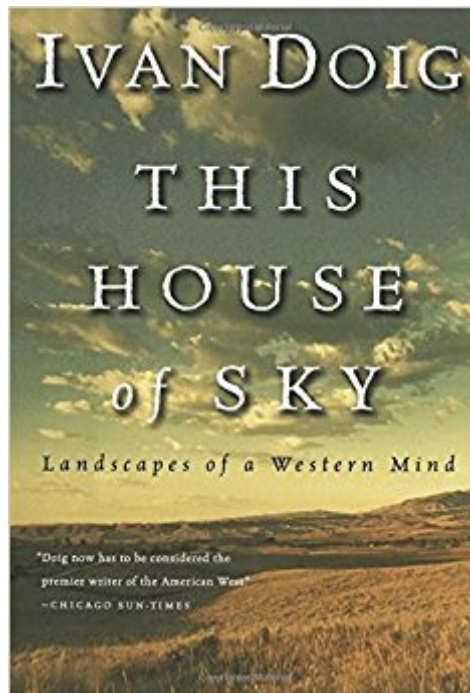




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# This House Of Sky: Landscapes Of A Western Mind



## Synopsis

A haunting, magnificently written memoir by Ivan Doig about growing up in the American West; Ivan Doig grew up in the rugged wilderness of western Montana among the shepherders and denizens of small-town saloons and valley ranches. What he deciphers from his past with piercing clarity is not only a raw sense of land and how it shapes us but also of the ties to our mothers and fathers, to those who love us, and our inextricable connection to those who shaped our values in our search for intimacy, independence, love, and family. A powerfully told story, *This House of Sky* is at once especially American and universal in its ability to awaken a longing for an explicable past.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ivan Doig (1939-2015) was born in Montana and grew up along the Rocky Mountain Front, the dramatic landscape that has inspired much of his writing. A recipient of a lifetime Distinguished Achievement Award from the Western Literature Association, he is the author of fifteen novels and four works of nonfiction.

This is the endearing story of a Montana man's reflections of growing up during a tumultuous, yet enlightening, time in history when life was slower, the landscape was environmentally protected, neighbors more supportive, and a boy's imagination could flourish. Doig describes in detail his mother and father's devotion for him and each other, and paints vivid portraits of a tightly knit family living in a rugged terrain and struggling for survival. After his mother's death, times got tougher, and

Doig's portrayal of his dad's difficulties are touching. Poetic interludes are charming and contrast interestingly with Doig's portrayal of a wild and rugged Montana and its curious inhabitants. This unusual and beautifully expressed autobiography is a stunning work of art. B.J.P. Â© AudioFile 2001, Portland, Maine-- Copyright Â© AudioFile, Portland, Maine --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I read This House of Sky not long after it was heralded as an award winning book by a Montana author. Then I reread it several times. I loved the story--all true. I loved the time period, a Montana of my parents' young adulthood, depicting the hard life just post-Depression, post-WWII. But most of all, I loved the lyrical language of Doig's straightforward presentation of the story of his life. He tells how his father approached his disapproving mother-in-law to help raise six-year-old Ivan after Ivan's mother succumbed to her life-long struggle with asthma. This most odd of couples worked together on ranches with scarce food or water for the stock, fought the weather in terrible plains blizzards, thunderstorms and droughts, drove sheep, ran a restaurant, did anything they could do to keep a roof over their heads. Even if sometimes it was only canvas. The two antagonists worked as a team because Ivan needed them to be a team. They gritted their teeth and tolerated one another for so long, that at last they learned to cherish each other. When I bought This House of Sky for my Kindle, I was facing tough times, frightened by the family budget, terrified of losing our home. So I read it once again to remind myself I might lose my house, as Ivan's father did several times, but like him, I would never lose my home. Home is family. No matter what, family is all that ever really matters. Just roll up your sleeves and start over again. Good advice in any era, any run of hard times. Any family. This House of Sky is Doig's masterpiece. Though he has written several other good books of fiction, I doubt anything will ever match the drama and raw emotion of his own life. Read it. It will change you. KL

I read this wonderful autobiography after reading Doig's extraordinary novel The Last Bus to Wisdom. I won't stop reading until I've read everything he wrote... each book appears to be an examination of a puzzle piece of a life lived in one of the last frontiers. Can't recommend highly enough!

Powerful, passionate and genuine...Ivan Doig has always been a great storyteller and his memoir is no exception. Motherless at the age of six, Ivan's upbringing was a checkerboard of existence. His father worked various Montana ranches to preserve the continuity with his son. Most

of these ranches were inaccessible in winter, so to secure Ivan's schooling he would stay with whoever was obliging in the nearest town, or with his maternal grandmother in some ramshackle of a country house if the situation presented itself...seeing his father only on weekends when weather permitted and during the summer months. This father/son relationship was absolute. It is oftentimes said that landscapes can shape the human fabric and spirit...these Montana prairies, mountains and valleys did just that for Doig, his father, grandmother and everyone else in these environs. Sadly, Doig passed on in 2015...but his books will live on. A compelling read.

I loved this book. This House of Sky is an elegantly written memoir about Ivan Doig's hardscrabble upbringing in rural Montana that often soars into sheer poetry. It's also a love letter to his father and grandmother, who transformed an uneasy alliance into a relationship of deep affection. If you enjoy fine literary craftsmanship, you'll find this a memorable read. It's the kind of book you won't want to put down yet won't want to finish. It's that good.

I found myself chuckling at the colorful descriptions and wonderful choices of words. Sometimes almost poetic. I've read other of Doig's stories and will miss this prolific story teller now that he has passed on.

This book is truly literature -- a story to be savored and underlined! Doig has an amazing memory of his past, and his words allow the reader to "remember and feel" their own. His portrayal of not only himself, but his father, and grandmother is rich and strong and set in a moving picture of seasons, actions and language of the people of Montana mountains and towns. I hope that these western mountain people with such courage and spirit still exist. It is remarkable that Doig gained such a command of language, but it is the words of his family and their outlook on life that stay with the reader.

Incredibly rich prose. I actually couldn't read too much at a time -- it's like too much cream cake. Very powerful images, emotive vocabulary, affective syntax. Loved it.

Most of us don't know much about real life in the American West. So, it took a while for this book to grow on me. First, being my hurried self, I wondered if I really wanted to read about the trying, demanding life of shepherders in Montana. I was looking for excitement and insight into life or at least the land in the West. Then, as I kept reading, I found it. I realized that the life of Charlie Doig,

his son, and his mother-in-law, held within it, the greatness, wisdom and love that only a few of us get to experience. And, although, I'm still not sure, I think that the greatness of the land around them somehow inspired them to be their best. They lived free of modern-day electronic gadgets, the race to make it to the top, and the ultimate disappointment and detachment that come from the worst cases of that kind of life. Instead, they were given the time to focus only on the next day and the world around them, including a few, manageable people they could understand and connect with in a meaningful way. There are surely lessons here for all of us and inspiration too.

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