they once feigned,  
oh, long ago, their marriage just begun, years  
of helping husbands feel important just begun,  
the scrimping, the anger brought home evenings  
from degrading jobs. This poem goes out to them.  
Is steal-of-home the touching of the heart?  
Last pitch. A soft fly. A can of corn  
the players say. Routine, like mornings,  
like the week. They shake hands on the mound.  
Nice grab on that shoot to left. Good game. Good game.  
Dust rotates in their headlight beams.  
The wives, the beautiful wives are with their men.







### Cataldo Mission

*for Jim and Lois Welch*

We come here tourist on a bad sky day,  
warm milk at 15,000 and the swamp across  
the freeway blinding white. No theory  
to explain the lake of saint, torn tapestry.  
Pews seem built for pygmies, and a drunk  
once damned mosquitoes from the pulpit,  
raging red with Bible and imagined plague.  
Their spirits buoyed, pioneers left running  
for the nothing certain nowhere west.  
Somewhere, say where Ritzville is, they would  
remember these crass pillars lovely  
and a moving sermon they had never heard.

More's bad here than just the sky. The valley  
we came in on: Mullan. Wallace. Jokes  
about the whores. Kellogg and, without salvation,  
Smelterville. A stream so slate with crap  
the name pollutes the world. Man will die again  
to do this to his soul. And over the next hill  
he never crosses, promises: love, grass,  
a white cathedral, glandular revival  
and a new trout, three tall dorsal fins.

We exit from the mission, blind. The haze  
still hangs amplifying glare until  
two centuries of immigrants in tears  
seem natural as rain. The hex is on.  
The freeway covers arrows, and the swamp  
a spear with feathers meaning stop.  
This dry pale day, cars below crawl thirsty,  
500 miles to go before the nation quits.

### The Only Bar in Dixon

Home. Home. I know entering.  
Green cheap plaster and the stores  
across the street toward the river  
failed. One Indian depressed  
on Thunderbird. Another buying  
Thunderbird to go. This air  
is fat with gangsters I imagine  
on the run. If they ran here  
they would be running from  
imaginary cars. No one cares  
about the wanted posters  
in the brand new concrete block P.O.

This is home because some people  
go to Perma and come back  
from Perma saying Perma  
is no fun. To revive, you take 382  
to Hot Springs, your life savings  
ready for a choice of bars, your hotel  
glamorous with neon up the hill.  
Is home because the Jocko  
dies into the Flathead. Home because  
the Flathead goes home north northwest.

I want home full of grim permission.  
You can go as out of business here  
as rivers or the railroad station.  
I knew it entering.

Five bourbons  
and I'm in some other home.





### Degrees of Gray in Philipsburg

You might come here Sunday on a whim.  
Say your life broke down. The last good kiss  
you had was years ago. You walk these streets  
laid out by the insane, past hotels  
that didn't last, bars that did, the tortured try  
of local drivers to accelerate their lives.  
Only churches are kept up. The jail  
turned 70 this year. The only prisoner  
is always in, not knowing what he's done.

The principal supporting business now  
is rage. Hatred of the various grays  
the mountain sends, hatred of the mill,  
The Silver Bill repeal, the best liked girls  
who leave each year for Butte. One good  
restaurant and bars can't wipe the boredom out.  
The 1907 boom, eight going silver mines,  
a dance floor built on springs –  
all memory resolves itself in gaze,  
in panoramic green you know the cattle eat  
or two stack high above the town,  
two dead kilns, the huge mill in collapse  
for fifty years that won't fall finally down.

Isn't this your life? That ancient kiss  
still burning out your eyes? Isn't this defeat  
so accurate, the church bell simply seems  
a pure announcement: ring and no one comes?  
Don't empty houses ring? Are magnesium  
and scorn sufficient to support a town,  
not just Philipsburg, but towns  
of towering blondes, good jazz and booze  
the world will never let you have  
until the town you came from dies inside?

Say no to yourself. The old man, twenty  
when the jail was built, still laughs  
although his lips collapse. Someday soon,  
he says, I'll go to sleep and not wake up.  
You tell him no. You're talking to yourself.  
The car that brought you here still runs.  
The money you buy lunch with,  
no matter where it's mined, is silver  
and the girl who serves your food  
is slender and her red hair lights the wall.



## Driving Montana

The day is a woman who loves you. Open.  
Deer drink close to the road and magpies  
spray from your car. Miles from any town  
your radio comes in strong, unlikely  
Mozart from Belgrade, rock and roll  
from Butte. Whatever the next number,  
you want to hear it. Never has your Buick  
found this forward a gear. Even  
the tuna salad in Reedpoint is good.

Towns arrive ahead of imagined schedule.  
Absorakee at one. Or arrive so late –  
Silesia at nine – you recreate the day.  
Where did you stop along the road  
and have fun? Was there a runaway horse?  
Did you park at that house, the one  
alone in a void of grain, white with green  
trim and red fence, where you know you lived  
once? You remembered the ringing creek,  
the soft brown forms of far off bison.  
You must have stayed hours, then drove on.  
In the motel you know you'd never seen it before.

Tomorrow will open again, the sky wide  
as the mouth of a wild girl, friable  
clouds you lose yourself to. You are lost  
in miles of land without people, without  
one fear of being found, in the dash  
of rabbits, soar of antelope, swirl  
merge and clatter of streams.





### **West Marginal Way**

One tug pounds to haul an afternoon  
of logs up river. The shade  
of Pigeon Hill across the bulges  
in the concrete crawls on reeds  
in a short field, cools a pier  
and the violence of young men  
after cod. The crackpot chapel,  
with a sign erased by rain, returned  
before to calm and a mossed roof.

A dim wind blows the roses  
growing where they please. Lawns  
are wild and lots are undefined  
as if the payment made in cash  
were counted then and there.

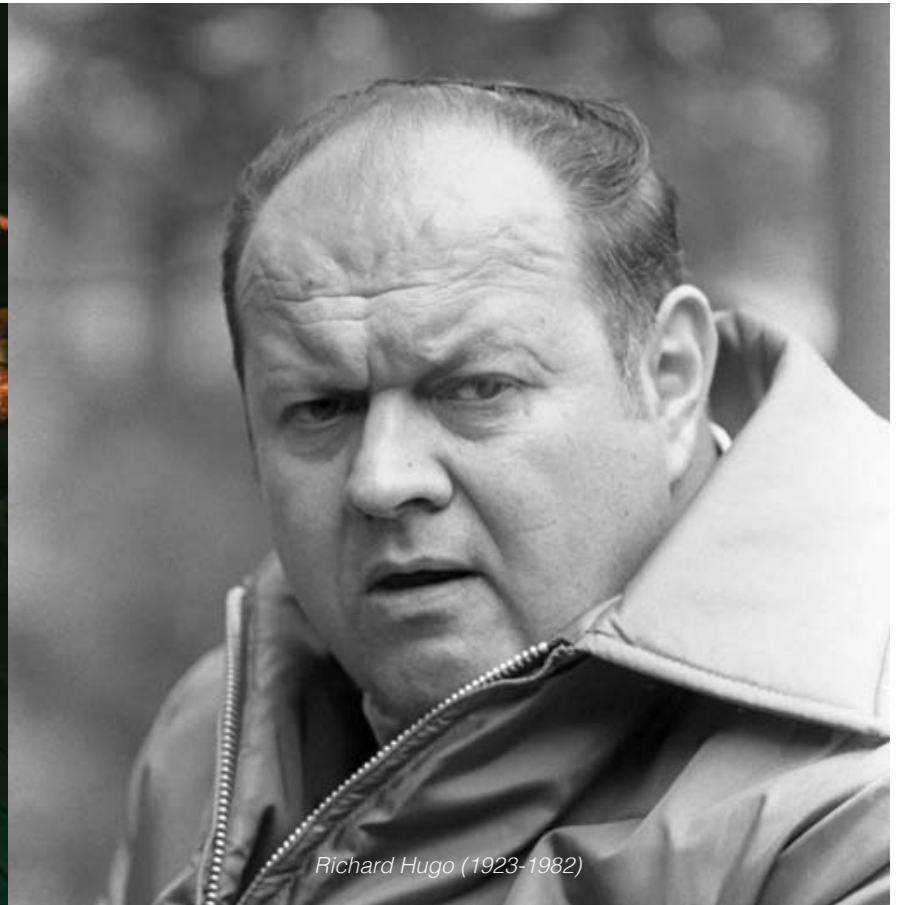
These names on boxes will return  
with salmon money in the fall,  
come drunk down the cinder arrow  
of a trail, past the store of Popich,  
sawdust piles and the saw mill  
bombing air with optimistic sparks,  
blinding gravel pits and the brickyard  
baking, to wives who taught themselves  
the casual thirst of many summers  
wet in heat and taken by the sea.

Some places are forever afternoon.  
Across the road and a short field  
there is the river, split and yellow  
and this far down affected by the tide.





*Wayne Horvitz at Ripley Schemm Hugo's family cabin, June, 2014*



*Richard Hugo (1923-1982)*



## Some Places Are Forever Afternoon

Wayne Horvitz, piano, Hammond B-3, electronics

Ron Miles, cornet

Sara Schoenbeck, bassoon

Peggy Lee, cello

Tim Young, guitar

Keith Lowe, bass

Eric Eagle, drums

Produced by Wayne Horvitz / Executive Producer: Tony Reif

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