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MONTANA DREAM BOOK

By

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B.A. English, Brown University, Providence, RI, 2015

Thesis

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Montana Dream Book

Chair: Ed Skoog

Abstract: A documentary poem based on archival research and oral histories of LGBTQ people in Montana, collected by the author.
Beginning in September, I wrote down my dreams. In December I saw footage of people going to fight in the trenches in Europe. Most of them are dead now so it's hard to know which of them were queer. In January I expanded my research. I began with Montana because I live here. Queer because our history is a dream. I interviewed people and asked them about their lives. I went to the books and archives to see what was there. The research is ongoing.

- June 2019, Missoula. Salish and Kootenai land.¹

¹ The local movie theater displays a land acknowledgement before its films. When I saw BlacKkKlansman, the statement read, "The Roxy Theater gratefully acknowledges that we rest on the traditional lands of the Salish people, where they lived and spoke their language." When I saw Boy Erased, the statement was in present tense: "live and speak the Salish language." By the time I saw Amazing Grace, a (living, speaking) Salish person read the statement aloud with English subtitles. Then the film begins, and we wade into the fantasy of light and form.
Part One
November 1997 to June 1998

I could write a novel..... Volume 1 by Darren Alexander.
I meant to ask you if there have been any sights
of Patrick around Missoula? Just curious. I was serving
I don't know what the hell to do with myself.
Justin I was going to tell you about the rest of my birthday

Big boots...a real stud (his name leaves more
to be desired...it's Vernon) "Let's go through
the Haunted House." I was like oh..."with your boyfriend?"

Jeff and I are no longer together....so I keep hearing.
Mom is very sick. E-Mail me soon o.k? I know
that lonely feeling your talking about.

Justin, I hope your days are filled with joy and happiness
and thank you for always being there.
Well I just spent a hellish 3 hours at the doctor.

Back on Marinol to get some of the weight back
that I've lost and Prozac to see if that might do me
some magical wonder. Phone bill isn't going to be payable....

Yup, he's a cutie! Go fo it!! Well it's raining here
and there's mudslides and all that crap but it's really beautiful.
Right now I'm feeling so up-rooted. I can't explain
really to you because no one really
understands until your in the situation........
I will never be able to detach myself from them.

God Justin this disease is a killer in so many ways.
I keep seeing new ways in which it is affecting my life.
Anyway, enough

Got a date tonight with this one. His names Nathatn.....
He's wonderful. What do you think?? I remeber saying
that in a way being HIV + was a blessing.

OK, I think I'm really feeking "love" for the first time.
Oh my god. I'm freaked out by this whole thing.
I've been running a fever so I've been staying home.................

Keene is dying in Florida. Very depressed. I'll be there the 13th unless I have to go to Florida for the funeral. Just wanted to say Hi and see what was new.

Right now I'm talking to this 16 year old who wants me to fuck him...YEAH RIGHT!!!

Same Ol' ame Ol'. Still kindof dating Skip but I think I just really want to be single for awhile. Rainy and chilly here today.

Looks like you guys are havin the same kind of weather in Missoula huh? I NEED E-MAIL........ all I get is SHIT mail........

From emails sent by Darren Alexander

born in Missoula on November 1, 1974
died on June 18, 1998, age 23
WILL FESPERMAN: I'm meh but on the mend.
WILL THELEN: Ugh :/ That's a bummer... How was your day?
FESPERMAN: It's been alright! Trying to find hints of lesbianism in mt homesteaders. How bout you?

THELEN: Oh damn that's awesome! What book is that out of? Yuck I hate working through the weekends but all is well. I'm so ready for the summer! And this week. Don't work for a couple days

Erin said there were bachelor ranchers, marriages of convenience, women who cohabited. That Chinese immigrants terraced the hills near Garnet, then white people drove them out of Montana. Do you know anything about these farmers, or the bachelors or unmarried women, can you write to me?
Doesn't say they stole that land from the Blackfeet tribe, Sarah Carter didn't research it.

**July 8, 1912**  Too busy to write. Washed.

**July 9**  Ditto. Ironed...

**July 28**  ...Cutting my wheat today.
   Very warm.
   14 to dinner.

**July 29**  Cutting my wheat Very warm

**July 30**  Finished cutting my grain to day looks fine
   Prairie fire broke out near field at noon

Mildred Belle Hunt
I got into bed with my friend but even with my lips against her ear could not make her hear for the roar of the hail on the roof and walls.

Ada Melville Shaw, 1931

March 24, 2019

My nails have got daggery
Will buy cake
Shannon took his red truck
and drove alone to the Bitterroot
And I ate his banana bread
While he partaketh of the bitter root
It's a little before 7 P.M.
I should walk in the daylight
Write interview questions
Or commands
Describe your first sexual encounter with a man
Should eat greens tonight
This is Will Fesperman interviewing MJ Williams
on April 10th?  11th
This is Will Fesperman talking
with Anne Harris in the Florence building
No we're in what used to be the old JC Penney building
Can you spell your name for future people
E Z R A  W O O D S    Cool so tell me
who I'm talking to    How I grew up and all that?

Ezra

Kind of a darker back story I guess, I don't know
Here's a juicy part    as soon as I became aware enough
you know    I remember this too
I just remember right off the bat
I like to put it    for myself
I'm a little Native kid from Rocky Boy
I got a wolf dog Rio  I have my cousin
Jenna    Whitney and Rhiannon
It wasn't totally miserable    I wasn't abused
My dad tousles my hair
What else do I need to cover? Hobbies?
WILL: I’m gonna head up around 4:30 on Monday, in time for dinner. Then we’ll do the interview in the morning.

LOGAN: I’d be down to join if you still want a Comrade

We Drive to Bryan Spellman

"When would you want to be a cow"
"Have you ever been to Paradise"
"Maybe to feel grounded"
"Who are 'the boys' I wonder?"
"I think we are
I think it is highly likely"

Rocky, Major, Driver

Bryan had three mini pinschers
I took a porn mag down
Driver peed on the floor
I said Hey I used to jerk off to this guy
He said After 50 friends I stopped counting
We ate a weird pizza
Something about yourself?

Was born in Billings in 1949
Grew up in California mostly
Billings wasn't big it stopped on 17th
It was a common practice to get Margaret
to drop her pants. Father spanked him
Irrigation ditch had a lot of private places
Came back to Montana in 1975
Working left no time to write

April 7, 2019

How are you feeling
     Mom's b-day  b-day rain
     they're called "beds" and you put fall garden to "bed"
or to "sleep"?
On the fridge: "who is Thomas Parker??"
     & illegible phone number
     "I'm getting a Tchaikovsky ring tone"
"how are you feeling?"  ("of course replied / something here inside / cannot" etc)
April 16, 1959. Deer Lodge, MT

Floyd E. Powell, Warden of the Prison, was working in his office when he received a telephone call stating there had been a knifing within the prison. By virtue of this call he was decoyed into the prison, being entirely unaware of what had already gone on inside the walls. Inside the prison he was confronted by inmates Myles, Smart, Toms, and Randall, all of whom were armed. He was required to make a phone call to the governor, which he did.

The warden noticed the body of deputy warden Theodore Rothe lying on the floor on his back, his shirt all bloodstains; froth at his mouth and his eyes open but rolled up into his head.

Warden Powell heard a rifle shot from outside the building and at that moment George Alton came through the door and crouched behind the wall.

Alton was armed with a 30-30 Winchester rifle. Alton received some cartridges from Smart and proceeded to load the rifle.

State of Montana v. George E. Alton
Cassandra heard that they were gay lovers, the men who took over the prison for 36 hours. So we stopped in Deer Lodge. You have to pay $15 to go inside the old penitentiary. No thanks. In the gift shop they sell prisoner costumes for adults and children.
Back to Bryan

He moved his hand up my thigh
I thought Oh, this could be interesting
Is--was--he's probably dead now
Sort of the Gordon Merrick of French literature
That was not really done
1968
Life in the United States
I had something to do with that
The first time since fourth grade
that anyone had seen my penis
My 2.5 kids
I was a homophobic little prick
I have said on numerous occasions
The important thing to note
is that the cover is lavender

April 8, 2019

Rain again
Dream: How would I ever catch a flight
Mom was "entertaining guests"
She laid out "Healthy Holly" scandal
I had a human friend named Guacamole
Neighbor climbed a ladder
He said "Oh yeah, book me on that flight,
I wanna meet Guac"
I googled if I would die
Bryan, cont'd

I have not seen or talked to Mike since 1959
One of our classmates was Arthur Harrison Buell III
Don went off to Lawrence, Kansas
It's the 1960s, and there's no such thing as crushes
I'm going to jump forward
Things never proceeded further. John Ellis
was the first UM faculty member to die of AIDS
What's the story with Don?
Does anyone know Don Frueh, or know of Don Frueh?
It's kind of frightening to ask
Something awful is happening. I need to get out
Doyle Forister
was a world history teacher in Billings, he is one of the named
I'm losing my legal--Gryczan v. Montana
Doyle had no reason to know about Don Frueh
Steve Everhart. I chased him
How on earth are people surviving
My god, Missoula has a leather queen
I have met a good many
Born in St. Mary's Hospital
San Francisco General Hospital
Harbor View Medical Center
A sick man who could very well become you
There were two red marks on his back
I sat at my desk. I couldn't move
There were more and more stories
I'll never forget this man's name--Chris
And Steven, the oncologist
Roy entered a monastery
where he still is
and is known as Brother Seraphim
I have met a good many men who have lived quite a while
I don't think you'll be one of them
And he said,
If you ever come to Montana, look us up
They didn't know that in 1980
Yeah yeah, sure sure, no problem
Nothing would ever change
We are still Facebook friends
SO, YOU KNOW, I REMEMBER

I GUESS I COULD, I GUESS

I COULD JUST SAY THAT

BUT YOU KNOW, I CAN GET, I CAN

REDACT THIS IF I HAVE TO, BUT
April 18, 2019

WILL: I dreamed I was in bed with my sister
a man let the lobster out of a cage
people stood around watching
And you were with me in the water
a different face
but it was you
Put your arm around me like this
you lifted me
Did you dream?
LOGAN: No
I don't remember
when you ask me it's like I failed

MJ Williams

DID I ANSWER THAT RIGHT? I JUST GOT
I KEEP THINKING, SORRY
IT'S HARD TO REMEMBER
AND THEN YOU'RE, YOU KNOW
YOU GET SIDE-TRACKED OFTEN, OH WOW
DID THAT REALLY HAPPEN?

have him
anywhere
would have him
I would have
had him
I have followed
anywhere
I would have
him I
would have followed
And I would have followed him
I would have followed
"And I would have followed him anywhere"
I would have followed him anywhere
May 8, 2019

Woke up: 10am
Dreams: Attacked by young boys
Sex: Yes
Masturbation: None
Reading: Pedro Lemebel
Poops: Two in the morning, sticky; one at night, strained
Cockatiels: One, gray, escaped

prescribed daily doses of morphine to help relieve his pain. Spellman also learned to adminis-

Abbas. They were warned by the U.S. to stay clear of the convoy and did so.

By midaftemoon, the ships had passed within 12 miles of Abu Musa, an Iranian island used by Revolutionary Guards, fanatical followers of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, to launch gunboat and helicopter attacks on commercial shipping.

Once again, General Quarters

Rain

(continued)
May 9, 2019

Woke up: 8:30am
Dreams: Horror movie
Sex: None
Tears: At the Roxy
Touches: Cassandra, Mateo, Maren, Carlos
Kisses: Logan
Reading: Kropotkin
Dogs: Two, one named Sappho
Mood: Longing
Allergies: Minor
Poops: Two, fairly relaxed
Part Two
May 21, 2019

Why hello tender petal
Kind of pukish yellow

44. The infamous crime against nature, either with man or beast, shall subject the offender to be punished by imprisonment in the Territorial prison for a term not less than five years, and which may extend to life.

Territory of Montana, 1865.
September 1, 2019

I really was proud for crying AT and ABOUT the grasshopper
Who was munching. A lot of new sunlight No "life" as a duration
Butterfly OPEN
to me revealing sexy back hair
A place for him

Chet McCullough
Born
Owned Mac’s Auto Parts
Married Judith Z
Died
December '15
I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness
MJ Williams

Helena in the fifties
It was dirt streets

We kind of caught hell

I'm Mary Jane do you want to see my hamster?

made a cement pad
rusted-out car door
put that thing on there

Life magazine

November 9, 1877. Deer Lodge

Frank Hyde testified that he was a clerk at Scott House November 9 that A. and B. went to bed there in a room which he showed them about eight o’ clock B., a boy fourteen years of age, testified that A. committed the offense with his consent; that A. had, on various occasions, committed this offense with him at A.’s ranch about seven miles from Deer Lodge that A. called him a boy prostitute and threatened to put him in the penitentiary
MJ again. Basin, 1972

We always just would do whatever we felt
We bought that place this place and the place next door
Bought the whole thing and started Figured
we could make it Bought that place this this place
and the place and all that
The whole thing started. Out
I plumbed all these
That one this one I did plumbing for that one
I was a painter painting
We can have some control that word lightly
Lightly our lives and how our lives go
that we could with our strength our
personal strength and imagining
We got jobs and little jobs here
and we could salvage. A good long stretch of time
The whole thing started Do you feel thinking
started thinking through having knowing
One thing to thing, you know full
full steam Figured we could make it
I don't know but we're older
and do have some idea how to look at things
how to make, what could work
I've just been blah blah blah
We always just would do whatever
The only thing I could say
about being a lesbian
in terms of the social context of you know political
you know about knowing about culture
and being inside and out
It was such an opening, you know, when I didn't know
and things were dark and what I found out
I was outside    What a thing that is
to be outside to know that. This culture I can be in or out of
This is me a human living growing human being

I can't hear you

    I said I'm looking for Alta Daugherty
What did she do

    I'm looking for information about her brother Mike Nall
Doesn't have one
Name NALL, Mike. Age 21. Eyes Blue.

and by whom employed Rainbow Cleaners.

On or about January 19th, 1952, did willfully, wrongfully, unlawfully

and feloniously commit the crime against nature by having carnal knowledge

of the body of LeRoy Kennedy, who was then and there a male person.

Term of sentence is FIVE (5) Years.

MOTHER Mrs. Birdie Nall. FATHER Luther.
We got jobs

and little jobs here

I plumbed all these

That one this one I did plumbing for that one

I was a painter painting

One thing to thing, you know full full steam
November 2019

A violent man at the hot springs. "I don't want the children to see," etc. (I was touching Logan's neck.) All the straight couples were silent. Fuck you, I thought. (Maybe they can't hear him. But he's yelling. I guess I could be dreaming. Life is but. You never know. You and me baby that's a dream.)

A confessed accomplice. 1936, Butte

County physician examined the boy's rectum
"In the ordinary person the muscle is tight
In this case the finger required very little force"
"I will never know why I was born
lived, and died on this earth"
Same year that Jean Renoir shot A Day in the Country
"Working on" poem
while I held in a lot of shit
(literal)
Tried to remember dream
Is any of it
an archetype
I guess you don't care
You all
Hi Jack

November 2018. Butte

I was fucked in the rectum without a condom
Later woke up and drove to the clinic
took an HIV pill that they
they or we
forced on macaques who were kidnapped

from Southeast Asia meanwhile a train
transporting coal
or another extraction

Rhesus macaques
are maternal live in "troops"
or "colonies"

Some autonomous
("feral") communities in Florida

Many in solitary confinement
for bio-med
RULE, Pete

Age 27. Serbian

Eyes Blue

Construction worker

Protestant

Shoe size 9 1/2 (a "sea" of data

on or about February 22, 1952 did commit

a lewd and lascivious act with his penis upon the body of Willard Neville Efaw, a male
over the age of 18 years with the intent then and there entertained (See back of form)

by the said Pete Rule of arousing, appealing to

and gratifying the lust, passions, and sexual desires of said Willard

knowingly, wilfully, unlawfully, and feloniously

Teeth Good
Edward Minor Phillips
John Gaub

José Castro
January 30, 2020

I like staring at insects and plants, being close to them, to their bodies and touching them, roots and dirt.

I was going to talk about my clothes. How I'm wearing all this stuff, I don't know, I don't feel like talking about it.

A lot of dogs here. Maggie and Fizzgig. They come up and touch me.

Do you think it's an achievement to be in love with someone? Or even a total failure? (A good one.)

Here's another deer. Shaggier.

There's the sky. It doesn't mean to be complex but it is. I think the sky won't mind being called It. It gets everything in it.

I hate cars. When I look at my students I feel a lot of tenderness. I love being close to one person, Logan. With my face against him. Other people, too. No one "jumps" to mind.

January 31, 2020

"Gay Terror" dance party tonight. Cassandra says "can’t people just have a ‘very gay dance party’ at 7pm instead of GAY TERROR in the middle of the night"
February 4, 2020

Called his brother Lonnie. "My brother died forty years ago what in the hell are you looking him up for."

I know who did it. Who put him in a cage.

The arresting officer was William Hafdahl.  
The county attorney was Robert D. Morrison.  
The judge was the Honorable C.B. Elwell.  
The county clerk was Ben Daggett.

"Are you one?" "One?" "Are you L G whatever?" "Yes." "Jesus. I bet you are."

Those men are dead or retired. Doesn't mean a lot to write their names here.

LONNIE: My brother was not gay.

CASSANDRA: That photograph time travels.
Number 47 said to number three
You're the cutest jailbird I ever did see
Knowingly/wilfully/unlawfully (say it with me)
If you go to eastern Montana take a big dog!

March 13, 2020

Rodrigo,

I watched Pasolini's Decameron
The director's blue paint
The boy laughs

He set the world in our hearts
And never quite to know it
in its beginnings and endings
out of our sight yet contained
within us (they say) but
where to look?

Thanks for the poem

it gives me company. In The Decameron
a peasant boy has your gap teeth
your patchy beard grinning above
my cock. I still remember the purity

(dirt) of your hair and sweat

A pot of basil --from Salerno

I love you as a poetry which I know
is real and can be grown with delicate work
not simplicity of style
They were migrant farmers plumbers
worked at laundromats or got paid for sex
or worked in the mines

I do love you

I think "nature" is othering. We are plants (if you can feel that

MIKE NALL
MERRITT CAMPBELL
PETE RULE
JOSÉ CASTRO
JOHN GAUB
RILEY RICHARDSON
LEONARD KEMMIS
GORDON FAIRCHILD
THOMAS D. HAYES
MIKE JOVANOVICH
Gary Gaub

Gobs of Gaubs
In my verse immortal
Their tale
which a Gaub cousin in Texas put together

Will, I talked to my brother
He heard John was strange
and wasn't bright. Poverty

            extreme poverty
            He married

That is all he can recall knowing
ANONYMOUS: So I’m really sorry but I have to beg you not to use our interview. My boyfriend is pretty upset over the whole thing.