The following index lists the major topics in the audio recording and the approximate point when they occur in the recording according to an analog cassette recorder’s tape counter. This tape counter index (TCI) has not been edited for accuracy by Archives and Special Collections.
Introduction to the program.

Bevis reviews that the course was divided into two parts. The first three books by Garcia, Guthrie and Johnson represented a traditional Montana literature whereas the books by Welch, Hugo, and DeMarinis fold into a contemporary Montana literature. Bevis mentions that the second half of the course represented work that surrounds the effective creative writing program that Dick Hugo started at the University of Montana. So at least half of the program was related to the style and teachings of Dick Hugo. Bevis mentions that Dick Hugo is on this program, since he wasn't able to make it to the earlier one.

Bevis introduces Hugo and notes that he studied in Seattle with Theodore Roethke. Bevis asks Hugo what kind and how much influence Roethke had on him. Hugo says that Roethke was an amazing man. He changed the english department at the University of Washington. Hugo says that Roethke was a very outrageous man and gave Hugo hope that he would succeed one day in his writing.

Bevis says that Roethke, Twain and other Western writers do seem to have difficulty in dealing with themselves as poets considering the fact that they came from a Western stock of people. Hugo says that when one thinks of poetry in America it generally comes across as an Eastern, New England type person who is very well mannered and soft spoken. So with this kind of style it was difficult for Western writers to deal with.

Bevis asks Hugo how Roethke effected the way he wrote and how he influenced the way in which he viewed subject matter. Hugo says that Roethke was able to take on poetry in a way that it was understandable in a child-like manner. Hugo didn't really find Roethke's style of writing that appealing, however. Hugo was more partial to Yeates.

Hugo explains that in his early writing he approached it in a manner that he could pack all of the heavily accented syllable into lines while leaving out words like 'and' and 'the'. Hugo says that Roethke was more of an influence by way of theme than style. Bevis asks what year Hugo is speaking of when describing this search for writing style. Hugo says around 1947 he
began and this learning process really went on until 1956. Hugo mentions that he didn't publish his first book until 1960, at the age of 37.

301-350 Bevis asks whether Bill Stafford has been an influence on Hugo's writings or not. Hugo says that Stafford was influential but not in the personal manner. Hugo says that around 1959 he became interested in the poems of Stafford. Hugo says that his style of poetry differed from Stafford's greatly. Hugo would write always contradicting the way he really felt about things in life. He would take the tough guy image in his poems although he is really the opposite. Stafford would take his poems and as he approached a high level of sentimentality he would veer off into another direction. In this way Stafford is a very clever writer.

351-400 Stafford showed a great deal of emotion and sentimentality in his life and this influenced Hugo to change his way of thinking slightly. To deal with sentimentality you have to risk it to show your true feelings but you don't want to get into it. This is something that Stafford has been able to do.

401-450 Bevis and Hugo discuss the transitions in his writings over the years. By the fourth book he published, The Lady in Kicking Horse Reservoir, he had changed back to his old style of writing.

451-500 They talk about the development of Montana over the past few years and now it is in the forefront when discussing writing rather than it being looked down upon by writers from the east coast. Bevis asks him exactly how long he has been in Montana. Hugo says that he has been here since 1964. Hugo mentions that in the 14 years since he has been in Montana he has been away four of those years. Two years teaching at other universities and the other two years spend writing.

501-550 Bevis comments that Montana has shifted to the forefront of the nation in desires and myths and so he wonders what writing will be like in Montana in the future. He asks Hugo if there have been a significant development in writing programs etc... Hugo says that there has always been a lot of possibility for this area because the kids who come off of farms etc. have never really written and they have some wonderful stories to tell.

551-600 Most of these kids in the outlying areas never had much happen to them and so when they did have outside experiences they were usually very adept at picking up some of the important things. Hugo says that the
University has always had a good standing in the creative writing department but over the past few years it has improved a good deal more.

Hugo notes that when he first arrived at the University, DeMarinis and Welch were already studying here and they took his Hugo's classes. Hugo says that both had a lot of talent in writing before they entered his classes as was apparent from some of the writing assignments they handed into Hugo. Bevis sums up what Hugo has been saying by stating that Montanans are simply interesting writers because of their lifestyles. The good writers in Montana don't necessarily come about because of good writing programs at the universities.

Hugo says that growing up and writing in Montana seems to have a sort of innocence that cannot be found, say, if you grew up in New York and wanted to write. In New York you know from the start that you are always in competition with other people. The people in Montana could generally feel free to do what they wanted because there is a lot of space between people and many people feel that if they wrote stories they wouldn't be read anyway. In New York, however, there are so many people that your stories are likely to get read and criticized.

Bevis asks Hugo what he thinks about the writers in Missoula today. Hugo says that there are a lot of good writers, many of whom are publishing in prominent magazines and others who are winning national awards for their writing. They talk about the book coming out by Bill Kittredge in the near future. They both agree that Kittredge is an excellent writer. Bevis asks what writing goals Hugo has in the future. Hugo says that he is working on a book about poems of Scotland. The language in it is going to be much quieter than what Hugo usually writes about.

Bevis talks about the great number of places Hugo uses in his poems. Almost all of the poems have the names of places in them and most usually describe places. Bevis says that most writers from the East are fascinated with the Western scenery when they come out here. Hugo comments that he has always been fascinated by the topography. Hugo says that his sense of place is so strong that occasionally he can't separate an event that happened from the place that it happened, even though many events can happen in more than one place.

Bevis tells a story of one of Hugo's poems about Dixon when it was sent back to the New York publishing company. The research committee wrote Hugo back
telling him that the Flathead River flowed north-northeast and Hugo, being overcome by a streak of nastiness, almost wrote back telling the publishers that this is what made the Flathead River so spectacular, since it would have to flow over the continental divide. Hugo, in his poem had written about the northwest flowing Flathead River, which is correct.

[END OF SIDE A]

[SIDE B]

000-080 Bevis asks Hugo to read one of his poems. Hugo reads the opening poem from one of his most recent books. Bevis then thanks Hugo for being on the program.

081-150 Bevis turns to reviewing some of the issue that laid behind the course. Bevis started the course by talking about the early history of the US and the fact that Thomas Jefferson had realized that there were differences between the styles of the east and west. Bevis had also said that for the success of Western writers they had to show Western consciousness. He notes that the first Western writer, Mark Twain, failed in this account. What Twain's writing represented was Eastern consciousness of the West. Twain's writings were what Easterners wanted to hear. They were not representative of how life really was in the West. Twain did introduce Western dialect and literature into his writings, however.

151-200 Along these lines then Bevis choose six books for the course, three older and written in the 1940s and three newer written in the past ten years. The earlier books being by Garcia, Guthrie and Johnson and the later ones by Welch, Hugo and DeMarinis. Bevis remembers commenting that Guthrie's book, although it contained a lot of Western language, properly started in Kentucky and ended back there. Bevis then asks what aspects of Montana are related in last three books of the course. Bevis notes that in DeMarinis's book the monster represents the Western style of life. He is the lone person in a strange trying to work out his life. Bevis remembers that DeFrees had said that if there was a Northwest style of poetry it is connected to the tendency for the writers to be more aware of landscape than other areas.

201-250 This landscape writing is very prominent in the inland west, in which is included Montana. Bevis again comments that anyone coming from back East to the West will be startled at the vast open spaces in this area of the country. So if there is a Northwest style of literature it would have to have as an important
element the use of landscape. Bevis notes that in the writing of Welch and Hugo, scenery is not just a backdrop for the story, as it is in most writings, but instead it takes an active part in the story. So the landscape is a character in the action.

Bevis comments that all of this tells us that the earth is a more active force in our lives than we thought. Bevis feels that Montana will become a more important force in the US in the future. This is because the US is becoming regressive and will demand more of the things that we had in the past, and these are the things that Montana still has.

Bevis thanks various people who have helped work on the course and the people who were on the program. He hopes everyone enjoyed the course and he signs off.

[END OF TAPE]