

AS JUSTICE BILL DOUGLAS COMPLETES
HIS FIRST THIRTY YEARS ON THE
COURT: HEREWITH A RANDOM
ANNIVERSARY SAMPLE, COMPLETE
WITH CASUAL COMMENTARY, OF
DIVERS SCRAPS, SHREDS, AND
SHARDS GLEANED FROM A
FORTY-YEAR FRIENDSHIP

Fred Rodell*

On a crisp, pellucid September morning in 1960, Douglas and I took off from Maroon Lake on a pack trip headed high into the Colorado Rockies. The Justice, foot-by-foot familiar with Washington's Cascade Mountains and the Wallowas of Oregon, was a comparative newcomer to Colorado's clustered 14,000-foot peaks and he wanted to do them proper honor in his forthcoming two-volume celebration of America's dwindling primitive areas, *My Wilderness*. With us on the trip were four husky henchmen: a rancher who had once been an all-star lineman for the Chicago Bears, a U.S. Forest Service Ranger, a full-blooded Potawatomi Indian, and a rugged cowboy-and-packer to handle the horses. When we reached our first campsite after a hard day's climb, we fast unsaddled our sweating mounts and then rustled up a fire, dug out the whiskey, and slumped around with double drinks, taking it easy for a spell. All but Douglas the indefatigable. There he was, climbing way on above us by foot, picking wild flowers, scanning them through a pocket magnifying glass—and also enjoying the better view.

Later, as it grew dark, I looked for him to come eat and found him sitting happily in his tiny pup-tent, scribbling away by lantern light with a stub of pencil on a small yellow pad. I wondered: was he recording those flowers, or what on earth "Oh, nothing much," he said. "Just a book review for the *Herald Trib*. I promised it to them by next week. Gotta send it off soon as we get back down. Hey, I'm starving. Let's eat." The book under review, I learned with no surprise, was not about wild flowers nor even about mountains, nor—perish forbid—about law.

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This little episode comes quickly to mind as I reach back through memory for bits that may help me bring to focus a few of the myriad facets that refract the inner incandescence of this extraordinary man. Thus, here there is only a hint of the vast range of his extracurricular interests, activities and enthusiasms—of the versatility that makes him master and craftsman of even his avocations. Everyone has heard of Douglas as outdoorsman, camper, mountain climber; how many know him as a botanist of professional stature—and this despite his being color-blind—who has collected specimens for the Smithsonian, done field research for the National Geographic Society, and grown in his Washington garden roses personally escorted from up around the Arctic Circle?

On display also, that evening in Colorado, was the man's devastating physical energy and endurance. Some years before, I had heard him say: "One man can do only so much in one day. Then he gets sleepy." The word was not "tired." And the reference was to a slow-down in mental alertness after prolonged intellectual labor. But his Supreme Court colleagues have long found it hard to believe that Douglas, unless sick, ever gets even sleepy-tired. On the bench, he fidgets and doodles as brethren and lawyers alike wend their wordy way toward the point that his precise and tight-wound watch of a mind has ticked off long since. In conference, I'm told, his sure instinct for the jugular often saves hours that might have been wasted cutting the fat of a case off the carcass. Once assigned an opinion, he cannot really rest until it is written. Indeed, at a sudden guess which would take quite a heap of checking to prove, I daresay the Douglas compulsion to *get things done* has already led him (with only Black even close) to write more opinions—considering all the early and now renascent dissents and also those thirty-odd opinions-for-the-Court per term under Hughes—than any Justice in the Court's whole history. The total must surely now exceed 900 and may be verging on a round one thousand.

And how far I have wandered—or have I?—from that camp in Colorado where the dynamo that is Douglas could not rest idle. But before I go again into the grab bag of memory for another hook on which to hang a modicum of musing, let me lighten (both ways) Douglas' driving dedication against dilly-dallying, with an old pet yarn of mine. It seems that a very large, very rich corporation had been held guilty of breaking the antitrust laws and had carried its case to the Supreme Court, which had allotted a whole day for so important an argument. The company's lawyers then had a brilliant idea. Aware that the Justices regularly whisper to each other on the bench during the course of argument, they smuggled two professional lip-readers into seats at their counsel's table to catch the drift of

judicial comment. Would it be discouraging or hopeful? Should they change the thrust of their appeal for the afternoon session? At the lunch recess, as soon as the Justices trooped off, the lawyers leapt for the lip-readers—who looked woebegone. “Sorry,” said one lip-reader finally, “but all we got was when Justice Frankfurter kept asking that lawyer all those questions and Justice Douglas turned to Justice Reed and what he said was, ‘Why can’t the little bastard keep his big mouth shut and let us get on with it?’”

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In an old wallet the other day, I came on a tattered-edged card bearing a stark picture of an iron-grille gate, half open, across which was printed Twenty One West Fifty-second Street. There was a phone number (Volunteer 8756) bottom left; and top right, in my own writing, “Bill Douglas, E. Wolfeboro, N.H.” That I should have chosen a speakeasy card—and from now famous and still unmoved “Twenty One” at that—to jot down the summer address of a man who has not summered in the Eastern United States for over thirty years—the combination could not but carry me back to the Herbert Hoover era of boom-into-bust and 20’s-into-30’s and Prohibition-almost-gone and depression-already-here when I first got to know Bill Douglas. As few would ever guess today, Douglas’ first government job (except as a private in the 1918 Army) was a Republican job on one of Hoover’s several social-study committees and commissions—and indeed, I spent most of the summer of 1930 as a leg-and-library man on Douglas’ small staff. It was the following summer that I drove a Model-A Ford roadster, complete with rumble seat, up to East Wolfeboro and thence to a dock on little Wentworth Lake where Douglas picked me up and rowed me, with his dog swimming astern, to his island camp. That was the first time, with many more to come, that we fished together, though the alleged Wentworth bass were not rising to flies that evening. But I, none too modest about my own fly casting skill, fast recognized the finesse of a master at the craft. And in that he scorned, even on a lake, such lazy lures as hardware or bait, I recognized that the superlative fisherman was also a true sportsman.

Perhaps this is as good a spot as any to pause and explain, but without apology, the patchwork pattern of this anniversary offering to my old friend. It is simply that I have written over the years so many orthodoxly and properly organized profiles and other pieces and pieces-of-pieces and passages-in-books about the man and his incredible career and his extraordinary character and his judicial achievements and attitudes and most of the score of books he has authored and on and on that I just could not conjure up a way to put pretty much the same mountain of material, however magic, into new

and different words for what would be at least the thirtieth time. If you care, you can find Rodell on Douglas from *Fortune* to *Look* to the *Progressive* (several times), from the old *American Mercury* to the *N.Y. Times Magazine* to the *Saturday Review*, from the *Pittsburgh Law Review* to the *Iowa Law Review* to the *Georgetown Law Journal*; and indeed one of my proudest—which I'd like, as the boys put it, to sort of incorporate here by reference—is a short twenty-years-on-the-bench tribute in the *Chicago Law Review* (vol. 26, page 2), obviously just a decade ago. To my regret, I have not yet made *Playboy* with a Douglas article—but the January *Playboy* for this year of 1969 does contain, and far better so, an article by ubiquitous Douglas on—you guessed it wrong—"Civil Liberties: The Crucial Issue."

Jumping backward forty years or so, this peripatetic pogo stick of a report lands us back again, for a couple of takes, in the days when Bill Douglas was brand new on the Yale faculty—and was also a bit of a playboy (though scarcely in the Hugh Hefner manner) himself. Already just as intensely dedicated, as impatient with time-wasting and time-wasters, as he is today *when at work* (brilliant in the fast back-and-forth exchange with top students in small seminars, he was less than his best in large classes where the Socratic method slowed him to the pace of the School's snails), Douglas found after-work time for fun and games and even practical jokes. His house on Livingston Street in New Haven was the regular meeting place of a club with some such name as the East Rock Chowder and Marching Society, which used to take faculty recruits on snipe hunts. One of his most successful ploys came one Saturday evening when colleague Wesley Sturges was addressing some learned group in New Haven and Colleague Thurman Arnold was talking at a businessmen's dinner in Bridgeport. Just before Sturges was scheduled to speak, a Western Union boy handed him a telegram which read "Trust you will mention me in your address tonight. Regards. Thurman Arnold." Down in Bridgeport, Arnold received an identical request by wire, signed "Wesley Sturges." Embarrassed and baffled, the two professorial friends avoided each other in the corridors for days until Douglas invited them both to lunch—and confessed.

And were it not for Douglas' fondness for frolic, I—and four fellow *Law Journal* editors—might never have got our law degrees from Yale. In the spring of 1931, on the occasion of the annual *Law Journal* black-tie banquet, several of us outgoing editors had sponsored a pre-banquet shindig at which we had fortified ourselves quite amply against the doubly dry formalities to follow. Fortunately, we had invited a few congenial faculty members and Bill Douglas was one who not only showed but joined fully in the festivities. By the

time we reached the banquet hall and six of us, including Douglas, seated ourselves at a circular table, centered below the dais, our dress collars, including Douglas', had been shellacked bright scarlet, and none of us, incl. D., could have come close to passing a breath test. The sight, the considerable sound, and perhaps the smell of us soon reached and outraged President James R. Angell of Yale, just above us at the speakers' table. He turned to the Law School's Dean Charles E. Clark and demanded that the objectionable sextet of law students below him be dismissed from the University by Monday morning. Only after Dean Clark, who told us the tale later with ill-concealed glee, informed the President that one of the "students"—the blond one with the boyish lock of hair across his forehead and the cowlick behind—was Sterling Professor Douglas did Angell grumblingly agree to accept a group apology [in lieu of a group exodus.

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Last spring, sitting in the sun with my wife and Douglas on a Washington park bench (*not* Bernard Baruch's) and chatting about the state of the world and other more pleasant matters, it suddenly struck me how little he had basically changed in look and talk and manner over the years. Heavier of course, but not in the wrong places, his face more ruggedly lined and weathered, both qualities added rather to the impression of strength than of age. Though in his late sixties he still fitted remarkably well, I felt, a description I wrote of him a quarter-century ago:

"Six feet of lanky, gangling frame, topped by an untamed cowlick; a tough but expressive mouth that moves with his mind; direct blue-gray eyes that can turn from stone-cold to sparkling-merry; a raw and rough-cut air which has no polish or pose or pretension. He looks like a man you can trust and like a dangerous enemy. Straightforwardness and simplicity are written all over him. Simplicity also marks his language; his words are short, salty, often profane, and they come out dry. He has no truck with smoothness or suavity or studied generalities. His Sunday laugh is a guffaw."

That guffaw, exploded rather rarely, is worth waiting to hear. I confess I have heard it, and indeed worked to hear it, most often as response to a good new barrack-room joke or bawdy rhyme. And I believe I blab no secret, break no confidence, when I assert that Douglas is a connoisseur as well as an aficionado (which is quite different) of the Rabelaisian. Following the impeccable judicial precedent of Justice Holmes—he who blurted out, when some prig was horrified to recognize the old Brahmin at a burlesque show, "Young man, I have, thank God, a dirty mind"—Douglas has long served as advisory committee-of-one to a friend who annually

awards a pseudo-Pulitzer prize for the year's best "dirty" story or limerick. As an occasional award winner, I should love to give an example or two but, despite what some student publications are pleased to print in this era of enlightenment, I rather doubt that the *U.C.L.A. Law Review* would find any of my samples suitable for display. And they are, after all, not Douglas' stories, except as his priceless guffaw punctuated them at the end. So here instead are a pair of printable and point-making yarns which are indubitably Douglas' own:

In early 1938, young and militant Chairman Douglas of the young and pre-Douglas milquetoasty Securities and Exchange Commission took on, as a sort of David, the Goliath of Wall Street—the New York Stock Exchange—in an effort to force it to reform itself from what he called a "private gambling club" into a publicly responsible institution. When the Exchange, resisting self-regulation with a series of patently impotent proposals, found that it could no more bluff highly knowledgeable Douglas out than it could beat him down, its spokesman, meeting with Douglas, "supposed" out loud that now the S.E.C. might move to take over the Exchange in order to ensure the reforms it wanted. "If so," concluded the spokesman with the touch of a sneer, "do remember we've been running the Exchange for 150 years and there might be a few things you don't know that we could help you with." Douglas never even blinked. "Thanks a lot," he replied. "There's one thing we'd very much like to know. Just where do you keep the pencils and paper?"

Though I can personally vouch for the verity of this tale, the next one may well be apocryphal. Still, Douglas loved to tell it to illustrate his sympathy for the economic underdog, up against the Big Financial Interests. It seems there was this Indian who wanted to borrow \$1,000 from a Western bank. The bank demanded collateral and the Indian had to turn over twenty ponies to get the money. Later, the Indian struck it rich. Oil maybe. Anyway, he strutted into the bank with a huge bankroll, peeled a few bills off the top to pay his loan with interest, and started out to retrieve his ponies. But the banker, eyeing the big roll, suggested the Indian deposit his money in the bank. "How many ponies *you* got?" asked the Indian.

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Of the uncounted hundreds on hundreds of letters I have had, and saved, from Bill Douglas over the years—most of them in a hasty scrawl, grown gradually closer to illegibility (whose hasn't?)—two utterly different dispatches, one short, one long, rank among my top favorites. While the long one eloquently speaks for itself, the short one, except for its vigorous manner—a scarcely surprising

Douglas trait—means little apart from the context that preceded it.

That context begins back before I knew Bill Douglas when, in the winter of 1926-27, at the London School of Economics, I studied under and got to know moderately well the late Harold Laski, brilliant British Socialist gadfly and devoted friend of then-Professor Felix Frankfurter. When Laski, in the spring of 1931, taught a course at the Yale Law School, I was again his student—and Douglas was of course his colleague. Laski and I kept in touch thereafter for a few years by a desultory correspondence, whose half-dozen letters scarcely bid fair to rival the famous and gargantuan Holmes-Laski exchange. Then, after a longish silence, I received somewhat out of the blue from wartime England, in Laski's tiny script, a letter so intemperately vicious that, except for its sophisticated style, it might have come from one of those paranoid nuts who sometimes write to writers.

What I had written, a few weeks earlier, and the *Progressive* had published in that fall of 1943—on October 4, to be precise—was a serious article on the New Deal Supreme Court, assessing the judicial philosophies and records to date of the seven Roosevelt appointees as well as holdovers Stone and Roberts, and noting how widely F.D.R.'s septet, presumably supposed to lilt along in liberal harmony, were instead diverging and disagreeing. I gave highest marks to Black; praised, in order of lessening enthusiasm, Douglas, Murphy, and freshman Rutledge; was generally neutral on Reed, Stone, and Roberts (for the forthrightness of his conservatism); and blasted Jackson and Frankfurter, the latter, for, *inter alia*, his "conservative sulk," his "glib superficiality," and his "failure to carry his proportionate share of the burden of majority opinions."

It was far from the first time I had written critically of Laski's friend, always on the basis of my honest appraisal and deepening disapproval of his work on the Court (and if this sounds defensive, which it does, it is by way of prelude). But this *was* the first time that one of my critical pieces was forwarded to Harold Laski, if not by, at least at the instigation of the one obvious someone who (a) knew of my relationship with and then-admiration for Laski, (b) was intimately aware of Laski's great affection for Frankfurter, and (c) was most anxiously determined to put a stop to my public criticisms of Mr. Justice F. Laski got the point; he did his best to muzzle me for good with overkill. His epistolary assault accused me of "smart-aleckism and mean innuendo"; dismissed me as the "Walter Winchell of the Law Schools," purveying "cheap and rather vulgar invective"; implied to me not only discourtesy but dishonesty; and concluded: "Your article of Oct. 4th is built on the methods used by Hitler and his friends. . . ."

Somewhat shaken—although the article had brought me quite a lot of respectable professional praise—I composed first myself and then a firm but polite reply to Laski, retracting nothing, expanding my charges against friend Felix, and ending, “As for me . . . I shall forego the easy luxury of being courteous and I shall not remain silent.” But I remained a bit uneasy about Laski’s angry bitterness; could such a star be *that* far off orbit? Suddenly, I made copies of Laski’s letter and my reply and sent them off with the *Progressive* piece (which he had not seen) to Bill Douglas. And it was by return mail that I got the little letter which I still immodestly treasure:

“Dear Fred—” it went, “I am goddam proud of you for your letter to Laski. It’s a neat job. And I am happy that you did not waver. Jesus—what nerve he had! As ever, Bill.” Remember that old one-panel cartoon titled “When a Feller Needs a Friend?” They don’t come often like Bill Douglas.

There is a pertinent epilogue to my encounter with Laski by transatlantic mail, which directly involves Douglas and also sheds some light on the integrity of the British gentleman who questioned mine. By 1949, the deep ideological split on the Supreme Court between the wing led by Black and Douglas and that led by Frankfurter (with Jackson)—a split which occasionally erupted into more personal antagonisms—was a matter of common knowledge and sometimes of common gossip. In 1949 also, Harold Laski made his last visit to this country before his death in 1950—and he was of course hosted in and around Washington by friend Frankfurter. Perhaps in partial repayment for this service, Laski was heard to declaim with dogmatic assurance, at a dinner party of Max Lerner’s that April, that Bill Douglas was Washington’s “number-one phoney,” and that he, Laski, had recognized the phoniness from close observation “way back when” at Yale and from careful checking ever since.

This incident came to mind only the other day when I was reading the recently published correspondence of Roosevelt and Frankfurter, into which occasional letters from other personages are interlarded. One such, on page 490, dated March 27, 1939, begins: “Dear Mr. President, 1. I threw up my hat with joy over Bill Douglas’ nomination [for the Supreme Court]. He is second only to Felix in the list of those I want to see there.” The letter is signed, very simply, “Laski.”

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The summer of 1949 was for me one of the happiest, most halcyon, in memory. I and my son Mike, then eight years old, spent August and the early days of sparkle-bright September at the tiny

Douglas two-cabin ranch, high near the headwaters of the Lostine River in the Wallowa Mountains of Northeastern Oregon close to the Idaho border. We fished and rode and hiked and climbed and camped and fished—exclusively with dry flies, of course, and Bill Douglas guided us on two- or three-day pack trips through magical Minam Meadow to dank, swamp-circled Green Lake, loaded with trout, and to spectacular picture-postcard Steamboat Lake, set among rock cliffs like a mounted jewel.

But the summer of 1949 was for the U.S. Supreme Court perhaps the most calamitous in all its history. The prior half-dozen terms had tended to team Justices Black, Douglas, Murphy, and Rutledge into an activist, libertarian bloc, constantly threatening and barking at the heels of the bare five-man majority of safe-and-soundly self-restraining passivists. In an occasional case today, they knew, on a conceivable new Court tomorrow, one more man voting with the quartet could turn the tide. Then during the 1949 summer recess, Murphy and Rutledge, both still in their fifties, died—to be replaced by a couple of Truman cronies; Clark and Minton, neither even in the same league as Rutledge or Murphy for liberalism or legal capacity (though Clark was later to grow in the job as Minton sadly did not). And before the Court convened for the fall, Black, dean of the liberal bloc, came perilously close to being left wholly alone.

For, barely a month after Mike and I had been riding Oregon trails with him, Douglas—by then back for a nostalgic visit in Washington's Cascade Mountains where he grew up, before returning to his job in a less wild, less lovely Washington—came within a whisper of death in a grotesque mountain accident. Indeed, when he was finally found and borne out of rugged woods to the nearest hospital, the doctors—discovering twenty-three of his twenty-four ribs broken, several puncturing one lung—gave him little chance to live. But less than three weeks later, he was somehow able to fill both sides of a sheet from a yellow-lined, legal-size pad with a letter to me that included an account of his accident. Partly because I believe this was his very first shot at putting into writing exactly what happened, partly because I rate his account a genuine small masterpiece of narrative style, this is one of the letters I have treasured. Here is how Douglas told it:

“The accident was a sheer freak. I was in rough country on an excellent horse. I was circling a steep mountain and climbing at a slight grade. No trail but easy going. The wall of the mountain was on my left. It was steep—60° or so. Suddenly the horse reared. Probably a hornet bit him. As he reared he wheeled and put his front feet on the side of the mountain. That put him practically

straight up and down. I dismounted by sliding off his tail. Due to the pitch of the mountain the drop was about 8 feet. I lost my footing as I hit the ground and rolled. I rolled about 50 feet. I ended on a ledge—uninjured—not even a scratch. I raised my head to get up when I saw the horse. He was rolling too. I was in his path. He was only a few feet away. All I could do was duck. He rolled over me and I could hear all the bones break. Then he was gone and I was paralyzed with pain and unable to move. It took 4 hours to get me to the hospital and some morphine.”

In the foreword to his partly autobiographical and wholly fascinating book, *Of Men and Mountains* (you can even find, at page 182, a 28-line humorous verse by Douglas to the rhythm, I think, of Abdul el Bulbul Ameer), there is a more detailed, more contemplative, and slightly dressed-up-as-with-adjectives versions of the accident. I like my stark recital a lot better. It was—as near as could be under the circumstances—instant Douglas.

There was considerably more to the letter from the hospital in Yakima than the spare narrative I have quoted. Thus, it ended—and when I read this I knew he was on the mend:—“I’m slowly going NUTS lying here on my back. I can’t even find anyone who likes my jokes. Please send me some limericks. As ever, Bill.”

A batch of limericks seemed little enough to send.

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So many still warm chips or chunks of memory, each with its agglomerate of related retrospection—and I have barely begun to mine the mother lode. (Why, I wonder, should so masculine-seeming a thing as a vein of ore be feminized—and with overtones of Oedipus?) Which latter brings me, however obliquely, to remark that Douglas, though one of my count-them-on-one-hand heroes and also the most all-man guy I have ever known, has never been for me in the slightest sense a father figure. Rather, if a family analogy can help define a deep friendship, Bill Douglas has been my revered but too-close-and-too-human-to-be-idolized older brother. Nor has anything remotely resembling sibling rivalry ever intruded on any level—though I own up to a chronic twinge of envy ever since I first met his incomparably lovely, lively, delightful Cathy. On both personal and professional matters, each of us has been confident enough of the other to feel as free to criticize or advise as to praise. Once, when I had sent him a just-published article of mine in which I had blasted an important opinion of his, his acknowledging note began: “You know me well enough to know that I would be the first to defend you even when you lambaste me.” Indeed I did—and do. And for the unsticky mutuality that has so long marked our regard for each other, the credit, in light of his stature, goes almost wholly to him.

So many chips or chunks of memory—as I was saying a paragraph ago when my own wayward stream of consciousness led me astray. So many—and yet so much of the multifaceted totality of the man has been either untouched on here or barely brushed over—Douglas, the world traveler and unofficial roving ambassador to the peoples of Asia, who found in him a friend more understanding of their problems than were any of the U.S. official breed; Douglas, the best-selling author of innumerable articles and reviews and at least one book a year, these ranging from history books for children to ringing affirmations of the Bill of Rights to tales of his Asian travels, spearheaded by the entrancingly titled *Strange Lands and Friendly People*; Douglas, the speaker and lecturer at almost any educational or liberal forum that invites him, who early flouted and has since all but buried the archaic anachronism that it is frightfully improper if not indecent for judges to speak, or even think much, about anything but law.

As for Douglas, the Supreme Court Justice, there is only an almost incidental touch of that most formidable facet, here and there, among these fragments of mine. But I should somehow suppose that most, if not all, of the companion pieces in this anniversary symposium would be devoted—and presumably with great professional competence—to the Court career and the judicial philosophy of Mr. Justice Douglas, so whatever I might have said on this score ought not be too sorely missed. That leaves, however, only one major facet of Douglas and his currently quintuple career that makes itself felt at all in my mishmash of memorabilia, namely—Douglas, the outdoorsman, a category which includes the botanist, camper, fisherman, hiker, horseman, mountain climber, and as culmination, the nation's most prestigious and eloquent conservationist—a life-long crusader for keeping what little is left of our American wilderness wild. So I guess my little contribution to this collection is sadly out of focus or out of balance. Or is it?

Two or three years ago, the editors of *Who's Who in America* asked a select and diverse group of notables to summarize what they considered their own greatest achievements and contributions. Among those questioned was Bill Douglas. Like many others, he modestly wrote of what he had hoped and tried to do rather than what he had done; and after a brief and impersonal opening paragraph, he divided what he rated as most significant about his life into two parts. "My good fortune is to have lived when . . ." he began—and here he listed in 12 lines a few of the civil liberties and civil rights he had had the chance to fight for and defend.

"My second good fortune," began the second part, "is to have lived early enough this century to have seen and known our un-

spoiled wilderness and to have lived long enough to sound the alarm against its destruction." Then, for 38 lines—more than three times as many as he gave to his work for freedom of speech and desegregation and the like—he expanded, but with an air of near-despair, on the conservationist cause. He talked of air pollution and water pollution due to atomic fall-out and pesticides; he foresaw the doom of the ivory-billed woodpecker and the condor and the golden eagle and the bald eagle; and also, with their spawning rivers dammed, of salmon and steelhead trout. He could still "stand on the ramparts . . . and give the warning" but "our materialistic society probably predict[s] that our lands, our waters, our wildlife and even our mountains will be despoiled."

One haunting line of his says it all: "Those born today may never be able to lie on moss-covered rocks and drink safely from a stream." And just as Douglas himself felt no compunction at calling the woods and mountains and lakes and streams he wrote of in those two volumes, *My Wilderness*, so—for all the admiration on other scores as well that has led me more than once, and leads me still, to call him our greatest living American—it is the outdoorsman, the wilderness lover, the guy who does not want to envision a world where a man cannot lie down on moss to drink from a mountain stream, who is *my* Bill Douglas.