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Oral History Number: 438-006
Interviewee: Hal Waldrup
Interviewer: Mark Gibbons
Date of Interview: March 23, 2013
Project: Ed Lahey Oral History Project

Mark Gibbons: All right, this is Mark Gibbons. I'm in Butte, Montana, it's March 23, 2013, and I'm conducting an interview with Hal Waldrup about Ed Lahey. So...(cat meows)...and the cat is with us (laughter). So Hal do you have a starting point, something you'd like to say about Ed?

Hal Waldrup: Well I think the cat stole the show there (laughter). Well, I had given it some thought of course when you talked about the interview. I remember I first met Ed at the University of Montana probably around 1970 for sure. There was a gathering at Paul Warwick's home; he was a TA at the university at that time. It was after the Kent State shootings so people were just gathering and talking and trying to figure out, were we going to go onto the University of Montana and act so cocky and face bullets? We didn't know. So, I don't know, I can't really remember the conversations, but we were there drinking wine and that sort of thing and just talking. There were peaceful demonstrations the next day and Ed was there along with Paul and Chuck Hall and my older brother Ed Waldrup. They were kind of the...I wouldn't call them the radicals on campus, including Ed Lahey, maybe the leaders of the faction from the school itself, the establishment, not radicals but they were willing to talk. Not Abbie Hoffman or anyone like that.

MG: Were you a student at that time?

HW: I was a student at the time, yes. So really that's my earliest memory of him. It was right at the end of the semester, the Kent State thing. I think it was May 1st and school got out early June if not mid-May. So, it wasn't long after that everyone went their separate ways. I went to Anaconda where my family was and worked at Warm Springs. Ed was a patient on the ward I was working. I was working receiving hospital, the intaking.

MG: What year was that?

HW: That was still 1970. Maybe 1971. It's hard to really remember.

MG: Yeah so that was...

HW: I think it was 1971.

MG: So that was kind of the second contact you had with Ed?

HW: Yeah, and he was treated there for mental illness and did well and was discharged.

Several months later I was living in Helena and I went to Boulder to apply for a recreation job I think. I was in my early 20s so I wasn't really attached to anything. No career of any kind yet. So I went by Corbin and I knew Ed was there so I stopped and saw the family. They invited me to come and live with them for a while and I stayed up there I think probably six weeks or two months. I found a job up there, worked for a geologist cutting ore samples and that sort of thing. Sort of you know hiking around the country with a compass and trying to find mining claims and stuff.

MG: How many people do you think lived in Corbin at that time?

HW: Let's see, Ed lived in the last house going out of town toward the mine. So there was one family down below us and then there was a little bit of a separation between us and the other houses in Corbin. They were down between the turn off to Wickes and there must be eight, nine houses down there and there are a couple scattered on the way up from Jefferson City that are probably included in the town. So gosh I don't know, maybe 20 houses or so all together.

MG: So do you have any recollection, was it a mining town?

HW: No, it was leftover people from mining days. You know people who were once involved in that. Now let's see Ed Lahey's family...I know his uncle drove the snow plow for the school district. Now that was Big Mead. I don't know if you ever heard the story, Big Mead was the little guy and Little Mead was the big guy. But he drove the snow plow, a grater I guess. I guess there wasn't any connection. Ed's family had some claim to that little house. Part of the mining claim of the Alta mine. They must've still had some connection with the Alta mine claim. That's the mine his father made a lot of money at when the Anaconda Company tried to cheat him out of decent pay he was getting for the ore he was getting out of that mine, and he shipped it all the way to Tacoma.

MG: Could you elaborate on that story?

HW: Well all I know about it, and if I mention it to family they'll probably remember it better, or more accurately. His father developed...there had been a mine at the Alta. I think he developed an open pit type thing. I know he reprocessed a lot of the tailings because they were rich in the ore they wanted. And the Anaconda Company wasn't going to give him any money for it, just a drop in the bucket for all this ore. So he shipped it all the way to Tacoma so they were pretty well to do for a while. Rich for a while anyway and lived very well and used to having good things. I think the money stayed in the family to a point. He certainly didn't have much money when he finally had to take his retirement for good. That would've been about 1975. It was obvious he wasn't going to teach anymore

MG: You mean Ed?

HW: Yeah, he couldn't hold a job that long, although he did try. Gee, I kind of forgot where I'm at. But the Alta mine, his father made quite a bit of money on that, and the family did real well and like I say he was used to living on that. But Corbin seems to be their family's home. His mother had a nicer home, one of the ranch type homes and his sister had a home further down and then her daughter lived there also, Ellen. (Laughs) There's Helen, and Ellen and Mead and Little Mead and Big Mead. So anyway, I stayed with Ed and his family in Corbin for a little while.

MG: Do you remember the last name of Mead?

HW: No, I don't.

MG: I encountered it not too long ago but I forgot myself. Any particular stories or memories of that six week stay up there?

HW: Oh yeah, lots of good memories. I think I introduced them to *American Beauty*, you know that album?

MG: Yeah, Grateful Dead.

HW: We played it every night before we went to bed. We took hikes and I worked for the geologist and we had a funny joke about whether I was cutting and splitting or chopping and splicing and all these ore samples and stuff. I brought a few home and showed Ed but he didn't see any ore in them. We drove around. He had an old Dodge pickup. Oh gosh, a 1950 or so. Painted it gray with a brush (laughter). They painted it with a brush. Ask Sarah I think she helped. We drove around, we went up to the Alta mine. God there were some beautiful buildings, I don't know what became of them finally. We took some of the lumber that was loose. But trying to sell it, we didn't know where to sell it.

MG: So this was '75 you're talking about?

HW: Right around there somewhere, '74, yeah...

MG: The mine wasn't operating at that time?

HW: Alta?

MG: Yeah, no one in the family...?

HW: No, it hadn't operated in many years.

MG: Was it still in the family or had they let it go?

HW: See, that's what I don't know. I would assume they kept paying the taxes on it because they lived in the house and the house was still part of the Alta mine claim. Even though it was a long way from the mine it was considered part of the Alta mine deal. And the house down below it I believe was part of it too. The buildings across the road were for working on vehicles and a garage and stuff. I think that was all of the Alta mine. And...what was your question?

MG: After that experience with Ed did that establish a sort of friendship?

HW: Yeah, sure, with the whole family. I was very fond of them, and I remain fond of them. We haven't been in touch but I have some of the best memories of that time, it was a lot of fun. It was very intellectually stimulating too. They are very bright people. Certainly wasn't any dull conversations, you know.

MG: I know that's one of the things Marylor mentioned was that she just loved being around those people. It was just so much fun, it was exciting, they were stimulating, they were talking about interesting things and laughing and telling stories and it was just a fun group.

HW: Yeah Paul Warwick just passed away, that's pretty sad. Chuck Hall, I don't know what he's doing. That picture that's on the internet is my older brother Ed, Chuck Hall, and Ed Lahey up at Chuck Hall's cabin. He built the cabin out of all this green wood and it was beautiful when he built it but then the wood all dried and it warped. I don't know if he sawed it himself but once it warped it was incredible (laughter) "You gotta go in this house, it's weird."

They were a great group but they all had to go their separate ways, they were all laid off from the university. I don't know if that was political but I assume it was. There was a lot of resentments at the university over the anti-war movement, which all of them were a part of. Although, I maintain they didn't take part in that kind of thing, they were a little removed from that. They weren't promoting "Let's take over the..." What was it, the ROTC building, trashed it. Then they took over Main Hall the next year for raising tuition to 125 dollars (laughter). You know it was 100 and they raised it to 125. Everyone was outraged (laughter).

MG: Power to the people (Laughter).

HW: They did, they trashed the ROTC building. I remember K. Ross Toole, boy he was ticked.

MG: I remember talking to Denny Bluen about a guy running up to Ed and Ed and Denny were outside the ROTC building and this young guy, some wild haired wild eyed student, and tells them "Man, I got a bomb man, it's in the trunk of my car." (Laughter from both) And they were like "What...?!" So I guess Denny said that Ed talked this guy down. "Now, I don't think maybe...we don't want..." (laughs). I mean this guy said he came up to them and said he had a homemade, he had dynamite was what it was, in the trunk of his car. I mean everyone had dynamite back then...

HW: Yeah, you could get it...

MG: Mining and what not. So (laughter) yeah...

HW: Well it was only a few days later that the group who called themselves the "Weathermen" in Missoula and a few other places left a shoebox outside one of the science buildings and said it was going to blow up but there was nothing in it. It was baloney.

MG: Yeah, they just wanted to scare everybody.

HW: So by then the peace movement had a really bad name. It deserved it for having those kinds of clowns. Well, it didn't deserve it. Somehow...

MG: It was a volatile time.

HW: You know the media played to that sort of person too.

MG: Exactly.

HW: And gave them the stage

MG: And the resistance was strong. The country wasn't...that kind of effrontery and what not, no one was used to...and certainly not ready to tolerate, anybody in the older generation. Then it was directly linked to that war and so all that fuel and the civil rights movement. The push and pull. So it really was a...a hell of a time.

HW: And it's the beginning of gay's rights, women's rights. You know just everybody.

MG: Indians...

HW: Caesar Chavez and that whole group, you know just everybody was suddenly aware they could demand their rights (laughter). You know people had been so oppressed, look at the Indians. God. So yeah...

MG: We're still looking at them.

HW: Yeah, yeah.

MG: Finally now this year, over the past few years, they've been making some sort of concerted effort to have some sort of Indian education in Montana schools. Which the 1972 constitution mandated but it never really happened until just old Schweitzer he kinda got the ball rolling I think. He was very friendly to the reservations and established the department to be aware of all that. Now there's a big push for...I'm doing something right now with the schools in Missoula

with artists who were basically Salish. One of them lives in the southwest now, Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith is her name. But the other guy's still up in Pablo, Corwin Claremont. Both of those artists are kind of collage art and they kind of work modern incidents and stuff into a collage that goes back on...deals with traditional and this cross cultural clash and blood and mayhem and what not. In different ways. In very interesting artistic ways. So we're using their artwork in schools and I'm asking kids to write poems about this art so I'm kind of getting the response and the kids are going to be able to make their own collage art, they get to make the paper and then do this sort of different mixed media, I guess is what they call it. Different kinds of stuff they put into this sort of 3-D canvas of sorts. So it's kind of a neat program. But I digress, let's get back to Eduardo.

HW: Eduardo...

MG: What else...So after that you were in the mid '70s.

HW: Yeah I went my separate way, I went to... I don't know I was moving around bouncing around. Anyway, I met a girl, of course. I wound up moving back to Anaconda and I worked at the Anaconda smelter for a several years. I was pretty, oh, I don't know... This lady and I had a child together, and it didn't last. We split up right after for God's sakes. So anyway, I had child support so I had to have steady work so I stayed at the smelter for four or five years. I was pretty unhappy. Ed was cruising through Anaconda one day and stopped at my house while I was at work, and left a note and said, "Come on over there's an apartment upstairs if you're interested." And I thought, gee, getting out of Anaconda might be the best thing for me right now. Not so far away I can't see the kid and go to work. So anyway, I took the apartment upstairs in a place we called "Tortilla Flat" ever after, well I still do, and we were Danny and the boys (laughter). Good hearted people. Just trying to do the best they could, you know.

MG: You said you called it the "Studebaker Arms"?

HW: Ed named this Tortilla Flat, we were thinking about it as Tortilla Flat but I had a sign that said "Studebaker" on it and it had been a tailgate for an old truck I had. A wooden, I made a wooden tailgate. So anyway, he loved this and called it Studebaker Arms after that. And called this Tortilla Flat. I don't know why I got that mixed up. I'm getting old.

MG: Do you have any recollection of the location of that place?

HW: Oh yeah. I have a picture of the place. Half a picture. Ed takes a picture of HALF of it. He doesn't take a picture of the whole place. (laughter)

MG: Where is it located?

HW: It's up on Washington Street, 815 or 817 South Washington. There's half of a picture on the refrigerator. So anyway we moved into Studebaker Arms and I don't know how long I was

there. I got into a carpentry apprentice so I was busy a lot then, doing a lot of stuff in the evening and classes and stuff. And at some point he got that award for the first book. I believe that was the Montana Arts Council and that was the first time they had given it. So it was the first, first book award. And I remember reading letters, every penny had to be spent on the book, don't go out and buy a cigar or anything. (Laughter) So he asked for my help in organizing it. So I'm responsible for the sequence of it I guess.

MG: The order...

HW: Yeah, and Paul Warwick wrote that really good introduction. Of course he had to go to a union printer, I think that was part of the, no they wouldn't insist, but I think we felt we had to go for some reason, it had to be union. So we did Artcraft and they took care of all of it of course. But the horse on the front I just never, never cared for that. Just a horse off a beer commercial and we cut it out and took it to them and they made it brown and made the eye look like it was blind or something, just doctored it up. It wasn't anything from the mines.

MG: Well, one of the things I found in Ed's papers, you know after he moved into a rest home, was a drawing of that horse in ink pen. I mean it was originally drawn in pencil then gone over. According to what I can gather from the signature and what not it was Burt Schute.

HW: Burt Schute, yeah! His uncle.

MG: It looks like he drew the horse. I think, that's what I gather.

HW: Well Burt Schute was his uncle.

MG: I think so anyway, that's what I'm guessing.

HW: Well I'll be darned. I can't remember the whole thing, too many details.

MG: Then of course there was another edition after that (inaudible).

HW: Yeah I think that I have the second edition. Let's see...

MG: Yeah I see that horse right there.

HW: Yeah I don't have the first one anymore, I lost it somewhere along the way, but "Poete Maudit" wasn't in the very first one, but that doesn't make any sense. It had to be I guess.

MG: Well I've got, I don't have it with me but at the house I have a copy of that first one and then in probably 2000 I think, somewhere right around there, it was probably not long after "Apples Growing on the Lawn" which we'll get to in a minute, but the University of Montana did a facsimile reprinting of the book and that drawing of the horses on the cover.

HW: They did? I didn't see that.

MG: Yeah I think it was like early 2000s. So that's what I have a copy of.

HW: Well I saw a copy of a compilation of everything. But it wasn't that.

MG: Well they did that too. Then after that they went ahead and did a copy, a book that was called *The Blind Horses and Other Poems*.

HW: Yeah that's the one I saw.

MG: That was kind of the collected ones, which is kind of what "Birds of a Feather" is, that with a few more poems added, but not too many. Mainly it's just a hardbound copy of the same one the University put together in a paperback form.

HW: Well earlier you were telling of a story about, oh gosh, what were you talking about, it reminded me of "Poete Maudit" so much. It was some poem you had written for somebody else. Anyway I always thought that he wrote that about me and I was mad at him. I thought I'm the only person living in Studebaker Arms that's drinking himself to death and quoting Rimbaud. He said, "That's true!" (Laughter from both). But you know it was an image that he had found. It wasn't necessarily me. It may be similar but...

MG: It applies to, that's the beauty I guess of a poem. It does have a specific target, that's where it starts, but it applies to...

HW: Sure, sure. It applies to much a larger audience. So I was always mad at him about that.

MG: (Both quoting the poem in deep voice) "He pulls the triggers shot by shot..." (Laughter)

HW: "Quoting Rimbaud as he goes."

Well I was also reading Verlaine and Baudelaire. "Paris Spleen" and all that. Yeah I loved that "Paris Spleen." Beat up the poor, huh! That was one of his poems, "Beat up the Poor." If you give them fish, if you give them a dollar, they'll just go spend it and get drunk, but if you beat them up they'll get up and fight back and feel like a human being again. So that was Baudelaire's answer for poverty.

Yeah, golly all these...I loved all these. They were great. I don't know if I'm so taken with his newer stuff but this was always great.

MG: Yeah it was totally different.

HW: And I know that Marylor had a lot to do with this. He wrote them for sure. But she was the one that kind of soothed everything, kept it all going and made it all happen.

MG: Along with, from what I can gather, his teaching experiences. She was pretty much invested in that about 50 percent. Or the person behind the man.

HW: In a way it was, I don't know. I think "The Cloud Chaser" was the one that first caught me and I was always taken with that. I don't know why, just an interesting poem. Maybe I liked "Sane women circle him tossing their hair / singing and joyous with laughter, / holding him close in their eyes / lightly kissing his skin for a taste of the rain."

MG: "For a taste of the rain..."

HW: Yup, I always liked that one. But, you know, I like them all. So it was real interesting living upstairs from a poet.

MG: Oh my god, yeah.

HW: Working at the Anaconda smelter making good money, living upstairs from a poet.

MG: Helping him out...

HW: Yeah, helping him out.

MG: God knows he needed help.

HW: But then the boom got lowered too, the smelter went out of business. So did the mines, and boy everybody suddenly was out of work. Nobody had any money.

MG: And this was like early '80s?

HW: Yeah, I was trying to think how it correlated with his mother's passing. I can't remember what year she died. Because it was right there, we were living in Studebaker Arms and she passed away and he moved out to her trailer. And then I was there for a while and moved away and moved back later. She must've died right around 1980 or so. Ed wrote that wonderful poem, "Combed Her Hair." I think that's the best poem he ever wrote.

MG: Yeah it's a... I read that poem last night to this little reading thing down there. You know it's a...because it does...it captures someone in just their own words, with very, very few words, it's just that hard edge. I said last night I think that's a lot of us growing up maybe because our parents were that Depression, World War Two generation of people, they're just tough. They gutted things out and they survived and they didn't sprinkle their I love you's around and they didn't have flowers in their fucking hair, they worked their fingers to the bone and they were

tough and they acted tough in the face of things and they passed that on to us so that it's a part of who we are, we can't deny that. But that's a tough poem.

HW: I could sure see her saying all that. She was like that.

MG: So, do you have any idea when he married his second wife?

HW: Kay? Gee, that was quite a while later, late '80s or so.

MG: Okay, and do you have any idea how long they were together?

HW: Hmm, gee, maybe a year?

MG: Not too long.

HW: No. Let's see after that I went hitchhiking all over the country trying to find work. I was all over the place. I wrote a couple stories, worked in a carnival. Had to write about that, wrote a short story about that. Somehow migrated back to Butte and wound up as a cab driver. And Ed was living at probably the worst hotel in town at that time, The Wino Hotel (laughs). I wrote a bad poem about that place too. And of course I had to move in too (laughs). He lived in the first floor, I lived on like the third floor of that big hotel, pretty bad place. It was a rough place. You didn't know who was going to be knocking on the door in the middle of the night. He was down right by the main door so...I was upstairs with all the loonies, holy Christ (laughter). That was something.

But, uh, we were both going through hard times then. I couldn't find work, nobody in Butte could. I was working two bucks an hour driving cab, 12 hours a day, six days a week and I was just barely alive. And he was having trouble getting his pension or something. I think they'd come to the point where they realized he wasn't going to be able to teach a whole semester. Maybe a visiting teacher, maybe lecture a little, but not every day. He couldn't do it. If he did do it before, Marylor...

MG: Right, he had somebody to help him, help get him through...

HW: But we were both struggling at that time. He finally got his pension, and he must have sold his mother's house, I mean trailer, at that time. So he had a few dollars, but that screwed up his pension, getting his pension, cause he had too much money. He could own a house but he couldn't have it in the bank. So there's a period right in there that I'm not sure when he bought the house on Jackson Street. He had a nice house there. It was much too big for him. But he wanted an investment, he got it real reasonable. That would have been the money from his mother's trailer. All this time, if there's one thing about Ed, he's always writing poetry. He's always a writer. He may work at something else but he's always a poet. So all of the time he

isn't idle, you know "I can't write unless I have a typewriter," but he kept writing. You know you can write without a typewriter (laughter).

So, he got settled in this house which gave him some stability. And then he met Kay, which would've been late '80s. I'm trying to get these dates right...But they had a nice romance, and were married and tried to make it and just weren't suited for each other. I don't know, you know tried to stay out of that aspect of it.

MG: Roger Dunsmore, when I talked to Roger, he mentioned that he went up to that house when Ed sold it and helped him move whatever was his out of there, and he basically sold it to Kay, or Kay's family, and he sold it for nothing.

HW: Six thousand bucks.

MG: He just basically...

HW: Yeah he wanted her to have a place, gave her the house. Yeah...he lost money on that. Then after that he couldn't hold it together and sometime after that he lost it again. Wound up at Warm Springs. Gee, is it after that 1990 we did *Apples Rolling on the Lawn*? We were trying to give him a lift, you know. He was getting out of Warm Springs. So Jana and Jim, a guy Jim Duran and I put that little booklet together. Typical Ed, "Well are you gonna sell it for me?" (Laughter).

"No, Ed I'm just going to buy them all and give you the money, geez Ed." Anyhow, it did give him a lift and he was glad to get it.

Then there was no moving back to Butte at that time. I'm not sure why all together, he'd had some problems here. So he made his move to Missoula and boy every time I saw him after that he was in trouble. He had this old Volvo that was just beat to hell. I'd never seen a car beat up like that. It was like something Kurt Russell would drive in a trailer trash movie, I don't know, I've never seen anything like that. I think he finally got picked up in Anaconda and they took his driver's license away in that car. You couldn't miss the car. You knew he was gonna get nailed just for having the car. God. And they finally decided he couldn't drive. Then he moved to that house on third in Missoula. I think it's Third Street. Apartment complex.

MG: Council Groves...

HW: Yeah. And he did all right there for a few years, but then lost it again. And I don't know if this was occurring with more frequency, I really don't know enough about how often that was happening, if it was something that was a natural sequence that increased or if he was just drinking again, which I suspect. I suspect most of his problems were induced by the bottle. When he stayed on his medication and tried to take care of himself he was fine. But the medication was awful, what he was on isn't like what they have today. What he was on

knocked you down, and I mean everybody gets fat, your whole metabolism gets slowed down. You don't feel good, you're groggy, you can't function. Nobody wants to take those things. But, you know, they do help. But virtually all of them would quit.

MG: Yeah they do help, they keep you off the ceiling, keep you out of too much trouble, keep you quieted down.

HW: A lot of it I can't really talk about, I'm still a licensed nurse. So, I really shouldn't get too much in it. There's nothing to hide that I could talk about. He had a hard time. It's a story repeated all the time, every day. We don't take very good care of people with mental problems. We don't do very good. The attitude is give them a little pinching and get them off the street. Get them out of my sight.

MG: And manage them with drugs.

HW: Yeah, manage them with drugs. But I should stick with the subject instead of thinking about other thing. But Ed always kept, even during that time you'd always get a letter from him, and it'd be signed peace, and there'd be some elaborate dove sailing off in to the distance. Something like that. He kept his attitude toward changing the world, or trying to be a part of improving the world.

MG: Yeah, I think he had that. The thing that, his shining moment, in not the darkest hour but towards the end of his life was in that Supreme Court chambers when they gave him the medal and he was able to stand up there and say, "I'm adamantly against capital punishment and war is morally wrong." I thought, good for you.

HW: Yeah and he did, or he always believed it and he always promoted those things. Even when he was really out of it. Can we just pause that thing?

MG: Yeah we were about early 1990s, somewhere in that neck of the woods.

HW: As I recall by then, they were split up by then, they had already broken up hadn't they?

MG: Late '80s, early '90s.

HW: I'm talking about right 1990 because you know when I think I remember something I zero in on something. In 1990 I was trying to open a little clock repair business in the Chinese building uptown. I had worked at the Chinese building for years trying to save it and finally decided to keep the pipes warm and everything I needed to be there. It was just too expensive. I needed to make money being there. So I had a little clock repair and kind of antique, collectible store. I didn't really know enough about that kind of thing, especially business. I didn't have enough business acumen to make a go of it, especially cash flow (laughter). That

was the big thing. But, uh, even right at Christmas, I was open right at Christmas, and couldn't make it go.

So I know that they were around because I can see him coming in have coffee with me in the morning and her coming by in the afternoons. I'm sure they were split up by then, or had they not been together, I can't remember now.

MG: Do you remember roughly when he went to Missoula?

HW: Well it was after 1990 because he was doing good. His mind was good. He was, it had to be '92, something like that.

MG: Do you remember why exactly he decided to go?

HW: Yeah...it's not patient confidentiality. It was in the paper and everything. He got kind of bizarre in a store up town, he would get attracted to women and not understand when they were saying get lost, or take "no" for an answer and got in trouble for that. And pretty much, I think I'll hold my thoughts. He left never to return, except for visits after that. He never moved back after that. I'd like to be more precise on the date. But, we didn't always have a lot to do with each other at that time. He had his own life and I had mine. I was, I'd worked as a LPN at Warm Springs for a while. Got sick of that. You can imagine being a psychiatric nurse can get to you after a while.

So I started a clock repair business and antique store in the Chinese buildings and think I did that for about two years and gave up on it and went back to work as a nurse. Just couldn't make it. And Ed had already gone back to Missoula I'm sure by '95. Then I would see him or I'd get a letter from him, I turned in all those letters I had. He had a reading in Anaconda and Jana and I and other people went over for that. He started having readings all around, he promoted himself well. There just wasn't any money in it. I got a letter about him working in the spa and he really liked that. That was a good job for him. I can't remember why he left that. I'm sure it wasn't that hard handing out towels.

MG: No, but I think it had to do with his mental health.

HW: Did that too? Because I thought he had got out of Warm Springs and was healing at that time, but it was the opposite you think?

MG: No I don't remember, it may be, I remember talking...he had just lost that job about the time I showed up in his life. And he wasn't working there anymore.

HW: But he was living at Council Groves?

MG: He was living at Council Groves but he had just stopped working at that spa. I didn't get the exact particulars as to why.

HW: I'm pretty sure I got a letter about it but it was kind of confused. There wasn't any blame, exactly. "Was it your fault or their fault?" (laughs)

MG: I think it was his pattern, the topic you've covered and other people have covered, he couldn't stick with anything for any extended period of time. He'd miss a few shifts or a couple in a row and you know how employers aren't that tolerant of that kind of thing.

HW: And he just wouldn't understand that, "What?!" I could see him. (laughs)

MG: So I think they finally just let him go after he missed a few shifts. That's my guess on that, I'm not sure.

HW: So anyway around this time he meets Mr. Chatham, right? And gets the encouragement he needs.

MG: No, that was much later.

HW: Oh, I thought that was late '90s.

MG: That was somewhere around 2003 or 2004 they decided to, that, the magazine in Bozeman, literary magazine out of Bozeman,

HW: Out of Bozeman? Bozeman has a literary magazine?

MG: Oh yeah, it's been there for a while. I never can think of it, it's probably not in existence now.

HW: There's nobody over there literate! I lived there.

MG: God knows, I lived there for 6 months.

HW: I lived in...I went to school there.

MG: Well Pete Fromm, the writer, he interviewed Ed for this magazine and they ran the story and took pictures of Ed, pictures up here at Butte. And I don't know if it was a, if maybe, that story probably came because of Russell Chatham finding a book of Ed's poems at a Bed and Breakfast in Butte. That's how it happened basically. Chatham explains that in the forward of *Birds of a Feather* book, the collected poems. He talks about how he was in this bed and breakfast and he found this collection of poems, *The Blind Horses and Other Poems*, that book the university bookstore had put together and he read it and he thought, "How the hell have I

been in Montana for 20, 30 years and didn't know about this guy?" So he calls Ed up telling him how blown away he his, wrote him a letter about how blown away he was, and wondered if Ed might be interested in making a real book. And of course Ed was totally interested in it and jumped on that idea. And he also mentioned to Chatham at the time he also happened to have novel that is just sitting over here. Chatham pretty much agreed to that too. He invested most of his power in that book of poems though, in that collection of poems and made this beautiful hardbound book with Clark City Press. Then they did a paperback of *The Thin Air Gang*, nice big....So anyway, that was in the mid, about 2003, 2004 with Chatham. But right after you did *Apples Rolling on the Lawn*, can you talk about that whole process a little bit? About *Apples Rolling on the Lawn*? Because you were in Butte and he's in Missoula, how did that come to be?

HW: Well the dates now are really...I know it was 19—1999. Yeah, I'd finished college up at Montana Tech. And I was working as Americorp at United Way. And I didn't like the place you can tell. Anyway, he was getting out of Warm Springs and I knew he had a collection of poems. I had seen a lot of them over the years. I had a bunch of them. And I just wrote him and I said, "We're going to try and put some poems together, send some more, I have these." So we---I pretty much did it all up until the point that Jim and Jana, they got involved and helped me print it. We used the United Way's printer, we had to buy them a toner cartridge. So, we printed that, and then we got the covers printed up at Instaprint. Found out we could've got for about the same if we'd just taken it up there, but we'd put all this work into it. And it was just the same process. Jim Duran did the tree, I don't know where we got that. It was just little chapbook and I just thought it would give him a lift so that's why we did that. It was his Christmas gift for that year 1999. His Christmas present from us. But like I said, he said, "Are you gonna sell them for me?" (laughter). Geez, c'mon... Humble fellow, Ed (laughter).

MG: Yeah, he was a character.

HW: After that, gosh, I didn't see him for a long time. He had had that poetry reading in Anaconda at the old courthouse over here, the heritage museum over there.

MG: That was after *Apples*?

HW: Yeah. I think the university had printed that. I thought, I was trying to tell him, don't include all of those poems in one book because you just got *Apples Rolling on the Lawn*, now you're gonna sell all of them in one book they aren't gonna buy this book. But he was taken with having a new book and wanted to sell it. So there were a lot of *Apples Rolling on the Lawn* books around for a long time. "You want ten...no not this week." (Laughter). Now, they're collectable almost. He got that published by them and like I said it was almost in competition, but what the heck you do the best you can. When he was in Anaconda it looked like he was having a rough time and I think he did go back to Warm Springs not long after that. He was just sweating and he was really nervous. He tried to use his tremulous voice to his advantage but sometimes when he was too nervous it wouldn't work I don't think. When it worked, it worked good.

MG: Yeah, when he was on, he was on.

HW: But you could always see he was covering up feelings or something like that. I think shortly after that had something to do with the Council Groves thing. I don't know because I hadn't been up there, but that's when he was driving the old car. That was just, I'd never seen anything that beat up in my life. I've seen a lot of cars. This thing had a dent everywhere!

MG: It didn't leave Council Groves I don't think.

HW: Did you ever see it?

MG: Yeah, we talked about it.

HW: I think someone was merciful and stole it.

MG: It wasn't drivable when he left Council Groves. I don't know what, if he let someone tow it.

HW: Junk yard wouldn't even want it.

MG: No, there weren't too many parts left on it that were any good.

HW: That was the low point I think. When I moved into Studebaker Arms he had a '74 Volkswagen Super Beetle, just real nice. The scariest driver you ever got in with. Never, ever, ever stopped at a stop sign...had no idea that that was "stop." Maybe that was his mom's. I guess it was, she gave it to him.

MG: The Bug?

HW: Yeah, she couldn't drive it anymore. She was pretty well blind the last few years. I guess he did a lot of taking her around when we lived up there in Studebaker Arms.

Somewhere around 2000, well when he got the book from Russell, the day we went up, we were gonna take him up to a Thai Buffet. That wasn't enough for him. We went home broke (laughs). He had a little clam linguini, red clam linguini and red wine.

MG: An author's celebration.

HW: Anyway he got real mad at me and I don't know I guess I haven't seen him since then, that was the last time. I called him at the nursing home.

MG: 2005, I think.

HW: Johnson told me, let's see, Jim's been dead, he's been gone a year, so two years ago he told me, "You better get ahold of Ed, check on him." Or I guess three years ago? I didn't take it too seriously. I wish I had but I didn't.

MG: You know if he hadn't aspirated he'd probably still be there. He seemed to have the heart of an elephant, the constitution. I mean for all... when you looked at him, his health, like you said he took so many drugs. He didn't eat, I mean what he ate...he didn't take care of himself, he looked like he was bloated. Of course he'd always complained of constipation all of his life, but it became a part of his obsession.

HW: Well you know, it started with Warm Springs. I mean that stuff plugs you up.

MG: I'd be there visiting and he'd just be focused on, obsessed, with the constipation. He'd say, "Would you wait? I'm going to see if I can..."

I'd say, "How did it go?"

He would, "(Sigh) I don't know, it's just I can't..."

I'd say, "How long has it been, Ed, since you had a bowel movement?"

"Oh I think yesterday, maybe..."

I said, "That's not too bad I know people who have gone maybe a week without moving their bowels, that's some constipation. Eat more it'll come out," you know, that kind of thing. Of course, a little time would go by and he'd be right back, he'd make three or four trips sometimes. But it was part of this obsessive thing. He'd land upon something.

He did that with, he wanted me to smuggle booze into the nursing home. I said if I get caught in here they'll probably 86 me. "Oh, I don't think so, do you?"

I said, "They warned me for sure. They might 86 me..." I said, "Well...would you rather have that one shot of booze or say bye to me?"

HW: It's pretty common these days to allow drinks.

MG: Yeah, I said let me talk to the nurse. I'll betcha they'll let us have a pint and dish us out a little shot. They won't let you have that pint and tip it back.

HW: Like you used to do at Studebaker Arms (laughs).

MG: Let half of it go and bring you your medication. That isn't going to happen.

HW: Man he could drink. I never could drink hard liquor. He just tipped it up. But constipation, that just comes with the psychiatric drugs. They're just awful with that. I doubt he was on anything like that when he was older.

MG: I mean his whole system, the distortion of his gut and....

HW: I thought that he might aspirate someday. Just from the size of his belly...you just can't force all that food down your stomach. I mean I didn't really take it seriously. It's something I saw a lot of. A lot of choking, you'd be standing behind a guy with that big of a belly. Always stood behind just in case, time for the Heimlich. Somebody probably didn't know how to do the Heimlich there. Of course, getting your arms around Ed.

MG: Really, I think it was probably...they walked away. He was in a bed in a single room. When I left, there was no one else in that room.

HW: Oh, he died that night?

MG: No, I think like Tuesday or Wednesday. I left on...anyway I saw him Sunday night. People would come and go. They usually tried to keep two in a room. He went through a lot of them in the rooms he was in. The last spot he was at, in this Alzheimer's ward, he was there by himself. One time there was a comatose person over here in the bed. But the last time there was nobody in there. So he was by himself. They brought him his breakfast, and walked away and left him in there.

HW: Oh, at breakfast it happened?

MG: Yeah. So when they came back to check on him he was gone.

HW: Hadn't used his call light, or nobody answered it. I tell you, during meals you don't have the staff to cover the halls.

MG: Right. Well there were people walking up and down there, but you know it's just one of those things. And I don't know if he was interested...because he went through periods of seeming to be, you know, comfortable. People were taking care of him, he always liked to be taken care of (laughter).

HW: He loved to be taken care of.

MG: Some days he'd be, "Hey! How's it going buddy!" and the next day he'd be, "Ugh, oh god, oh god (mumbling, groaning)." You know, that kind of thing and so you know, maybe...I mean, we joked about the fact you don't have a bullet but you have a fork. What else do you got?

HW: Did you really?

MG: Yeah...

HW: Well, he wouldn't do it on purpose.

MG: I don't think so, no. No one wants to choke that's a panic reaction. No one wants to do that.

HW: You know, he and I shared girlfriends too over the years.

MG: Well, there you go.

HW: I lived with a woman...maybe I shouldn't name names. Yeah, I've had affairs with his women, he had affairs with mine (laughter). Funny how that worked out. I don't know why. He had good taste and I did too.

MG: Somebody told me one night they were out drinking with Ed and a woman. He said he really thought there was going to be a threesome. That something was going to happen there.

HW: No!

MG: He was feeling...he really thought that was where this whole thing was leading.

HW: He told you this?

MG: Yeah, not Ed. This other guy told me. Then he said somebody showed up, somebody else came to the room. But he said he really thought that was where the whole thing was headed. I mean, it could've just been in this guy's head, not anybody else's. Stranger things have happened. Read the scroll of *On the Road*.

HW: Yeah. Did you read *The First Third*?

MG: Yeah, with Neil Cassady?

HW: Yeah, he was a crazy guy.

MG: No kidding.

HW: That was really excellent writing. I don't care what anybody says. The writing of that was incredible, he's a good writer. He just didn't have much of a topic.

MG: I saw a documentary, I don't know if you watch film a lot. It was put together by Kesey's son. He finally dug into these hundreds of hours of film that Kesey shot on the trip on the bus

and condensed it into a documentary film of almost two hours. There's quite a lot of footage of Cassidy driving and talking. Oh my god, I mean just talk about a standup routine.

HW: Talk about ADHD.

MG: Yeah, that and whatever else was going on, I'm sure on top of that, yeah.

HW: Didn't he die trying to catch a train?

MG: They found him on the tracks in Mexico. Dead and wouldn't be surprised, sounds about right.

HW: Well the last thing that I feel that I wrote, I guess about Ed, was that letter I sent to you. And I guess it was a prose poem. I've probably wrote more prose poetry than any other kind. Simply cause I'm not much of a poet.

MG: Do you remember what the title of it was?

HW: Just "Letter to Ed." He was already passed away and I wrote it present tense and just talked about finding this wonderful old typewriter and I was going to write this great new story on it and it's what you and I've always wanted and it's so smooth and at the end I said, "Oh, someone told me you were dead. You and I talked about that a thousand times. I'm sending this anyway. Love, Hal." (Laughter).

And we did, we talked about it a thousand times. Neither one of us really feared death in the sense of... I have friends or have known people who are just terrified. I don't even think of it. And maybe we all will at some point. I don't think it's something he would've feared. He might have feared not getting around, that kind of life is no fun. I don't think he thought of things like that at all. He would be thinking of poetry in his last days. His last breakfast...he would have made a poem out of it (laughter).

MG: A few things that, he went through before he left the Clark Fork. Must've been 2008, 2009, maybe, before he was moved into the assisted living place because basically he wasn't really able to take care of himself at all anymore...

HW: Now that's assisted living?

MG: That village health care, they had assisted living and the nursing home. But he was in the nursing home. They also fed the assisted living people there too. They had two different wings of the nursing home then they also had this locked ward where he eventually wound up. But he was in other rooms and just the nursing home for a long time. But he got there because he couldn't take care of himself in the Clark Fork, which was just an apartment. He started being afraid. He started...it looked like anxiety. Anxiety is hard to pin down anyway and of course he'

a man with mental health issues and medications anyway. But he started contacting, he's always had his sort of Buddhist practice of his own and readings and theories and poems and so on. He moved back towards Catholicism.

HW: Oh really?

MG: He had a good friend who was a nun who would come to visit him and they would talk about Catholicism. He tried to start reading...Who's the Catholic philosopher? I can't think of his name. He was trying to read this and he said, "Have you read this?" I said, "Oh no, I've kind of put my nose in, I knew I didn't want to go in there and spend too much time, I don't think I had that time left, I want to spend my time doing what I want to do." He said, "I know, I really tried, but it's awfully dry."

So anyway, he did, he was sort of, at that moment, he knew he was losing things on his own and he could feel this eminent change that he was going to be moved to the nursing home. He was definitely reaching out in those spiritual ways, wondering what was next. We talked a lot about that.

I'm sure that once we get there probably, just before we know it's that time, if you're given that opportunity to know you've only got this much space left, and you get to really contemplate it. Like my mother, she died of cancer, and it went really fast the last month and she was able to do it at home with hospice. She could feel that window closing in days and hours. If you live through that experience I'm sure that you really have a chance to come to grips with your whole understanding of the fact that now you're moving out, you're done. It's something we all have to face on our own when we get there. And if you're hit by a truck you're just fucking lucky. (Laughter).

HW: You got that right.

MG: Anything else?

HW: Well, in some spiritual sense he wasn't really afraid of it.

MG: I don't think so, no. I think he was just nervous about it to an extent. But that may have been complications from other things too.

HW: Yeah I would think so.

MG: God almighty.

HW: Yeah he was on meds all his life, his liver must've been shot. It was, "Smoking in his liver when he wrote his poetry." That's his words.

Um, to cap it off, gee I don't know. We had quite a time. Some of it was fun. Some of it was crazy. Not much of it was bad for me. A few fights, minor fights. We weren't that involved in each other's personal life. We certainly helped each other out when we were down. But not, you know, we were people on our own I guess. He had the people that he was dependent on and they were dependent on him for affection or whatever too. Maybe you should talk with some of his...Molly is still around, I don't know if she would.

MG: Molly?

HW: Powers I think. They were gonna get married once.

MG: Did she live in Butte?

HW: Yeah, maybe get a hold of her. And then he had another lady he almost married. He was getting around while he was here, he didn't waste his time (laughter). He had his quirks and stuff because of the meds and all the years of all that and his other problems but he always had a dame. If he didn't he would pretty soon. He was funny that way. Why waste it you know.

MG: Even when he was pretty, getting pretty feeble, pretty much using a cane if he had to walk any distance at all, he had a girlfriend who he ran into up at Lolo Hot Springs. She started coming down and picking him up and taking him to the hot springs. They had a few dinners and a few evenings.

HW: When he was at the nursing home?

MG: No, when he was at Clark Fork. This would've been between 2000 and 2005, somewhere in that neck of woods. Maybe even up to 2007. That woman was around quite a few times, a nice, good looking woman. Roger would say, "How does he do that? Why are women attracted to him?"

HW: He was gigantic.

MG: He was gigantic, and he was very feeble.

HW: Didn't have a scent.

MG: But he was charismatic.

HW: He sure was to the ladies, geez (laughter). Pass it on, bud! Yeah, I don't know, an interesting character. The more you know about him the better. You know what thing, he and I were both stuck on, ever read *Conversations in Sicily*? The most wonderful book. He and I talked about that for days and hours.

MG: Who wrote *Conversation in Sicily*?

HW: I don't know. I only read it once briefly and it went briefly through my hands. And he had read it briefly. It was the most wonderful book. It was about a guy talking to his dead brother in a cemetery, a long conversation about life and war and death. And Ed was always opposed to war. What war was on at that time? Been so many fucking wars I don't know which was which. This would've been back in the late '70s. Who were we at war with then? Iran?

MG: Probably threatening Iran.

HW: And we were doing something in South America. We were overthrowing somebody.

MG: We still had our eye on Nicaragua. Because Jimmy, old peanut farmer, wouldn't play ball with the Contras. They had to get Ronald in there, the great communicator (laughs).

HW: The great liar, confabulator. Jesus. Yes, quite a place. Elected George Bush and Ronald Reagan. Amazing.

MG: Yeah, cowboys...

HW: I don't know what they are. I guess cowboys is...

MG: Well I say that as a reference to just entertainment. Not a real cowboy. In Montana you know what a real cowboy is like. You'd love for a real cowboy to get ahold of George Bush and Ronald Reagan.

HW: I had that movie...what was the 9/11 movie by Michael Moore? Anyway George Bush is out digging on his farm. "What are you digging for President Bush?"

"Bugs." That's what he said! Bugs?! You're digging for bugs? Let your dog do it. God...no hope.

MG: One of my favorite Bush comments after he was long gone and we started dealing with this new brand of post Reagan Republican Party insanity. This guy that writes for Rolling Stone, Matt Taibbi, he's a hell of a writer, journalist, a real journalist. Anyway, he got the story on...he was talking about Boehner, the Speaker of the House, John Boehner. I guess Bush used to call, his nickname for Boehner, he'd say "What's old Boner got to say about this?" That's a Bushism (laughs).

HW: I believe that. Turd-blossom, isn't that what he called Karl Rove? I guess cattle turds there's some blossom that always comes out in the middle. I guess Karl Rove was always coming up with some horrible idea. Finding something beautiful in a cow pie. God, he's a turd-blossom. How could you possibly...Did you see "W"?

MG: Yeah.

HW: That's a good portrayal.

MG: No kidding. Oliver Stone.

HW: What a place. What a world. We're lucky.

MG: We are. That's why I'm here that's one of the reasons I'm here.

HW: Look how lucky I am. I mean I did have a real bad amount of luck. The first doctor didn't do his job. But here, I have insurance, I have a pension. I have home health care workers coming. I could be in Africa with Ebola.

MG: Or Iraq.

HW: Holy shit. How many people did Bush kill in Iraq?

Mg: I don't know, I don't think they counted them all.

HW: Thousands. No they couldn't count them all. Maybe the ones on top of the pile. Jesus.

MG: Should we turn this off?

HW: Whenever, it's your thing.

[End of Interview]