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Act 4: How the Land Looks (c. 30,000 BCE-1984)

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Act 4 is the book's fourth chapter.

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How the Land Looks (c. 30,000 BCE-1984)

A gust of wind, sweeping across the plain, threw into life waves of yellow and blue and green.
– O.E Rölvaag (1927)

Bob Winston had a favorite photograph of his daughter Anne. For all she can recall, he kept it in his wallet to show his buddies at work. Then after he died in 1965, it found its way into a crowded credenza drawer. Worn and torn along its deep folds, the image remained clear: a blond three-year-old, seated on a Lilliputian's tricycle, looks up at the camera, her smiling, bespectacled eyes aglitter behind dense lenses.

Why this picture in particular tickled Bob's fancy is impossible to say. It hardly amused his daughter, who found the child she once was unbearably ugly and gauche. When we cleaned out the house where Anne's mother lived for many years, the photo disappeared. I think I know why, but Anne is not telling (*or are you?*).

How ironic that the glasses were necessary at all. Notwithstanding astigmatism and myopia, Anne is graced with a sharp visual intelligence as measured by her ready identification of objects in rotation that only appear on IQ tests. Although she had no formal training as an artist or an art historian, she has frequently tried her hand at painting and reads artwork with alacrity and accuracy. Packing the car invariably requires less cogitation on Anne's part than it does on mine. And she pays meticulous attention to her personal grooming. Blessed with insightful sensitivity, she has a keener view of things.

This shrewd vision is still selective. Anne notices another woman's hair much more readily than she does the color of her irises or the automobile she drives. These latter matters are men's interests, she protests. Her strong preference is to use a magnifying glass for her scholarship on fifteenth-century women's religious art in southwestern Germany. When springtime clouds cluster into livid swirls, Anne scans for tornadoes

whose shifting traces she discerns with ease. This expertise comes from early childhood summers spent kenning the distant sky on the Oklahoma prairies. As her mother Fran often said, “You never can tell, those twisters can change their course when you’re not watching.”

The high plains of America’s furthermost Midwest call for a different manner of seeing. As Georgia O’Keeffe descried in her art, the big western sky is more capacious and embracing, a pacific sea whose horizon reaches outward whichever way one turns. The light is so bright, the distances so vast, it is hard to gauge them with precision. On a late winter morning, as Walt Whitman writes, “the good green grass, that delicate miracle,” spreads out before a cool curtain of azure. The puffy clouds look painted on a turquoise canvas. What entrances those of us from elsewhere is taken on trust by the natives, like the arid, coppery sunlight in the summer and the rain that comes five minutes before it is too late. Such is the spectacle, the lay and lure of the land.

Here Anne’s remotest ancestors arrived many millennia ago. They gazed at the same ranges of wide meadow roamed by indigenous quadrupeds: bison, antelope, and elk. Beginning in the 1800s, after several centuries elsewhere, a trickle of people returned only to be displaced by a flood from the east and north. These latecomers were settlers as opposed to hunters, and they brought with them a Cather-esque sense of the frontier. It is a distinct spirit reflected not just in how they knew the space they inhabited, but also in the stories of the past they told as farmers, ranchers, teachers, and preachers.

I am tempted to say that the flat topography renders its denizens more egalitarian, more libertarian, ultimately more democratic in their communal instincts, as Alexis de Tocqueville contended about Americans generally. They perceive the world their own

Comment [1]: The Land Rush

Angie Debo (1890-1988), the award-winning historian who lived nearly her whole life in tiny Marshall, Oklahoma, captured the spirit of its earliest families: “A few seconds past noon of April 22, 1889, two riders drew rein and looked upon a scene that telescoped nine generations of American frontier settlement into one flashing moment. The ‘Oklahoma Lands’ lay before them, a level plain pitted with the wallows of the vanished buffalo and broken in the distance by irregular green lines of timber that marked the courses of the streams. Across the grassy swell of the prairie scattered horsemen were racing, each striving to find in the unknown waste ahead one hundred and sixty acres of rich land, which before the sun should set that night would be his home.”

way. This outlook is worth considering, even though the migrants were not all from the plains and they did not all stay there when their lives turned for the worse. As frank as the small, wood-frame sheds they left behind, this story is theirs and deserves telling.

Because of these folk, I understand why Anne is so fond of her brother-in-law's pastel chalk drawing of a New Mexico canyon that hangs in our library (ill. 9), if I dare speak for my wife (*I can see your eyes rolling now*). The scene is not from Oklahoma. There are no red barns or clay dirt to remind Anne of her grandparents' homesteads. There is not a soul in sight. The composition is sky blue in the distance, desert yellow in the middle, and scrub green up close. In fact, the lower profile is heavy with underbrush.

What delights my wife are not the colors, despite their brilliant contrasts, nor the perspective, which balances the foreground against the far canyon wall, "a ladder to the plain," as H. Scott Momaday observed. Rather, she is taken by the semblance of rugged and ingenuous candor, the nakedness of nature lying so close at hand, more the raw, virile quality of the land and the intrepid types who paused to see it over the centuries. It is closer to the prairie than it looks.

Rowdens and Wilsons

The first of Anne's forebears to behold the new world were peripatetic Cherokee. Archeologists are still assessing when the first migrations to North America occurred around 30,000 BCE or earlier. But the recognition of Native Americans as family came much more recently, when Anne's great-great-grandfather Joe Rowden married Bettie Able in the 1840s. According to Nell Rowden Page, a granddaughter, Bettie was one-quarter Cherokee. The high cheekbones of subsequent Rowdens suggest as much. At the time it was not a connection everyone celebrated.

We have no other, more substantive testimony to confirm this story, certainly nothing as reliable as published records. Native Americans did not keep them as literate Europeans did. All the same, family accounts, genealogies mostly, reveal a proclivity for inclusiveness, a marked preference for remembering anyone worth a lurid or merely colorful canard, whether or not the individual did anything notable otherwise.

Oral lore had Anne's other early relatives coming from England. Thomas Emerson settled in Ipswich, Massachusetts by 1636. For successive generations, so Aunt Doris told Anne's mother Fran, they lingered in the Boston area. But the nineteenth century saw them and many others like them press westward.

Lemuel Emerson first glimpsed Tennessee where his son Elisha was born in 1843. At age 18, a self-styled farmer, Elisha joined the Union army in St. Louis to fight in the Civil War for three years before he married his cousin, Katherine, the daughter of Lemuel's brother, Bufford. Doris the genealogist alleged that Elisha and Katherine were also cousins to the great American Transcendentalist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, however distant from Boston the young couple had settled. Home for them was Pleasant Hope in Polk County, just north of Springfield, Missouri.

Ralph Waldo generally kept up with his expanding clan; his voluminous correspondence includes practically all his relations, most of them in New England. The index is replete with obscure familial relations. But not a one of Ralph Waldo's copious letters concerns the Missouri Emersons, and for good reason. They were not related.

According to Benjamin Kendall Emerson's thorough study, Ralph Waldo had no relations by the name of Lemuel or Bufford. It is probably just as well. However proud the Missouri Emersons and their progeny were to claim ties to the Boston literary Brah-

min, they would have been appalled by his eclectically ecumenical ideas, which he borrowed from South Asian Hindu and German metaphysical traditions. These notions were anathema to the Emerson faithful, all of whom sought much narrower ways of parsing the Holy Book.

Katherine and Elisha Emerson had six children, the youngest of which, Margaret (b. 1867), married Mac Albert Rowden (1855-1936), himself one of nine kids. His father Joe Rowden (d. 1895) had married Bettie (d. 1880) the part-Cherokee. In their turn Margaret and Mac Albert settled in Polk County with their eight children.

As a member of the Providence Baptist Church, Mac Albert was licensed to preach in 1891. Proclaimed W. A. Gilmore, the church clerk, "We offer to God our earnest prayers that he may become 'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth' [2 Timothy 2.15]." He was apparently the first of the Rowdens called to witness the Gospel. His wife Mag, I am sure, found this calling consistent with what she thought of the Emerson clergymen back in Massachusetts.

A daughter, the conversant Nell Page, wrote of the Rowdens. Their drab, dreary lives on the frontier were particularly precarious; a passel of them perished prematurely. Mac Albert's brother Elisha, a "jolly, witty, good-looking" fellow, "liked the bottle too well" and was killed in 1907 when his horse and buggy were hit by a streetcar in Springfield. Nieces and nephews met with similar mishaps, such as Finis who fell out of a buckboard and was dragged to death by the horses. An adopted child, the "little albino girl," was found, abandoned, on a woodpile in nearby Bolivar; she lived to be just 13. Thomas Jefferson Rowden's son, Hobert, grew so crippled by arthritis, he shot himself without compunction. Such forbidding fates appear in Nell's matter-of-fact accounts, as did the

Rowdens' Baptist faith in God, but with at least "one shouting Methodist" among them.

It was Annie Mae "Mamie" Rowden (1889-1972), the happy-go-lucky child of Mac Albert and Margaret, who became a school teacher in Hollis, Oklahoma, where she met her husband Francis "Frank" Wilson (1883-1956), a quiet, often dour man from Harris County near Houston. Hollis was a lonely, implausible place for them to marry. The primary route there was by the Western Cattle Trail north to Fort Dodge; the nearest railhead lay in Weatherford, more than a hundred miles away. In the middle of nowhere, far from the Wilsons' ancestral roots, Hollis never claimed to be a gateway to anywhere.

Together, after southwestern Oklahoma was opened for settlement in 1896, Mamie and Frank had eight children, seven girls and one boy, whose personalities were distributed more or less equally between their mother's high spirits and their father's stern nature. Evelyn (b. 1913), Doris (b. 1915), Mary (b. 1918), and Janice (b. 1920) resembled Mamie; Frances (b. 1914), Helen (b. 1922), and Paul (b. 1926) were more akin to Frank. The retarded Nan Lenore (b. 1931) died too young for anyone to know which parent she resembled. But they all feared God and kept to their studies, except for Paul who resisted his sisters' solicitude for his goodly soul and material welfare. He absconded to join the Navy and returned to become a fireman in Oklahoma City. The girls attended college because, as Mamie told her husband, they "couldn't afford not to": more than 80 percent of all gainfully employed, public school teachers were educated women.

The frontier's hard times were settled facts for the Wilsons. When Frank and Mamie married, she was forced to concede her teaching job, which left the pair only a barbershop to feed their brood. The Great Depression and Dust Bowl saw still leaner faces. Day and night, everyone pinched pennies, the dad stringing fiddles, the mom stitching

Nota Bene:
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clothes, as the family grew ever more needy. Decades later Fran recalled childhood meals of macaroni and canned tomatoes. What else the Wilsons ate was grown out back in the kitchen garden, whatever survived the drought and the blowing soil. On Sundays they had their only meat for the week, a scrawny, dirt-scratching chicken.

The children paid no heed to these hardships. They capered about with toys of their own contrivance and, in Jan's case, with imaginary playmates. For a while, Mamie despaired of Jan running off and tied her to a tree, a situation Frank would not tolerate. He untied her; and Jan pranced free, singing the praises of her second soul, Brack, who may or may not have lived down the road. No one knows. Years later, Anne cried in laughter as one of Mamie's other giddy daughters, Doris, told of her fallen, cotton drawers on a busy street in Dallas; she just stepped out of them and glided on. Such amusement was typical of the crazy Wilson genes (*yes, Doris was loonier than most*).

The girls did well in school, especially Anne's mother Frances, who took after her more serious father. A glance at Fran's academic transcript from Southwestern State College in Weatherford – its railhead marked no better connection – indicates a rigorous curriculum in high school. She was admitted to the institution with four college-prep courses in English, three in history, four in math, two in Latin, one each in biology and art. For her degree, she finished 144 and a half credit hours with As and Bs.

In May 1935, Fran was graduated Summa Cum Laude with a BS in Education, certified to teach natural and social science in secondary school. Perhaps more flattering to Fran was the undated note, an unexpected validation of her achievements that she kept from one of her professors: "When are you going to start on your doctorate? You are obviously intelligent enough for this and we need people like you at the college level very

badly." Scribbled below was Fran's incomplete, unsent response: "Thank you – I'd love [to] try but I have a…." She meant to say, she had an engagement to marry Bob Winston.

Fran's personality can be inferred from her breadth of interests in college. She enrolled in a curious array of courses outside her specialties in education, psychology, history, government, and the physical sciences, including chemistry and physics. In these areas she needed reasonable competence to teach at the secondary school level. But she also took almost as many credit hours in English literature, which she never taught.

Beyond the distribution requirements in biology, mathematics, economics, music, and home economics, plus some miscellaneous classes in hygiene and geography, Fran made an effort to develop her artistic inclinations: clay modeling, water color, and illustration. These optical fields led her to copy Léon Bonnat's "Fille Romaine à la Fontaine" (1875) depicting a raven-haired, bare-foot child in her native garb. The chroma is bright, the perspective well handled, the proportions right, and the brush strokes firm and confident. Given fewer pentimenti in their work, Fran's girls still admire her knack and craft.

Winstons and Meinerts

Like the Wilsons, the Winstons were newcomers to Oklahoma. Their earliest progenitor may have been William Winston (1630-1702), who was born in New Kent, Hanover County, Virginia. His son Isaac (1680-1760) bequeathed dozens of slaves to his seven children. As a matter of course, his will mentions the slaves by name – Charles, Miah, Saul, and others – but it makes more reference to debts than it does to land. Apparently, most of the estate went to creditors. Without property of their own, Isaac's grandson Anthony (1723-1783), the second by that name, and his great-grandson William (1815-1894), also a captain, fought bravely for causes dear to them, the first against

England, the second for the Confederacy. Both men then moved west and south to Alabama and Tennessee, respectively, to make their fortunes. Descended from the revolutionary patriot Patrick Henry of Virginia and antebellum governor Anthony Winston of Alabama, these men had more visible predecessors than they had traceable successors.

No better is the corroborating evidence that these Winstons were related to Sir Henry Winston, the Duke of Marlborough, and therefore to Winston Churchill. An unknown judge, Francis D. Winston, asserted as much in a letter, dated March 23, 1930, to Bob's father William Hurt; he also alleged that they were descendants of the Alabama governor (1853-1857). Writing from Windsor, North Carolina, the jurist was sure of these ties long before the Internet's genealogical references discredited them.

The Winston women are easier to trace from one John Hicks Hamer. His enigmatic son, Anderson (1816-1899), not unlike the notorious Abner Snopes in William Faulkner's "Barn Burning," lived in Madison County, Alabama, with his slaves (*this time, the genealogical connection is certain*). A Confederate "bushwhacker" during the War, he and his second wife, Parralee Sartain (1825-1903), allowed their eldest child, Estalee (1855-1889), to marry Captain William's son, Robert Fontaine Winston (1847-1905), a Baptist circuit preacher. Robert was an eloquent "school house lecturer… on the subject of Uncleanliness," according to a handbill distributed in Dallas County, Texas. Here the eldest of his nine children, William Carroll Hurt (1880-1960), was born.

It was this boy, the son of the resourceful, itinerant pastor, who as an eighteen-year-old helped string telegraph wires across Oklahoma Territory. The young man's timing was uncanny. In 1901 he drew a quarter-section farm on the Red River in a territorial land lottery. William Hurt settled down in Kiowa County near Lone Wolf, however, be-

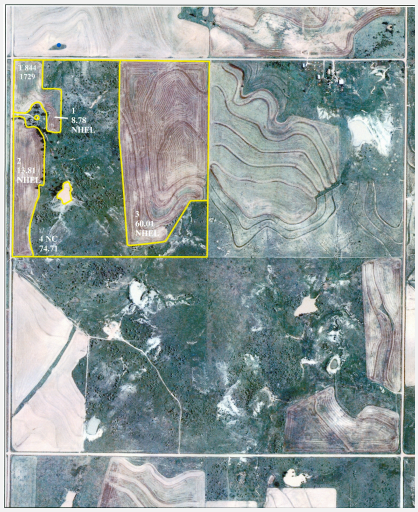
Comment [2]: Anderson Hamer

After the Civil War, Anderson Hamer, the former slave-owner in his native Alabama, had the temerity to apply for compensation from the federal government for the loss of property – a barn, part of a house, livestock, and tools – which Union troops destroyed or carried off during the conflict. Of course, as an unrepentant Confederate, he never received his "due." Such brazen conniving suggests that he deserved to lose far more than he alleged in his patently dishonest "Petition to the Commissioner of Claims" in the records of the US Southern Commission, Disallowed and Barred Claims, 1871-1880. By denying the claim, the Commissioner must have known what Hamer had obfuscated if not occulted in his formal declaration. The equal protection clause of the 14th amendment to the US constitution was surely written to thwart the likes of him from further depravity after the war.

cause he preferred the clay soil further north to the sandy, river-bottom he had drawn in Dill. It did not take him long to swap his first drawing with another farmer's. That the local Kiowa tribe contested the illicit ownership never occurred to him.

With the support of his closest confidant and cousin, Claude "Dutch" Sanders, William Hurt "batched for seven years until I couldn't eat my cooking any longer," he told a reporter for the Hobart Democrat Chief in 1951. Desperate for decent meals and female companionship, he married Caroline Meinert (1887-1952), the daughter of German immigrants: Friedrich Meinert (1861-1924) and Anna Marie Heim (1854-1916). Friedrich came in 1864 and Anna in 1871, both settling briefly in Millwood, Kansas, in Leavenworth County. They, too, were drawn to Oklahoma for arable land, and homesteaded in Kiowa County near William Hurt Winston.

The five Meinert children, all of them large, brawny men and women, stayed on. The youngest girl, Caroline, married William Hurt and lived in a half dugout of dirt and sod for the first part of their marriage. Such inhospitable conditions on the high plains made Germany, indeed the stunted woods northeast of Oklahoma, seem a far-off and luxurious vista. A satellite photograph of their farm much later captures its stark beauty, strangely like Kevin Robinett's pastel drawing of New Mexico (ill. 10), on a map highlighted by Rand McNally as one of its scenic routes.



William Hurt and Caroline had two stillborn infants (twins) and three strapping sons: Robert (1909-1965), Clarence (1912-1988), and Fred (1914-2004). Nearly everything they needed – food, clothing, shelter, and company – derived from the farm they worked together. It toughened them. William Hurt drove his sons hard, so brutally that his eldest, Bob, rebelled. In defiance, Bob came to blows with his father, but won the

elder Winston's guarded respect; from then on, William Hurt kept his distance.

Caroline also learned how to manage her husband's severity. When William Hurt poured the concrete steps to the basement of their farmhouse, they were too narrow for her large feet, despite her specific request that he allow for them. So once the project was complete, she took a sledgehammer to the slabs; she forced William Hurt to pour them a-gain, to her measure. The resulting story – and the one about the Kiowas eager to trade two horses for Caroline's sister – decorates considerably on an apocryphal frontier life.

The Winston family envisaged much better for itself. Caroline paused from her chores around the farm to stitch several quilts whose patterns she found in magazines. For one, she bought materials to festoon a tufted blanket with twelve symmetrically ar-ranged bouquets within a multi-colored, scalloped border. The other also looked as if it were made from mail-order scraps. The bright calico pieces are neatly fitted into boxes of cartwheels and axils. On each of these creations Caroline lavished many hours and left their ornamentation for her children to appreciate.

William Hurt forged an analogous deal with the boys. He granted each of them a patch of land to till, and what they grew was theirs to keep. The lads sold the produce to attend school while the nation was gripped in deep Depression. They struggled to escape the rigors of farm life. Training for another livelihood, Bob earned his undergraduate de-gree at Southwestern State College to become a schoolteacher of history, fully aware that he would be a coach of some sport, as well. The extra hours on the athletic fields were nothing compared to the backbreaking toil on the sparsely settled, open prairie. Lone Wolf had fewer than 200 inhabitants in 1930.

So it was not a random event for Bob Winston and Frances Wilson to meet at

Weatherford. Ambition and necessity each played a part. Whatever the precise circumstances of their acquaintance, they made a self-consciously handsome pair, a fact evident from the one letter we have of Bob to Fran written in May 1935. She had just finished her degree and returned home to Hollis to seek a teaching position in the fall. Meanwhile, Bob was back at school taking summer courses to complete his own degree.

Something of Bob's folksy, good humor is also apparent in the missive: "Honey," he penned plaintively, "I will have my [manly] countenance, my beauty, my likeness recorded, struck or otherwise registered as soon as my curls grow out a little bit. I had my gorgeous wool cut or [trimmed] and I have a startling resemblance to a cabbage." The rest of the letter expresses an infatuation, born of solitude and, yes, affection, one neither deferred nor deterred for the moment: "Write now. Love ever, Bob."

North Chester Street

Fran and Bob were married later that year. They both landed teaching jobs and continued in education, off and on, for the next decade. Fran worked in Hollis for two years (1935-1937) and in Altus for one (1940-1941). Their long summers were spent out west: they took courses at the University of Northern Colorado, canned fruit in a southern California factory, and sold art roadside on the continental divide. All seemed well.

Bob actually became a superintendent in Blair, then gave up this post because of politics in the schools. The pay, I am sure, was also a problem, but so was his miserable marriage to Fran. It was not at all clear that they would last together unless their situation changed dramatically. They considered separating. Instead, Bob sat for the US Civil Service exam and did sufficiently well to begin as a border guard in the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in El Paso. Presently Fran gave up teaching to give birth

there to her first child, Carol Anne, on November 29, 1942.

The Winstons did not remain long in Texas. After Bob had trained in New York and served as a guard at a detention center in Kansas during World War II – where he gained the extra weight he carried for the rest of his life – the three of them were on the road to Pasadena, California. Close cousins, Mary and Leonard Smith, who found employment with Douglas Aircraft, had preceded them to the west coast. These fair friends helped the trio to settle into a house of their own for three years (1945-1948) before they relocated to Paloma Street (1948-1950) and again to North Chester Street (1950-1962) on the east side of town to join the 104,771 other residents of Pasadena proper.

Nota Bene:
The Winstons' move to California was a much easier and safer journey than the one 300,000 farmers took in the 1930s.
(page 182)

For two decades, Bob investigated illegal aliens, a challenging civil service assignment in the greater Los Angeles area. He learned Spanish and supervised a staff of his own, though he much preferred being out in the field. Once Anne was in school, Fran returned to the classroom, this time at William McKinley Elementary (1947-1970). She valued the opportunity to practice her profession with the assistance of the Smiths, who kindly cared for Anne whenever she was ill and required the curative effects of their dark green pea soup.

Neither the child, nor the move, nor the jobs curbed the connubial vituperation. Normally Bob was an amiable man who enjoyed a jest over many a beer and cigarette; upon occasion, however, his intemperate judgment got the better of him at Fran's expense; he called her "half-chick" the "secretary of war" – but never to her face. Fran, for her part, was adamant if not intolerant, re-engaging her family's long-held belief in biblical inerrancy; she worried about the salvation of her husband's soul during the Great Tribulation. So when Bob came home from the office after a round of drinking, Fran informed

him of her fears and then some. Fed up with the incessant strife, Bob sent his wife and child back to Oklahoma, but they soon returned to Pasadena merely mollified to a modicum more of decorum.

The altercations were still noisome for the neighbors to notice. The most thoughtful among them cared for Anne whenever she was reluctant to go home, for obvious reasons, not because she was in harm's way but because she was so wretched with the quotidian discord. Consumed by their covenant for contention, Bob and Fran paid Anne no heed; they winged the pots, pans, and suitcases only at each other.

Inadvertently orphaned, Anne grew up defining home as elsewhere. She had been too young to recall her parents' arguments in El Paso. Her earliest memories are of making a snowman with her mother in Lone Wolf; the two cinders for eyes were her particular contribution. Later in Inglewood, her father snapped a photo of her in pigtails on the front stoop of a modest suburban house, a small doll clutched tightly to her chest. But these resplendent scenes turned despondent whenever her folks were together.

Anne's block in Pasadena became increasingly necessary to the incidental waif. On Paloma Street, Jo Annie Thompson, whose father owned a garage-door business, and Lynn Helpbringer, whose father founded General Tire, kept her company. On North Chester Street, Anne found a much larger circle of companions. For a decade they became her surrogate family without the combative salience of her own.

Directly across the street lived Darcy and Jimmy Johansen. Their mom and dad, Barbara and Arthur, indulged "friend Annie," feeding her as needed, taking her to their crude ranch in the San Gabriel Mountains, and including her on weeklong excursions to Catalina Island on their motorboat. When they were at sea, Mrs. Johansen reminded

Anne, as she was washing dishes overboard, not to let go of the "Chore Girl." But the reminder was untimely; Anne watched in dismay as the dish scrubber disappeared into the water's limpid depths. She was never scolded. For days on end, the Johansens boasted a cardboard fortress in their living room. No one seemed to mind. Although Darcy and Jimmy were two and four years younger than Anne, they were chums until the Johansens moved to Denmark; Jimmy's death was Anne's first experience with the sad, senseless war in Vietnam.

Another angel, Martha O'Dell, lived four houses up the street. Martha and Anne were closer in age, which put them together more often, first at McKinley, then at Longfellow Elementary, where they went to school. The O'Dells also welcomed the accidental foster child. So long as Martha's mom and dad could read, not much bothered them. Marion devoured popular novels, and Vinny science fiction; they had whole cartons of books up in the attic. Two of Anne's other pals, Donny Benioff and Beverly Serell, joined the neighborhood scene. Donny became Anne's pretended beau, and Beverly shared Anne's passion for peddle-pushers. Despite the dysfunctional Winstons, or rather because of them, North Chester Street was a refuge from the constant familial fracas.

Summers brought a brief break in the bickering. The Winstons traveled to Oklahoma for vacation visits; and for the most part, Bob and Fran put on a good face for the family. Anne remembers sitting on the back porch of the Winston farmhouse reading Wonder Woman comic books that had been abandoned by her older cousins. The deafening rhee-a-rhee of the cicadas, so prominent then, was summer at its best. During World War II, Fran's parents, Frank and Mamie, had retreated to Oklahoma City to run a small grocery store; Frank later worked at Tinker Air Force Base. With government-

issued ration cards, the shop thrived and provided a margin of comfort and security the elderly couple had never known before. They could afford to forgive Bob and Fran.

Once Mamie taught her granddaughter to sing the titles to the books of the New Testament – a song the girl can still chant with charm – Anne left for Falls Creek Bible Camp with her cousins Gary, Phyllis, Janann, and Carol, the progeny of Fran's sister Jan and her first husband Carl Stringer. They were all about the same age as Anne. With ties proximate to space called home, while other cousins had dispersed physically and emotionally, these extended bonds had stamina enough to withstand more than time.

Summers also summoned apparitions of the Great Plains. One trip to the Winston farm occurred in the middle of a torrential rainstorm, which required Bob to strip to his skivvies and push the car through the mud. His bare ankles, socked in bright red clay, brought a bit of Oklahoma with him as he got back into the automobile. On another occasion, Anne flew from Los Angeles to Oklahoma City. The suffocating heat made the black tarmac shimmer and sheen magically as she deplaned in a mirage.

In Falls Creek, however, Anne remembers awakening to the vacuity of gambling in the broiling sun. After chasing her peers about in the brush, as sweat beaded up on her upper-lip, she realized, "This is not fun," and sauntered back to the cabins. Since then Anne has loathed all strenuous exercise. Such deliberate indolence, born of an Edenic independence, has inspired other self-indulgent decadents like Anne, such as the deluded figures in Carl Spitzweg's satirical paintings, I suppose (*Hogwash? Oh, well, no matter*).

Pasadena

In Pasadena the beach beckons, and Anne was as susceptible to its allure as any youthful bohemian. Every week in fine weather, with her mother or with the other fam-

Comment [3]: Western Sunsets

The farmlands of central Oklahoma are hardly alien to the beaches of southern California. The barren prairies of wheat stubble after the harvest may be less inviting than the glimmering Pacific as the fog lifts each morning, but the big skies at dusk on both horizons are much as Walt Whitman once described them:

Shot gold, maroon and violet, dazzling silver, emerald, fawn,
The earth's whole amplitude and Nature's multiform power consign'd for once to colors;
The light, the general air possess'd by them – colors till now unknown,
No limit, confine – not the Western sky alone – the high meridian – North, South, all.
Pure luminous color fighting the silent shadows to the last.

The Winstons, displaced Okies in Pasadena, surely found this evening scenery on the West coast both familiar and reassuring.

ilies on North Chester Street, she scurried to Newport Beach, Laguna Beach, Crystal Cove, or, best of all, San Clemente. These locales meant frisking in the ocean shallows, roasting in the sun, and tracking sand-crabs at low tide. Such activities were a psychic facade, more a momentary emotional stasis, if you will, as the elders ameliorated what they could of this chaotic childhood.

At Crystal Cove, for instance, a surging surf sucked Anne into a rocky blowhole. Only Beverly Serell's handhold prevented injury more serious than the embarrassment of losing a bathing-suit top (*nifty, picture that!*). Upon Anne's return to Pasadena, her father asked about the incident he had eerily anticipated. Premonition of trouble led him to leave his fishing party early to check on his thirteen-year-old daughter. And so Bob gainsaid a plainsman's popular proverb, "hindsight is a darned sight better than foresight."

Anne's mom and dad taught her comparable responsibility for others. They did so by means of brilliantly plumed parakeets, 57 of them in all. When Anne was in the fifth grade, Fran bought a bird – Coo – because she thought Anne would enjoy having it. She was right. In time both Fran and Bob brought her more parakeets, such as the aquamarine Tweedy and the opaline Opee; in turn the birds reproduced until the menagerie got completely out of hand. Bob built an aviary with plywood sides to keep the parakeets from drafts. A light bulb protected them from the winter cold. As her parents grew bored, Anne continued to attach and remove the plywood, to feed and water the birds, and to attend to their more idiosyncratic needs.

One morning Anne failed to secure the flimsy cage door properly before leaving for school, and about half of the parakeets escaped. She returned to find them chatting brightly in the trees and shrubs. Although she was unable to recapture all the fugitives

– thereby contributing to Pasadena's feral parrot problem – she and her friends hunted them down, like rare specimens, with butterfly nets. The Winstons soon decided the parakeets were too much of a chore for the youngster and gave them away.

By the time Anne was attending Pasadena City High School, she resorted more to the town's rich institutional resources. The central public library, with its shiny bronze and copper lighting fixtures and dark paneling, served as a peaceful oasis after school where Anne could focus without interruption. Close by the town's civic center but far from parental dissension, she spent a fair quantum of quiet, gratifying hours under the Mediterranean-style main hall's timbered ceiling and bright skylights.

Likewise, the youth group at Immanuel Baptist Church provided better companionship. Roy and Percy Koushon, two theology students at the nearby Fuller Seminary, led the youngsters in their social and religious pastimes everywhere in town. With two others at church – Judy Langenbach and Dawn Carlson – Anne sang in a gainly group; her sororal soprano descanted well with Dawn's and Judy's voices. Lithe, winsome, and witty, the girls were also vain about their sound.

Pasadena had its own art museum, now the Norton Simon, which Anne visited often. Gustave Courbet's seascapes were particular favorites, for obvious reasons so near the beach. Gathering with neighbors, she watched the annual New Year's Rose Parade, whose floats all seemed to come from the Huntington in San Marino, the next town over. Beverly caught on camera, entirely by chance, Anne shaking hands with Gene Autry on horseback. The child's pleasure lasted as long as the image itself, longer actually than the 1939 film set for Gone With the Wind at the former Busch gardens.

So Anne's affiliations were hardly hopeless. For years, her folks tolerated each

other's presence; Bob learned to stay predictably out of Fran's way. The man enjoyed woodworking and often took Anne with him to the hardware store for supplies. Out back, by her inattentive observation, he made lawn furniture for co-workers at the INS; and in the kitchen, he relished cooking favorite dishes for his wife and child.

Each weekend Anne's father would work up a roadhouse breakfast of scrambled eggs, sausage, biscuits, and real country gravy. Lunch was a feast of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, patty-pan squash in melted butter, more biscuits, and a cherry pie, though rarely of Bob's own fashioning. He also liked to grill steaks and his signature cannonball hamburgers. After cleaning and tidying up himself, Bob would rest, worthless for the moment, to watch a boxing match or golf tournament on TV before preparing dinner, mostly Dagwood sandwiches stacked long and high with cold cuts of every description.

It was a diet that contributed to Bob's heart disease, but he could have cared less. On his best behavior Friday nights, he offered Fran and Anne dinner at a nice restaurant such as the local Elks Club. Normally Fran ate with Anne at a cafeteria for – what else? – carrot-raisin salad and pan-fried okra. Otherwise, if Bob's girls greeted his culinary treats with a quizzical look, he responded, "That's not enthusiastic enough!" and whisked the dish away in exaggerated dismay. The resulting squeals for forgiveness were among his few familial triumphs.

(Get up, stretch, and breathe deep)

Much to everyone's surprise, including Bob's, Fran learned late in 1957 that she was expecting another baby. Anne's mother did not receive the news well. She cried, evidently because of all the trouble that childrearing entailed. "I just got through raising one child," she complained to Anne, "now I have to start all over again." What she realized

was how the chores could be shared with Anne. To Anne's adolescent amazement, Deborah Jane was born on June 7, 1958. Here was a socially acceptable, prenuptial means to learn what it felt to be a mother. And she did indeed assume many new responsibilities when Fran enrolled at Los Angeles State College for her master's degree.

Anne and Fran took turns rearing Jane, resulting in a decidedly odd schedule. Fran's habit was to lie down soon after dinner, rise at midnight to study for three hours, and then return to bed. At the expense of her sleep, what little she got with Anne as her maternal proxy, Fran balanced her studies, her school-work, and her family life. In due course (1961-1963), she earned her Master of Arts in teaching with a specialty in reading.

But Jane was a handful. Active, inquisitive, and smart, she could bewitch, for better or for worse. As a toddler Jane rose before everyone else to breakfast with the Petranics, indulgent neighbors down the street. Early one morning instead she awoke Anne with a question indicative of trouble: "Annie, how do you open your oil paints?" When she missed her very favorite TV program, "Felix the Cat," she threw a frightful fit to remember years later; her tantrum was very nearly worthy of the grimly malicious Elizabeth Bright Murdock in Raymond Chandler's High Window (1942), perhaps the original "little old lady from Pasadena" (*you betcha*).

Raising Jane elicited reserves of humor that even Fran did not know she had. Once, on the way home from the beach, Jane needed to relieve herself, right then and there. So Anne brandished the little plastic pot for this purpose. But just as Jane dutifully handed the brimming vessel to Anne for its disposal, Fran stopped the car short to avoid hitting another vehicle. The golden pee splashed all over the front seat. Unable to scold the girls – a discursive instinct – Fran chortled at last in the spirit of her more genial sisters.

Nota Bene:
"I have touched the glimmering surf from Newport to Santa Monica;… I have made the pilgrimage to the citadel of the cult of youth and beauty; I have been… to California."
(page 181)

In the spring of 1960, Anne was graduated from Pasadena City High School, and the following fall she walked across the street for classes at Pasadena City College. There was no discussion as to whether or not she would attend, it just happened as naturally as moving on to the next grade. Anne and her parents trusted implicitly the decent college education at their doorstep.

Years earlier she had been offended by her mother's condescending advice about how well she needed to do in school. Fran was convinced that Anne was not as gifted as she was, so she warned her daughter: mediocre grades were OK. Anne's pride was wounded to the quick. She redoubled her efforts and succeeded just to prove that she could. Anne found herself in the college preparatory track in high school, surrounded by the bright children of scientists at Cal Tech and the Jet Propulsion Lab. When Mr. Stewart, her exacting English teacher, strutted about the classroom urging his students to "think!… think!" she tried still harder. Her stellar paper on Shakespeare's Globe Theater was the result.

College was a cold, sobering shower. Like many freshmen, Anne quickly discovered that time management was critical to success: studying half a semester's material in French the night before the exam earned her a D. She never did that again. Similarly, in philosophy, Anne repeated unthinkingly what her mother often said, "You can die of a broken heart." The professor's chilling retort, "Are you serious?" drew an embarrassed recollection of Mr. Stewart's charge just a year earlier. In chemistry, Anne took her duties perhaps too seriously; she eschewed memorizing scientific formulae as a form of cheating, much to her chagrin on the first test. And yet these intellectual growing pains during the first two years of college failed to keep her from attending Westmont College

near Santa Barbara for her junior year (1962-1963).

Westmont made for different pains. Although it developed her ability to lead others and to enjoy Brussels sprouts, the school was too small, the social activities too demanding, the resources too limited. Anne felt constrained and only stayed a year; she resented the school's strictures. Social dates were constant diversions from what she really wanted to do, which was to study. It was time to pursue her major, psychology, but there were only two professors from whom to take classes. Her liminal world had yet to arrive.

So Anne enrolled at Los Angeles State College to complete her BA degree by 1964. Was it the right choice? Go figure. She had access to a competent research faculty, who took a personal interest in her training. Well before graduation she found the program gratifying enough to begin graduate school. In the end she much preferred Cal State LA's academic code to the simulacrum of one at Westmont.

Europe

In summer 1965, Anne grabbed at the chance of a lifetime: an all-expenses-paid trip to Europe, courtesy of a professor's wealthy friend, Dora Gaspard, the widow of the Russian, Taos-based painter Leon Gaspard. An expansive and sociable type, Dora invited Anne to join her on a cruise that few people could easily afford. Belford "Paco" Blackman, Dora's second husband, and Richard Balvin, a worldly professor of psychology, joined them. For three marvelous months, Anne encountered European culture, up close and in depth, to the extent that her weak command of French and Spanish would allow.

Anne experienced her first haute cuisine on board ship and then in France and Spain: escargots, coquilles Saint Jacques, ripe Brie, fresh squid, and vintage wines her parents would never have condoned. The damascene waters of the Mediterranean en-

tranced her. But the circumscribed prospect of a factious family and a former fiancé, the seminarian Chuck Berger, turned the aftermath of such a trip somber and mirthless.

Anne's parents were not impressed. They were so preoccupied with their own discontent, they lent scant attention to Anne's European adventure, which suggested to her the luxury of escape that she had long contemplated as a child. For years, when she was still in elementary school, Anne wanted to flee from the unhappiness of home, keeping a little suit-case packed and ready under the bed for the right occasion. Twice she ran away, or so she thought, just down the street.

After the trip to Europe, however, the moment finally arrived when Bob dropped dead of a massive heart attack on November 25, 1965. That and the burden of her mother's inability to cope with the funeral back in Oklahoma tipped the balance. Anne went to the bank, withdrew everything she had in her accounts, and headed to the Los Angeles International Airport for a flight to Germany, where her cousin Phyllis Stringer had been for the past several weeks. The interminable wait was over; she was off in a flash.

The illumination lasted all of six months, though it seemed longer: Anne found a new passion, the German language. How she did so is easily told. For the possibility of employment at Deutsche Welle in Duisburg, she registered for the Goethe-Institut's introductory course. "Das ist eine Landkarte," debuted the instructor, gesturing to an imposing map of Europe. "Deutschland liegt im Mitteleuropa." Anne understood every word and, in that moment, discovered a new life and love to learn (*it's true, you realize*).

Although Anne never tracked down her cousin, she did not care. This program of study was all that mattered, at least until she received word that her mother was ill and needed for Anne to return. Fran's ruse was blatantly underhanded, of course, but it almost

Comment [4]: Pasadena 2003

In December 2003 Anne and I visited Pasadena. It was Anne's first return since 1968. Little had changed on North Chester Street and New Haven Road, except for the price of real estate and the relative size of the houses: they seemed so much smaller than what Anne remembered. In 35 years many trees had also disappeared. The day included a drive along Colorado Boulevard, a major part of the annual Rose parade route; a lunch with Judy and Dean Langenbach at Cal Tech's Faculty Club; an afternoon tour of the Huntington Museum and its grounds; and a visit to old haunts in and around the downtown civic center, particularly the public library. The trip provided Anne the occasion to exorcise personal demons long left from her childhood.

worked. Anne flew back to Pasadena to enroll in every German course she could at the University of California, Los Angeles. In her revenge, this much of Anne's transition to a new personal purpose remained. She now had a plausible plan of her own.

A family acquaintance contacted Fran about an instructor job in languages at Eastern Oklahoma State College. Naturally, Fran thought of Anne, who applied for and got the position, starting in August 1967. Little did the novice know about teaching for the first time; it was tough preparing lessons in French and Spanish as well as German. The effort almost killed her. But at age 25 she felt invincible and saw it through with verve.

Anne also met an engaging young man, Daniel Fine, whom she joyfully married in August 1968. While she gave up her post in Wilburton – the couple had bought a house in Oklahoma City – she anticipated attending the University of Oklahoma nearby in Norman for a master's in German. It was not long before she landed a teaching assistantship and was back in the classroom, albeit for just one language. Thanks in part to this astute arrangement, she received her degree in 1970.

Finishing his studies at Eastern, Danny joined his father's food business, Lieberman Produce. Henry Fine, Danny's dad, had gone to work with his brother-in-law, Paul Lieberman, not long after having moved to Oklahoma City from New York in 1917. Born with a phenomenal memory and equally beguiling charm – he never forgot a man's name and calculated produce prices in his head – Henry helped build the company into the most successful egg distributor in the area. It was natural for his adopted son Danny to join him in this enterprise. But the young man was not personally invested in the firm. His interests faded from Anne as well, and their marriage ended in an amicable divorce in March 1972, the wedding three and a half years earlier a soon forgotten shadow.

Having completed her degree at OU, Anne seized the moment to pursue a doctorate at the University of Kansas. A second extended trip to Europe prepared her for the rigors of more intensive study in Lawrence, which Henry subsidized somewhat sheepishly. For a decade, he paid Anne's rent, an apologetic gesture that she never forgot and that earned Henry and his radiant wife Ray many grateful visits.

Lawrence and Enid

The next eight years (1972-1980) made a dream of Anne's fascination with all things German. During her second year at KU, she was awarded a DAAD fellowship from the German government to study at the Universität München. Life overseas was its own phantasm. Often accompanied by her DAAD fellows, Anne attended every play, lecture, musical performance, and museum exhibition she could imagine. (She also paused to make snow-angels on Munich's Odeonsplatz late one magical winter evening.)

Upon her return to Lawrence, Anne was very nearly ready to sit for her qualifying examinations, which she did with brio, and then begin her dissertation under the direction of Frank Baron, with the support of Ernst Dick. Her self-confidence was at its zenith. She felt easily capable of achievement comparable to other exceptional students in the program, such as Maria Dobozy and Winder McConnell, who went on to enviable jobs. All she needed was to research and to write her extended meditation on the Book of Job and Johannes von Tepl's Ackermann aus Böhmen (c. 1460).

The point that Anne made in her dissertation was deceptively simple, but its implications for our understanding of Tepl's text were not. "The question to what extent the Job story may have influenced Tepl," she concluded, "cannot be answered with certainty. It can be stated, however, that the two works strikingly resemble each other in structure

and content…. Tepl's work diverges sharply from the prevailing interpretation of Job and more closely resembles the modern view of the Job story as a real questioning of traditionally popular beliefs about God's nature and the justice of the world order."

In short, the Ackermann was neither medieval nor humanist but modern, a tale more easily admired in our time than in its own. Anne was not satisfied with the result (*it's much better than you think*). The dissertation easily fulfilled the requirement for her degree in June 1979. Her original scholarship later provided ample material for a substantial article on Tepl's thematic figurations and their sources.

Part of Anne's tentativeness about her writing came from comparing it with that of her second husband, Jimmy Bono, who was also in the German graduate program at KU. He wrote with ease on a host of topics, including the war in Vietnam and educational reform. He pressed the faculty to share his fervent commitment to ideas. By contrast, Anne seemed speechless, her PhD little more than letters signifying "Pleasures hieratic and Demotic," otherwise "Piled higher and Deeper." So, she decided to concentrate her professionalism instead on undergraduate teaching.

After a year of office administration at KU, Anne accepted a tenure-track job at Phillips in August 1980. At last she could excel without fear of rivalry with Jimmy. He had launched into another doctoral program, in education, a distant interest of Anne's. They were now safely out of each other's way. Their efforts complemented each other's, though her husband earned extra cash with Halliburton, then with Union Equity, to balance the household budget – and to learn Oklahoma's vivid lingua franca on the frontier, to speak nothing of the state's well-stocked fishing holes.

Anne had known Jimmy since the year she arrived in Lawrence. Her new spouse

was a brilliant language student. A child of Lancaster, Kansas – population 200 or so – Jimmy inherited his parents' way with words. His father, BJ, a World War II veteran who was awarded the Purple Heart and Silver and Bronze Stars for bravery, wrote with innate flair and felicity, though he disavowed any such distinction. Jimmy's mother, Sally, embedded quotations from The New Yorker and Harper's Magazine in her sophisticated double acrostics. Despite the Bonos' French extraction, none of them showed the least interest in France or its culture; the Bonos preferred more colloquial entertainments.

Jimmy's propensity for language at KU was thus more than his own. But it was not enough for him to survive epilepsy and clinical depression. In the summer of 1982, Jimmy had a psychotic episode – he was convinced that the employees at Union Equity had conspired to kill him – which led to his psychiatric hospitalization, tragic relapse, and suicide by a shotgun blast to the chest on November 30. Captured Kleist-like by his despairing imagination, he died in resolute silence, far from the family farm in Kansas.

For Anne the years ahead were glum, forlorn, bereft. The legal and financial problems arising from Jimmy's death strained her modest assets and pittance of a salary from Phillips. She was simply unprepared emotionally to recover on her own. Although her mother and sister had moved from Pasadena to Norman back in 1970, they were unable to help. Fran's mind began wandering with Alzheimer's; Jane had married Kevin Robinett and enrolled at the Oklahoma School of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa.

So Anne threw herself into teaching with renewed vim. She found solace in whole days she devoted to developing a new pedagogy for language instruction; she adapted the Rassias method of Dartmouth College to her one-person German program at Phillips. Moreover, the university community succored her efforts not just in the classroom but

Comment [5]: Limerick

A gift for gab ran far and wide in the clan. Besides Jimmy's father and mother, his maternal uncle, Brutus "Porc" Sewell, was glad to be glib (he owed his moniker in part to the ridiculous pretense of his given name in tiny Lancaster, but mostly to his slicked-back hair which made him look like a porcupine). Porc's irrepressible son, Tommy, was an accomplished impersonator and the likely source of a favorite limerick among the younger Bonos (N.B.: Blish-Mize is a hardware distribution company headquartered in Atchison where Tommy had worked):

There once was a young girl at Blish-Mize's
Whose boobs were of two different sizes.
One was so small,
It was nothing at all.
But the other was large and won prizes.

also in her personal life. It became another familial alternative resembling the one she had created for herself on North Chester Street years earlier.

Norman and Beyond

In June 1984, after a slow, happy courtship, Anne's mother remarried. Fran had fallen in love with a gentle eccentric, Robert J. Lee (1924-2000), a retired physicist in the aerospace industry who had extensive roots in Oklahoma. He was the son of Senator Josh B. Lee (1892-1966), a popular New Deal public servant who had a penchant for familiar rhetorical turns. "The public platform is a great institution," he wrote. "It offers an opportunity for any citizen to take his cause to the people," which is what Josh Lee did.

Earning a BA in oratory at OU, an MA in political science at Columbia, and an LLB from the Cumberland Law School in Tennessee, Josh returned to Norman to teach speech. But FDR's populism moved him to run for the US House of Representatives from Oklahoma's Fifth District, near Woodward where he grew up. After a term in the House (1935-1937), Josh was elected to the Senate (1937-1943), before he was appointed to the Civil Aeronautics Board. He stayed put in Washington, DC, until 1955 when he decided to practice law in Norman. A good-natured but fervid critic of flabby oratorical bombast, he roundly ridiculed the polemical flatulence of a Senator James Smith, Jr.

Josh's two children, Mary Louise and Bob, were duly proud of their father, however antithetical they became from him. Mary Louise married a safely conventional banker, Don Symcox, but remained a committed Democrat, while Bob freelanced as a defense contractor – he developed the guidance system for the Tomahawk cruise missile – and proved a Reagan-era Republican convert. But their differences did not stop there.

Bob was a textbook case of obsessive-compulsive personality disorder. He never

seemed at liberty for everyday, common-sense matters, like retrieving his car at the airport after a long trip. (It took him six months to replace the car's battery and finance the astronomical parking bill.) He was always too busy to cut his hair, which tousled luxuriantly, or to repair his broken glasses, which he customized with scotch tape and drinking straws. His passions were computer programming, the reconciling of biblical prophecy with empirical science, and libertarian politics and economics, for whose study he sacrificed most of life's creature comforts. Nothing else was of interest to him, except Fran.

Bob married Fran none too soon. Within a year she manifested the most obvious symptoms of dementia: getting lost on the way back from the grocery store, driving on the wrong side of the street, struggling to get in and out of an automobile. Once on a trip to visit her sister Doris in Dallas in 1985, she was unable to exit from a roadside bathroom and had to shout for Anne to rescue her. The disease continued unabated for fifteen years; and at each step of its painful progress, Bob was at her side, unwisely at times, to ensure that she felt safe and loved.

Because Bob promised Fran not to place her in a nursing-home, he provided for her at their Norman house on Beverly Hills with round-the-clock caretakers. Only when he ran out of money – and when it was obvious that she needed more skilled attention – did Bob relent and allow Fran to be put in Holiday Heights. Then his Parkinson's disease had progressed to where he needed care, as well, and he claimed a bed in the same nursing-home room with Fran. She passed away at Thanksgiving 1999, 34 years to the day after Bob Winston. Bob Lee died just six months later, his exasperating eccentricities the true marks of saintliness.

Meanwhile, Jane and Kevin finished medical school in Tulsa, did their internship

in Oklahoma City, and took up a residency in psychiatry at Central State Hospital in Norman. To cover their student loans, Jane and Kevin relocated to McAlester for five years; because of their rural medical service, the state paid their debts. Free at last to move wherever they wished, Jane and Kevin packed off to Laramie, Wyoming, to set up their own practice. They hated it. The responsibilities were too much, so they accepted hospital jobs in Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, for two years before settling in Cheyenne by 2000.

Along the way, Jane and Kevin adopted a son, Richard, and assisted him through school, college, and study to become a Certified Public Accountant. He is married and living with his own family in the Denver area, much to Jane and Kevin's delight. Anne's surrogate daughter now has domestic space of her own. Given the same zany spirit and practical sensibility, Jane and Anne travel together overseas and chuckle over pets, patients, and books during weekly telephone calls (*each time your face speaks volumes*).

In February 1991 Anne was not surprised to receive a letter from Jane, which read: "I have seen a 9,000-year-old woman and a 20,000-pound Imperial Mammoth; I have touched the glimmering surf from Newport to Santa Monica; I have eaten See's molasses chips (and felt sorry for the little moles); I have cruised the Pacific Coast Highway, the Pasadena Freeway, Wilshire Boulevard, Colorado Boulevard, and Rodeo Drive; I have breathed brown air; I have seen [art by] Hopper and Redon; I have made the pilgrimage to the citadel of the cult of youth and beauty; I have been… to California."

Jane had attended a professional meeting in Irving, not far from Pasadena. Before returning to McAlester she revisited her old hometown haunts, including the Winston houses on North Chester Street and New Haven Road, their new address after 1963 when Anne was at Westmont and Jane was in kindergarten. The last house they

had owned, Jane ascertained, was worth 15 times what Fran had sold it for in 1970. She hardly recognized what it had become since then.

The Heartland

The Winstons' move to California was a much easier and safer journey than the one 300,000 farmers took in the 1930s. They were much luckier, for example, than the Joads in John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath (1939). Although they all hailed from rural Oklahoma during the Depression and traveled west for better lives, the two families could not have appeared more distinct.

The Joads were dirt poor, uneducated, and desperate for work to feed their many maws; their mortgage had been foreclosed and their sharecropping yielded to hired tractors; after selling nearly all their worldly possessions at a discount, they rode off in their Hudson Super-Six sedan, which had been crudely modified to make room for eleven *de facto* gypsies, plus an erstwhile preacher and a dog. Their reception in sunny California was far from warm and their prospects there dismal.

The Winstons, on the other hand, were "Okies" of another sort. They had money in the bank, college degrees, and professional positions awaiting them in Los Angeles. The older Winstons owned their land outright; the Wilsons had capital enough to buy a grocery store; and neither set of parents needed to stray far. After having shipped their furniture, Bob, Fran, and baby Anne left for California by a car in good repair to better fortunes in southern California. Bob would learn Spanish and the complex protocols of the INS to earn substantial promotions in the US Civil Service. Fran would teach school. Years later Fran's self-assurance was well expressed in a brazen "inspection visit" she paid to her sister Jan and her fiancé, Lawrence Penny, to ensure that he realized what

Nota Bene:
… The only things that the Joads and the Winstons had in common were a rootedness in the land, an immense human dignity, and a long trip west on Route 66 from Oklahoma. But disparate odds defined their different experiences in life.
(page 183)

kind of folks the Wilson girls really were.

Consequently, the only things that the Joads and the Winstons had in common were a rootedness in the land, an immense human dignity, and a long trip west on Route 66 from Oklahoma. But disparate odds defined their different experiences in life.

Much more akin to Anne's view of herself is Fanny Price, the main character in Jane Austen's Mansfield Park (1814). Anne has often said so (however "insipid" Austen's own mother thought Fanny). In fact reserved, orphaned, and neglected, this figure becomes the ethical compass to Sir Thomas Bertram's clan, who take the entire novel to recognize her worth. Edmund, the minister who ought to have known better, proposes to her only at the very end, when his father confesses how "Fanny was indeed the daughter that he wanted." It was a confounding journey for these titled gentry.

From the outset, a child of poor relations, Fanny sensed the moral chiaroscuro of her situation: "The elegance, propriety, regularity, harmony – and perhaps, above all, the peace and tranquility of Mansfield, [–] were brought to her remembrance every hour of the day, by the prevalence of everything opposite to them," whether back home in Portsmouth or among her new family in Northampton. Fanny's steadfastness, in contrast to everyone else's fatuous tergivisation, ultimately guided the Bertrams to right action and restored them to their proper station in English society.

An analogous dilemma, with a dissimilar outcome, diminished the Winstons, who were irredeemably torn by a cruel incompatibility. In their garrulous quarreling, Anne's mom and dad exhausted what affection they had for their girls. The parents simply did not deserve the wise and winning children they might have reared if they could.

Anne sought elsewhere a domesticity of her own among friends on North Chest-

er Street and at Immanuel Baptist Church in Pasadena, at the educational institutions she attended and worked for in the Midwest, and with the kin of the men she married. As migrants to America's heartland, they welcomed Anne, like Fanny Price at Mansfield Park, "the daughter that they wanted," entitling her principled passions to unanticipated privileges at home and abroad. Anne's virtuous discernment has been as acute as her facility with color, line, and form – in art and on the land – whose very nature is culture itself.

The West

In October 1985, newlyweds for all of ten months, Anne and I traveled with colleagues from Enid to Santa Fe. There we went to observe the pedagogical and curricular innovations of St. John's College. St. John's is famous for its peer instruction of classic texts in the Western tradition, an idea that Phillips University would adapt to its own circumstances. Whatever its purpose, the journey from the Great Plains to the southwestern mountains resulted in a fitting ocular epiphany.

On the twelve-hour trip along Route 412, through the small towns in the Oklahoma Panhandle – Slapout, Guymon, and Boise City – on Route 58 into the rugged terrain of northern New Mexico and down the long valley of the Rio Grande between Taos and Santa Fe, we noted at first the expansively ochre-colored wheat fields and the open desert yellows and browns, then the gulches' bounded boulders, the bright leaves of the aspens and the light purple blossoms of the sagebrush on the steep hillsides.

By the time we arrived in town, dead tired from the drive, we encountered the brash automotive handicraft of the Chicano low-riders on public display. We saw, too, the softer beiges of the Navajo adobe houses with their molded walls and roofs. Akin to settlers from further east, we were captivated by the landscape, its vistas and hues, its

rich mix of languages and cultures. In daylight, they were everything we had esteemed in artists of the Southwest; at night, we were startled by the infinitude of stars scattered across the dark, distant dome like powder on a vast, black slate.

My brother Lou had claimed for himself this same space some fifteen years earlier. In various spots such as Gallop, Farmington, and Shiprock, he learned how much it meant to the Navajos, who had been there for centuries. Eventually Lou adopted this world – or it adopted him – when he married Freida and joined in the tribe's natural rhythms and religious rites. Their wedding in 1972 had been at the foot of the cavernous Canyon de Chellay. I first visited them a decade later, but I had yet to scout about, until I found the rusty railroad spike that now conjures up the Southwest's furthest ranges.

The country west of the Appalachians was for a long while unfamiliar to me. I had been reared where deciduous trees, rolling hills, and narrow ravines closed off the horizon on all sides. The enclosed cityscape circumscribed the view still more. The vastness of the Atlantic Ocean bespoke the further reaches of the west, but only by my facing east. I needed to travel elsewhere to appreciate the world more fully in the round.

It was in Santa Fe, starting a new life with Anne, that I understood at last what wave after wave of men and women espied for themselves when they first arrived in this part of the country, far from the ocean shores. It was one reason among many why this place revealed so much to all those who came to live here. Its sight was as striking a revelation to them as it was much later to less adventurous visitors like my grandfather Ben, who reputedly named Notamiset after a Navajo chieftain. On this particular journey, however, both Anne and I had set aside our eyeglasses to see for ourselves.

(*Now, how does that look to you, my dear?*)

Dialogue with *Bettie Abel Rowden*

JSA: *"Bettie, until now, I never met anyone from the Cherokee. I know some Navajo – Freida's family – and some Lakota – students at the university – but your people have always been a mystery to me."*

BAR: *"What's so strange? We were one of the Five Civilized Tribes to move westward, long before the Trail of Tears brought the rest of us to Oklahoma. Not just oral tradition has it that my people began to flee the first Europeans moving into the Appalachian foothills of the Carolinas, near Asheville. In the early 1800s, we followed the game to the Ozark plateau. That's how my folks got to Missouri and I met my husband Joe."*

JSA: *"Were you never on a reservation?"*

BAR: *"No, it was in northern Arkansas at the time. Like the western Cherokee, I watched the cowpunchers on the Sedalia Cattle Trail headed north and took up their ways. We were better adapted to the people who invaded our lands. Akin to Chief John Ross, who was half Cherokee, half Scot, we often intermarried with the missionaries."*

JSA: *"So you weren't very much of an Indian then?"*

BAR: *"One quarter. But that's not how my people look at it. We are a nation, an Indian republic, not a race. The Cherokee are defined by community as much as by blood. Will Rogers was pleased to recall how our people welcomed the white man arriving from Europe."*

JSA: *"But the rest of the Cherokee were not spared the worst of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Legend has it that more than a third of the tribe died on the trail to Oklahoma Territory. Still more died on the way to the Cherokee Strip around Enid."*

BAR: *"Yes, the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville may not have been an eyewitness to it*

all, but he was here in America to see the first wave of deportation for himself near Memphis. More of our people crossed the Mississippi close by where you live in southern Illinois. Thousands of them never made it over the river in the brutal winter of 1838."

JSA: *"How come no one in Anne's family ever spoke of this, Bettie?"*

BAR: *"Well, like a few folks, I was lucky and never wanted to talk about the hardship of others. Life on the land was hard enough without dwelling on the past. Besides, none of my relations wanted to hear it, not from me anyway."*

JSA: *"How did you deal with that?"*

BAR: *"I learned to laugh and pray. How do you think the madcap nature of the Winston girls came to be? It was from me, the funny one whose faith hid deeper feeling. I didn't need the Rowdens' fervor, that wasn't mine. I preached by example. No one could fault me for it."*

JSA: *"Native Americans are not particularly well known for their proselytizing humor."*

BAR: *"That's right, brother. We joke with God when white men aren't watching. Just think how much fun the raccoons and crows have in the wild. Their laughter, like the Cherokee's, is sacred."*

JSA: *"You don't have to be a Cherokee for that."*

BAR: *"Or much of a Christian, either."*