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Interviewee: Mark Gibbons
Interviewer: Chris LaTray
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Chris LaTray: Cool, you just want to start out reading that?

Mark Gibbons: Sure. This is a poem that Ed Lahey wrote to Roger Dunsmore, September 14, 2003. Ed was a great letter writer, and he writes,

Dear Roger, [pronounces it Ra-jah]

I am gradually making my way through *Early Morning*, Kim Stafford's wonderful memoir of his father [poet William Stafford]. I remember the party at Warren Carrier's home in the South Hills in Missoula where we got together to honor Stafford. In the kitchen, Marge, Carrier's wife, had prepared a large delicious ham, and set beside the ham, a loaf of cheese and a carving knife. There was bread also. We had been told to help ourselves and adjourn to the basement living room with our food. There was a bar in the downstairs living room and many bottles of expensive whiskey. Something attractive to me in those nervous years. I eyed the cheese but opted for a slice of ham on a piece of bread, and went downstairs so as to be able to station myself next to the bottle of Jack Daniels. People were crowded around Stafford, who, though he did not talk much, arrested attention. He stood with his wife who only had one arm. I liked her looks. She was an olive-skinned woman as I remember who seemed at ease. I remember thinking, 'She is doing the talking for her husband.' I could see that there was no room around the poet, and that did not distress me since I had gotten next to the whiskey and was able to refill my glass at will. A strong will in those days.

The room was full of people who I knew in one way or another—one's peers, the department, and department competitors. People were asking Stafford questions about his life and his work. He seemed modest, but I thought he might be egotistical—merely acting the part of a humble man. I wondered. After all, he had won the National Book Award, and we had heard him read from his recent book *Traveling through the Dark* and perhaps from *The Rescued Year*. He shuffled through many poems at the podium. I would have been egotistical. I dreamed of such attention, and I could not believe I could have handled such celebrity as easily as he did. If I did, I figured it would be a show—something most of the people in the chairman's basement living room knew how to do—to create an act which gave them Teflon insulation from sharp questions asked by naive students. These people were masters at hiding the marbles, we used to say, figuring we had to learn the art ourselves if we were going to get on with our careers. I hated the game.

After several drinks of the potent Kentucky bourbon, I made my way out into the crowd and spoke to people I recognized and put on the dog a bit myself so as not to appear ill at ease. I was ill at ease, but the whiskey smoothed me out and I heard words leap to my tongue and secretly felt like I was witty and smart. If only I knew why I felt that way, I thought. Who were these people? Why was I afraid of them and self-consciously in need of Dutch courage? It was simple. If I was perceived as ignorant or inept, I could lose my position. I was junior faculty and the room was filled with people who were in fact my judges. What if someone asked me a literary question I could not answer or had to bluff, and I embarrassed myself. It was all so unfair. In those days, it seemed like all conversations required bluffing ability since there were a million questions I could not answer. There were faculty who gloried in asking questions that made you hang yourself trying to answer. The room was full of Ph.Ds. My knowledge was awful knowledge. There was no safe place even by the bourbon. I wanted to go on teaching at the university, and not only hold my job as a composition teacher but to win my spurs and get a job teaching literature courses.

I trembled and made a final run for the Jack Daniels. I put an ice cube in a fresh glass and poured the glass full of amber liquid. Then I headed back into the sea of faces having decided I would at least speak to William Stafford so if anyone had been watching me it would not seem like I had copped out entirely. I reminded myself that my mother had always said, "Other people are interested in themselves." A surge of confidence moved me, and I made my way toward the poet who was standing alone now. His wife was by a table visiting with some others. I noticed as I walked around people that he was standing in front of the gas fireplace, and it crossed my mind that he might be cold. I had intended to say the usual, that I had enjoyed his reading but for some reason, I said instead—after I introduced myself—"Are you hungry?"

A benign expression flashed across his face, and he said warmly, "Yes." He had been standing around listening to people who surrounded him, and he had not gone up into the kitchen to get ham and cheese as had many of the rest of the guests.

"Do you want me to go up and get you something?" I asked.

"Let's go together," he said, and moments later I found myself in the company of the guest of honor, climbing the stairs to the kitchen.

"Do you write poetry?" he asked me as we climbed together.

It was my turn to say simply, "Yes." The kitchen was a disappointment. The ham was gone, and only a ragged bone remained. There was a piece of cheese left, and that was all.

"Do you like cheese?" Stafford asked.

“Yeah,” I said, “but you go ahead. I had a sandwich earlier.”

“No,” he said and picked up the carving knife, “we’ll share.” Then he cut the cheese—piece of cheese—exactly in half, smiled at me, and took a piece. I felt great suddenly and knew why I had come to the chairman’s party. I got to meet William Stafford. Things would never again seem as bad as they did when I was standing alone by the bourbon.

Sincerely, Eduardo—Ed Lahey.

CL: That’s a great letter.

MG: But you know, one of the things that strikes you about it is it’s a piece of literature.

CL: It really is.

MG: I mean it’s a letter. He was a tremendous letter writer, but there is a there is a storytelling distance and formality to that letter. And it’s just so well constructed and crafted, you can imagine how much many times he went back and—not necessarily revised it too much—but at least re-read and made sure—

CL: Proofreading, the whole bit.

MC: This thing worked exactly like he wanted it to.

CL: So I think we should start out first just for posterity sake, you should say a little bit of who you are for this recording and why it would matter why you would develop a relationship with Ed Lahey at all in the first place.

MG: Well, it has to do a lot...my name is Mark Gibbons, and I was a good friend of Ed’s in the very last part of his life. I’d say the last stage of his life. To me, that is the timeframe in which I knew him, and that’s from like 1996 to 2011, which is 15 years. That last part of his life was kind of a, kind of a golden time. I mean, prior to that he had only published one thing, and that was *The Blind Horses* and that was back in 1979. He had spent many, many trips to Warm Springs and Three North and St. Pat’s and the mental wards around—a couple of different spots around the state—because he lived in Butte and he lived in Helena and he lived in Missoula. So by the time he got back to Missoula in the early ‘90s—he got out of...the last time he got out of, I think it was, Providence, which is St. Pat’s, the old General Hospital which no one understands that. The Providence Center out by the Orange Street exit. That used to be the mental spot. By the time he got out of there and he got an apartment...As Roger mentioned—

CL: Roger Dunsmore.

MG: Roger Dunsmore, who was a good friend of Ed’s at that time and had been kind of taking care of him and getting him off to his dental runs to Butte and hanging out and visiting with

him, having a few drinks, Roger pointed out that Ed seemed to dive into the aspect of writing a novel and the writing of that novel seemed to focus him and give him some sort of a mission.

I'm sure that probably drugs had something to do with it too. I mean mental health had made advances over those 20 years from the '70s to through the '90s. So anyway, but he literally wrote two different novels in that timeframe from the very late '80s into the mid-'90s. He wrote a novel that was published the end of his life, *The Thin Air Gang*, about bootlegging in Butte. Then he wrote another novel that has yet to be published, but Drumlummon, I think, is going to probably publish that too, and it's called *The King of the Cabbage Patch*. They're both very good novels—excellent prose sort of writing—but of course, Ed was known, and he was known only to me at the time that I first met him as basically the voice of poetry in Montana.

CL: You were a student in the late '90s. You'd gone back to school in that time period, right?

MG: Right. '96, I went into the graduate writing program at the university [University of Montana]. Just prior to that, I had written a little chapbook of poems and so I was invited to partake in the Garden City Reading Series which was run by sort of a group of poets in Missoula. And it took place in the old Union Hall on Main Street—on East Main—upstairs in that big meeting room up there. John Holbrook kind of spearheaded the thing. He was kind of the man in charge. He kept it going really. But then he had help, and other poets Roger Dunsmore, Dave Thomas, Pat Todd, and Ed Lahey were all involved in that Garden City Reading Series. They would suggest people for the series. So that's how I managed to be involved in that series with a poet by the name of David Dale who's from Big Arm, Montana. I had met David up in Ronan and where I had been teaching high school English, and David was a high school Spanish and English teacher—formerly an English teacher—in Ronan. He was a poet, and he had studied with Hugo and other people in that old program—the writing program. So David invited me to go with him because he was invited to the Garden City Reading Series. So David and I went down to the Garden City Reading Series to read our poems, and there was a poet from Virginia City, who was a friend of Ed's who Ed brought over, and his name was Jack Waller. So the three of us read that night at the Garden City Reading Series—Jack and David Dale and myself. Ed introduced Jack, and then afterwards—after the reading—we kind of hung around and visited with all the people involved.

So that's where I first met Ed. But he was totally untouchable from my point of view at that point time. I met him, and he greeted me as he would because he was so cordial in that sort of way. But he was just...it was just almost too much. I mean whereas I immediately sort of became friends, I think, at that moment with Dave Thomas who is just such an easygoing, down to earth, bar stool sitting buddy that walked up afterwards and says, "Hey, I really like that...I really like that railroad poem you wrote, man. That's really good stuff."

[laughs] I'm like, fuck, that just made my goddamn day right there. Then Roger came over and he introduced himself, but immediately of all of those individuals that night...And John Holbrook was real nice to both...well, he knew David, but he was nice to me. I felt like the new kid on the block, but Dave is the guy that I immediately felt immediate kinship for like we could

go out and get to work on a job somewhere. Right? But the other people had that level of stature or status that I associated with literature. And Ed was a step above everybody else. So it was difficult for me to think about trying to just strike up a relationship with Ed.

CL: So Ed wasn't necessarily the sit on the bar stool, kind of guy at least in your eyes at that point?

MG: Oh god, no, not at that point time. No. I mean he became that guy. Many years later, but he sure as hell wasn't that guy initially. He was—

CL: Was he teaching at that time?

MG: No, no. He wasn't teaching, but, like I say by that time, he had written himself back into the world and a level of confidence and strength again of character and personality. Of course, anytime that you ever saw Ed perform poetry, he was just mesmerizing because he just had such strength and command.

One of the things that I found after Ed passed away I found his yearbook and there were all these...the way that kids write these comments to each other in yearbooks, and all these people were...He was in the debate club, he was in the drama club, and everybody referred to his incredible voice, his presence, his acting ability, his strength as a debater. They all thought he was going to be a lawyer or a politician or a judge or something profound like that. And important, because he had that manner to him, and he was very, very smart. You know, sharp as a tack. So I mean, when I met him in '96 at that reading, I think that after...because he had—also the opposite side of the coin—was literally the collapse, the breakdown, the coming apart at the seams where he spent time in mental hospitals—

CL: Was it schizophrenia?

MG: Well—

CL: Or do we even know?

MG: Well, I'm that if you wanted to go dig up those records...and one of his old friends who was a psychiatric nurse at Warm Springs, Hal Waldrup. When I interviewed Hal, he talked a little bit about the fact that, well, there were certain things he didn't really feel comfortable about saying. It's kind of that patient relationship. But you could, if you had the authority or ability to find out what the record said, I'm sure that you could find a whole lot of stuff. They used to call it schizophrenia. They used to call it by manic depression. Used to call it bipolar. I mean, not used to. These are terms that have developed, and one of the things that definitely was going on at the end of Ed's life was an obsessive compulsive thing that was just crippling for him. He just circled and circled and circled in these obsessions and these compulsive behaviors.

CL: And he would be diagnosed and treated now would be wildly different, I'm sure, than how it was handled back then.

MG: Oh yeah. And to begin with, I mean even after initial bouts that happened back in, starting in the very late '60s and through the '70s those, those first sort of breakdowns or attacks or whatever you want to call those kinds of things, I don't think he came out of there with much medication probably. Or if he did, I think he probably went back to the other medication which was a street medication. It was easy to get ahold of, and not to mention the old reliable John Barleycorn was always there. It was always a treatment option, and it soothed the wounded spirits.

He's been referred to as an alcoholic. He obviously had issues with alcohol. And a drug addict because like everybody in the '60s and '70s, he was sampling all kinds of psychedelics and different kinds of things. Then he also was prescribed different things at different times. Like I say, that's all just a...I don't think anybody ever has the last word on anything like that. Nothing ever solve the problem. But he found relief in different ways.

CL: So when you met him in '96 initially at that reading, then time passes before your paths really cross again, is that—

MG: Yeah, but not long because of the fact that that reading I...you know, I said '96 and it was either early '96, because it was winter, so it was either early '96 or late '95. It could have been late '95 because my book came out in '95, and I started in the program at the university in the fall of '96. So after that initial reading at Garden City Reading Series, early '96 or late '95, when I moved down...I actually didn't move down. I was still living up at a place in Pablo where my wife and sons were at. And I got my schedule worked out where I was three days in Missoula—I could be Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday down here—and then go back up on the rez [Flathead Reservation] for the rest of the week.

So once I can't start coming down here and going to school, that fall of '96, then I met Roger Dunsmore because Roger was teaching in the humanities department and doing poetry, and we had just met and so we sort of started kind of hanging out a little bit together. He told me...I told him, I said I was just absolutely fascinated with Ed Lahey, for obvious reasons like every poet in the state of Montana was but also because he was from Butte. My dad came from Butte, and he was Irish and alcohol was involved. And that all was like right up my alley. [laughs]

CL: Sure, and the only work you're familiar with is that original *Blind Horses* thing, right?

MG: Right, right. So Roger told me, he said, "Well, he lives right over there on 3rd Street in Council Grove, and he'd love to have some company. You ought to just go over and visit him."

And I said, "Just go over and fucking visit him?"

Roger, "Yeah, yeah." He says, "You want me to give him a call or something and let him know?"

I said, "Well, maybe, maybe...find out if he would be interested, if that would be an intrusion or anything. Yeah, let me know if he's interested, I'd more than...I'll fucking break a leg trying to get up the stairs to go visit him."

So Roger says, "Yeah, okay. I'll check on that." So Roger set me up. Roger checked with Ed that he wouldn't mind some company from some nosy graduate student guy who was kind of an old graduate student. I was like 42 or something like that. So anyway I...That's when I met Ed, and I just, I went over to his apartment. He lived in the Council Grove apartments in an apartment up there on the third floor. I went up there and knocked on his door, and "Yeah, Come on in. Come on in," and just started talking. I asked him a couple of questions and I mean, he was...By the time I met him there in his apartment, it was like he wasn't the same. It wasn't the same. When he was when I saw him at the Garden City Reading Series, and I'd seen him read before—just the goddamn presence—the body posture, the way that he held himself, and the way that he took himself so seriously when he read those poems in front of those people. The intensity in his manner and his face. All of that was so fucking spellbinding that he was larger than life. When I knocked on his door and he answered the door in his boxer shorts and a t-shirt, it changed everything completely. His hair standing on end, and he walks...and I come in, and he says, "Well, I'm glad you came. Nice to meet you. Can I get you a cup of coffee?"

I'm like, "Yeah, sure."

He says, "Just find a place to sit down there. You might have to move some stuff on the floor," because everything had shit all over it. Papers, books, crap stacked on everything. So I kind of found this one chair and kind of moved one stack off of the seat and sat down there, and Ed's standing over there at the counter. Well, no, actually the first thing he did when he walked in, he said, "Have a seat there. Just move anything. I'm gonna slip my pants on." He goes into his old bedroom, and he puts on a pair of pants and comes out. So now he's in a pair of trousers and his t-shirt. He goes over and he gets a couple of cups that are sitting on the counter and turns the water on and kind of runs them under the water. I can see him look in there, and he run them under the water and he takes like three fingers and wipes them down around in that cup like that, you know, to get that settled coffee out of the bottom and rinses it out again.
[laughs]

CL: Scrape the grounds off the bottom.

MG: Shakes the bottom, reaches over and grabs an old towel that's probably been hanging in there for three months, god knows, and kind of wipes the cup and pours me a cup of coffee and brings it over. I thought, now this is...What that reminded me of was total Cabbage Patch City, which is just perfect because I have such a total relationship to that whole Cabbage Patch mentality because that's what my old man grew up was in the Cabbage Patch in Dillon. To, then later on, find out that Ed had written this novel called King of the Cabbage Patch just blew my

fucking mind, not to mention the fact that he was born on the same day my old man was born—

CL: Wow, just the weird synchronicities—

MG: July 8 in Butte, Montana. Exactly. All those synchronicities. And the Irish aspect—all of this was just like...And the fact that in Christmas in 1993, my old man died and basically two years later I run into Ed Lahey, and for whatever reason he kind of becomes this oddly sort of surrogate father-kind of figure in a way. It just...I don't know...I mean, if I somehow made it that way or just the serendipity of the whole damn thing. It's just really interesting. For me, from my point of view.

So anyway, we start visiting and talking about poetry and his work and what he was doing, what he was working on—outside of just sort of the small talk and the getting to know and letting him know where my family came from and my dad, and my grandparents had come to Butte in '17 [1917] and my dad was born there. And my great-uncle Tommy Joyce was killed in the Speculator Mine disaster in '17. That blew my grandmother's mind. It was her little brother, and so she was not happy about being in Butte. She was not happy about her husband working in the mines after losing her little brother. So eventually he quit, and he tried to do...and he did other things. But I mean the real money was—if you're living in Butte—is working in the mines.

He actually worked on the Washoe Stack which was built in '17, '18 in Anaconda, which is a funny story because he was doing hod for it on the inside as they were building it. And one day he asked, yelled up to the bricklayers, what did it look like up there?

“Come on up!”

So he came on up and he walked up, and they got him right up on the edge and he looked over and they were up in the air about 200 feet or some fucking thing. [laughs] And he looked and he just almost—

CL: I can feel it just thinking about it.

MG: Vertigo, you know, whatnot. So he went back down, and he never went back. He quit that job because...and then he went back to work in a mine again, I think, underground, but all that blew my grandmother's mind. That's when she forced him to try to make the move, and so he made the move. If you're going to become a miner himself, become a prospector. So they moved down to Beaverhead County, and he worked for the city digging in sewers and that kind of manual labor stuff. But he also had these claims, he kept prospecting. But they were poorer than cat piss and they lived in the Cabbage Patch down there with the Chinese and the Hispanics and the five black people and all the lower classes.

CL: Yeah, probably a few Little Shell [Little Shell Band of Chippewa].

MG: Yeah, exactly. Several Indians I'm sure. Different varieties. Anyway those conversations we had and he talked about his family and the fact that they were moonshiners during the Depression, and during prohibition and into the Depression.

CL: So was your conversation...was it mostly...like what people would imagine as a couple of writers getting together and talking about their influences and drinking coffee with your pinky sticking out. Or was it...it was more just those connections and—

MG: Well I mean to begin with on that those first couple of meetings, I think the more of those Montana sort of connections—

CL: Getting to know each other's people kind of.

MG: Kind of the ground you're standing on, I think. Then ventured into the idea of the work or the poetry or the topics. One of the things that...well, one of the things that Leslie Fiedler who Ed had developed a relationship with Leslie Fiedler who taught here and was a preeminent literary critic in America and so Ed had met him here, taken a class from him, and then later on when he was trying to establish some kind of a literary reputation he corresponded with Fiedler after Fiedler left here for a while. Fiedler was then asked to give some kind of a response or whatever to Ed's work, or Ed asked him to. One of the things that Fiedler told Ed was that he was lucky to have something to write about. That his writing came from his life and from a place and a source on the earth that it was, had this earthiness to it. It had this connection to not only the earth, but people and the earth, and in a way that so many writers who work from their imagination don't quite achieve that same sort of attachment to a place or the ground in the way that Ed's work did. You know if there's any kind of a way of talking about...I mean I'm not a big advocate of place poetry or regional kind of work necessarily, but obviously those poets who come from a region and then write out of those experiences are going to have that kind of a thing going on. And Ed had it in fucking spades. Particularly writing about the miner-related stuff or just that aspect of Butte so heavily dominated by that that his work definitely captured that.

So I mean he had that going on, and I think he recognized a similar kind of thing in what I was doing because that was sort of where I came from—a similar mindset in that—and that sort of came from Hugo I guess. And that's where Ed, I guess, maybe got that from. I'm guessing that's where that originated from because, see, I became interested in poetry through Jim Welch, a student of Hugo's, who came to my school through the arts program—state arts program—to teach us poetry. And that's what he told us, you know, you need to...because everybody was trying to write poetry. [laughs] We didn't know how to write poetry. We read it in our English classes. So we thought, well you know, and everybody knew how to rhyme, and we all were fairly familiar with song lyrics. So we kind of had a sense of a little bit of that kind of thing, but Welch came in and gave us that Hugo philosophy of writing from your own experience or writing from a place or letting—

[snaps fingers; talks to the cat] Hey! Luna. [laughs] Goddammit.

—writing from a place where—

She distracted me.

CL: Write what you know, right?

MG: Exactly, exactly. Just that kind of a thing. At least let it start there, and a lot of times just follow your observations. I think that was key. So Ed did that. When you look at his later work, he was living in Butte and he was still, he was following his observations. He wasn't trying to rewrite the poems in *Blind Horses*. He was writing poems out of his experience at that time in Butte which was in the '80s or whatever. And Butte was a different place. Then he moved to Missoula, and the poems—a lot of the poems, *Apples Rolling on the Lawn*—came out of Missoula. And Butte's not there in the lines necessarily. But there's something still there in the language and the choices of images and the weight in the poetry—that doesn't go away. So anyway, Ed had that ability, and that's the way kind of he went at poetry. Once in a while, he wrote sort of heady kind of things or playing around with language, but a lot of times it was just started from observations and some of it definitely came from dreams, which are observations that we have.

CL: Do you think your relationship helped him keep working or...I mean, where was he as far as his own career at that point? Because he'd had the book come out and then all those years passed because he is held as this kind of like center of this wheel of all these different poets—of people who if there's one thing they have in common it's Ed Lahey's influence. Was he still that guy, or was he becoming that guy? I guess I'm just trying to place him where he is as far as the big picture when you guys started spending time together.

MG: Well, I think he was already that guy, but he was that guy that really hadn't gotten the attention that we all felt he deserved and that he'd gotten a raw deal in a way just because of his own mental disabilities—if you want to call them disabilities or problems. So he couldn't get a break in in the in the literary scheme of things because he was held in that high regard and I think right almost from the get go. When you talk to his old friends like Rick DeMarinis and the people that knew him back in the '60s when they were in the program with Hugo. Paul Warwick, those people—they were just like...they were in awe of him at that time. Of course, by the late '60s he had started to come unglued. So he'd written much of that poetry, a lot of it, some by that time, but it didn't go anywhere because he didn't go anywhere. He came apart. Then in the process of coming apart and kind of losing his family to boot and dealing with all of that and trying to get back, he struggled. Finally by the end of the '70s through the help of Paul Warwick and Rick DeMarinis and Jim Welch...because Jim Welch and DeMarinis were serving for the Arts Council. They were readers for that first book award when Ed finally had the book together—*The Blind Horses*—and he submitted it for that contest. When two of your best friends and biggest fans are on the board, you're more than likely going to have a pretty good ear. Warwick helped to help him get all that together and so the success of that first book...Then he followed up that first book with a second edition, and the second...The first

edition of that book, the cover design was drawn by his uncle Bert—Bert...damn! Well, it's in the archive. But his Uncle Bert was, you know, did sketches and graphic designs and artwork, and so he drew this picture of the horse—the blind horse—for that cover. Then the second edition of the book came out as *The Blind Horses and More Poems* because there was a couple of poems added. It was a bigger book. A little bit larger. And the cover was literally a photograph of a blind mine horse, that was shot by Lee Nye, the portrait photographer. Got all the shots down at Eddie's Club or Charlie B's [a bar in Missoula].

After that addition, everything went silent, and Ed kind of fell by the wayside, went through a few more ins and outs and downs and outs, and didn't do anything again until 1999. The little chap book called *Apples Rolling on the Lawn* was done by Hal Waldrup, his friend in Butte. Most of those poems, or a lot of them, there's about half and half, I'd say, between sort of Butte-related and Missoula-related type poems. Several about his family. Roger and I used to joke about them being the grandpapa poems because there's just a different tone. Totally different tone 20 years later than *The Blind Horses*.

CL: Well then, Russell Chatham comes along and combines all of that into *Birds of a Feather*, right?

MG: Yeah, 2005. Yeah...Well, before that, actually in 2000...In 2000, there was the University of Montana Bookstore, which really doesn't exist anymore—that was back when it was a bookstore—they decided to do a facsimile reprinting after...This was after *Apples Rolling on the Lawn*. Do a, what they call, the facsimile reprinting of the first edition of *The Blind Horses*.

CL: Yeah. And that's the one that I have.

MG: Yes. Yes. Janet Homer was kind of responsible for that. She was a friend of Ed's and a writer and worked at the University Center Bookstore. Then after that came out and they found a little success, then they decided to push for a larger collection since they evidently got the ear of the university or whatever, they decided to push for a larger paperback collection. Nothing fancy, but...and they called out *The Blind Horses and Still More Poems*. Jenny Fallein, a poet and artist—Roger Dunsmore's wife—she drew an image of an old Underwood typewriter with these horses and traces kind of leaping out of the keyboard. They used that as the cover for that addition. Basically what's in that book though, *The Blind Horses and Still More Poems*, is what Russell Chatham found when he was at some kind of a bed and breakfast in Butte, is my understanding, and he found that book and he started reading it and he thought, 'How come I don't know about this guy? What the hell!' I mean, he's reading these poems and going, 'Jesus, this book...' because what was going on with him at that time—Chatham—was that he had Clark City Press. Chatham had the Clark City Press. Everybody knows who Russell Chatham is.

CL: Sure, artist, writer.

MG: Landscape artists. Famous worldwide and whatnot. Restaurateur, writer, and publisher. He ran a press out of Livingston called Clark City Press. Did 30, 40 titles or something like that,

but he decided to do this reissue of the O'Malley [Richard K. O'Malley] book, *Mile High Mile Deep*. Novel about Butte. After that, and he bumped into this book of Ed Lahey's, he was also getting the...his ear was being...they were going after him from Ellen Crain and the women of Butte were talking about this *Motherlode*—a collection of stories of the women of Butte that they were putting together. [pauses] Oh god! What's the other gal? Doesn't matter at this...Quinn was her last name [Janet Finn]. Anyway, so they did that. They were putting that book together, and so Chatham had this O'Malley book and he wanted to do Ed Lahey's book and he had this *Motherlode* book. So all of a sudden there was this Butte emphasis going on. So he did all together. At the time he was working on Ed's book of poems, Ed told him he happened to have a novel about Butte. So he was very interested in reading that, and that's the *Thin Air Gang*, which is a hell of a novel about Butte, about moonshiners and Butte.

CL: Did you help Ed, at this point at all, with any of this stuff?

MG: Other than just reading and talking about it, no, I didn't actually help in the process because Clark City Press did...basically they sent a guy over to sit down with Ed and retype and type the manuscript. So they went over it, and the same thing with the novel. So all of that was that was basically handled by Ed and Clark City because they were invested in it. No, I didn't have to deal with that at all. In a work way.

But then later on...trying to remember what...was probably 2006 or 2007 when Lowell Jaeger formed something called Many Voices Press out of Flathead Valley Community College up there. And wanted to put together an anthology of Montana poetry. His idea for that was to contact ten poets in the state, and then have them find ten poets. Then he could, out of that, put all these people together in this anthology to be an anthology of Montana poems. Ed was chosen to be one of those people. Like I say, I think was like 2006, 2007 maybe, something like that. Ed had started to slip at this point. He was starting to slip. I mean, it was a struggle along that lines of that question you asked me about Clark City. I think that was a bit of a struggle. I don't know how much, but I think that the novel was a bit of a struggle too as far as the whole editing thing goes. But I don't know. I don't really know anything about that. I mean, I just heard comments that it was...because he was not...he didn't have the same abilities he had had just a couple of years before that.

So when it came time for this anthology thing, Ed said to me, he said, "Well, I could do this if I if you would be willing to help me."

I said, "Yeah, I can do that." So I helped him, and we got together...I think I really, in my own mind, I'm proud of the group of poets that are in Ed's section in that book. There were ten people I remember—

CL: Which book is this? Is it—

MG: *Poems across the Big Sky*.

CL: Yeah, that one, the first one. Because there's two of them now, right? Yeah.

MG: Yeah, the first one. Ed, well, he thought of the people that he knew and of course, he knew, he thought, well, obvious choices for him were John Holbrook and Dave Thomas and Roger was—he had a section on his own. By that time, Roger was down in Dillon teaching still at Western Montana College. So he was one of the ten. And Sheryl Noethe, she was one of the ten. So they had they had their own little sphere of ten people to deal with.

CL: Sure, and those are two people that presumably Ed would have chosen as—

MG: Oh, yeah, for sure. Well, I mean it to an extent you could probably say that of a few, but I'm trying to remember exactly who everybody was. Keeler was another one. Greg Keeler. Greg Keeler and Lowell [Jaeger] and Sheryl [Noethe] and Roger and Ed, and Zarzyski [Paul Zarzyski] was one. Tami Haaland was one and... [pauses] I shouldn't have started this. Now the three people I left out...well, they'll never know. [laughs]

Anyway, because of the fact that Ed didn't know a lot of other people at that particular point time to think of, I suggested people to him. So I found these different people who I don't think anybody had ever heard of. They're poets that...One guy lives down in Superior and another one lived up in Seeley Lake. One of the people that we chose for it, it was a friend of Ed's that he'd been at Warm Springs with, was a man named Steve Robbins. Was an exceptional brilliant man, but—and I say this in an endearing way—his poetry was crazy, man. It was really good. He was a good writer, but it was just out there. It was on a different sort of plane, to which...which I love to digress, so why don't I?

I taught over at Warm Springs through Very Special Arts and had this class at Warm Springs. A lot of the people that I worked with over there...some people...It's like any crowd of people. Some people are just...they're good, they're marginal, they're what not. But there were some really exceptional people over there that...you think a lot of people...I mean, people always are drawing conclusions or comparisons to the fact that, "Look at all the crazy people in the arts," or whatever. I don't if crazy's the right word, but just people that are touched in ways that other people aren't. I think there's something to be said for that. I mean I think it's a lot of it is because you're writing out of the right side of your brain a lot of times. It's interesting to see the things that...it's just surprising. We like to be surprised, I think. So it was fun to have that experience over there. Then we had a culminating activity—you always do in those kinds of writing group things—where you have a reading. I invited Ed...the gal that I was working with—the occupational therapist gal over there—Cheryl Emmons. Cheryl Emmons. She knew Ed. She loved Ed. She'd spent time with Ed, and so she agreed that that would be perfect to have Ed come. So Ed got to come and be a part of this reading celebration. It was like having the graduate, the old alum, come back and read. So that was a really neat trip to be able to do that.

And Steve was there. Steve Robbins. One of the guys that was in that *Poems across the Big Sky*, book and he read his poem too. Steve was in that. So that was fun to work on that project with Ed.

Then of course, the work that we...Ed and I and Sherly Noethe and Sheryl's husband Bob Rajala and...oh, couple other people. Kim Anderson who was the director of the Montana Humanities, or at least involved with Montana Humanities. I don't know what her position is exactly, but...well, she used to, she was the director of the Missoula Writing Collaborative when I first went to work there or soon after that. So she was there for a while, and I think had a couple other people show up. But mainly it was just the four of us, and we get together as kind of a writing group just to visit and share some stuff that we'd written and just hang out. We did that for a while until Ed started kind of losing interest in that.

CL: Then as his kind of decline started in earnest, or for the last time, however you want to put it, did you find...I mean, were people kind of falling aside maybe to where his circle of...his support structure was kind of deteriorating as well? Or was everybody still kind of part of his circle? I wasn't like it was just Ed and you, and there wasn't anybody else, right?

MG: Oh. No. That's not the case, but it does—in those kind of situations, people do tend to fall off. I mean, you can't...And of course we can't keep up with everything anyway. I mean, that's part of life to. But his daughter Sarah was always there. Sarah was always around and looking out for Ed, looking into what's going on. So she was always in the picture, and Roger was around to check up on him. A lot of people I think sort of...I mean sometimes I'd grab Dave or I'd grab somebody like that and go visit Ed just to add a little bit more color to the visits. But I went to see him, and I don't know why that is exactly other than like I said, I mean, it may in part just be...I'm an odd character, I think, in a way. I mean, I grew up here. Like you, I grew up here with my family and my parents. So I always looked after them in a way and looked out for them. I mean, I was like always in constant contact with my mom or my dad or whatever—that kind of thing. That was just something that I'm just used to, I guess. My sister was the same way. I felt that way about her too. She was sick in her later life too, and so I felt incumbent to make sure that I didn't lose track of that because people like that, they get stuck and isolated and they've got nobody, not a lot of people stopping in. Well, Ed was like that for me. I mean like I say, he kind of replaced that father figure sort of for me too. So it was kind of like a family. It was kind of like Sarah's involvement being the daughter. There's kind of this family almost obligation that was with me in my association with Ed. That's mainly from my perspective. Who knows what Ed's perspective was on that, even though I know that he really appreciated it and he really cared for me. But it's just the way that all went down.

CL: When did he go from Council Grove to more assisted living?

MG: He went from Council Grove over to the Clark Fork Manor, yeah. Then he was at Clark Fork Manor from...oh, he was there for probably almost ten years.

CL: Oh wow!

MG: Quite a while. Yeah. Quite a while because I think it was...it was about 2008 maybe. He won the Governor's Award in 2008. He was still the Clark Fork Manor, and right after that—it

was in the six months, I think, after that, which would have been the end of 2008 or beginning of 2009—is when he wound up being moved into assisted living at the Village Healthcare.

CL: Okay, and Clark Fork Manor is kind of an assisted living place.

MG: Yeah, yeah, kind of. Yeah. I mean, you got to pull strings there, and they're sort of keeping track of you because you're on a meal plan—one or two, two times a day or whatever your thing calls for. But for the most part, you're on your own. You're coming and going from your apartment. My mother was there for a while. [laughs] She moved in. She was there when Ed was there. They were there together, and he moved out just before she passed away. She moved in, and she didn't want to be there. She didn't want to leave her place necessarily, but her health had really started to deteriorate and we didn't know exactly what was going on and turned out to be a cancer situation that those things don't oftentimes really become debilitating until after about a year. So anyway, she—in that whole timeframe—she wound up moving to town because a lot of doctor's appointments and not feeling well. She moved in, they kind of got to know each other in about a three to four month window there. Then he moved out in the end 2008, and she died in February...March...February...March...February...one of the...Yeah, that in 2009.

But that was funny because he had a reputation as...He read there a couple times, and he had his reputation as the poet. As Roger said, he kind of had a reputation as a ladies man. He'd be down there at the table of blue hairs, holding court. "Wasn't that a delicious pudding," that kind of thing. Developing these relationships with these people. So my mother ate with him once, I think, down there at a table. But she spent a lot of time in her room too. She's pretty damn independent, and she really didn't...she was not into the whole social aspect of that thing. So I mean, it all worked out. The window of time and her disappearance, that all worked out pretty good probably the way it went down.

Anyway, she introduced herself to him. Or he introduced himself to her, I guess. It was after a meal there one day, and quite formally, he said something along the lines of, "Mark, your son, is a good friend of mine, and he's a wonderful, he's a wonderful fellow," you know, whatever, something like that.

And Fern says, "Well, I don't know. He can be an asshole." [laughs] And that just tickled the shit out of him. It just laid him in the shade because he didn't exactly see that one coming.

I said, "Oh yeah, there's plenty more where that came from."

CL: Yeah, that's funny.

MG: She was pretty witty. But, yeah.

CL: It was his move then from there to...was it Village Healthcare?

MG: Right.

CL: Where you came into possession of all of his papers and stuff, right? Because he couldn't take any of that stuff with him.

MG: Exactly. Exactly. So that was like late 2008, I think, we showed up there and boxed up everything and hauled that stuff out of there and gave away whatever things that were worth keeping to people that wanted them or would take them and or The Goodwill and then throwing a lot of it in a dumpster. But all the boxes all the paper and that kind of stuff, I just moved into my basement. I mean, only the paper, really. Anything else that was, had to be boxed and whatnot, that probably went to the dump most of it. I mean it was about like that. But the paper, yeah, went to my basement, and it just sat there. I didn't have time to even go down that road at that point in time.

CL: When you finally did, did you find any surprising evidence of work he'd done that maybe you didn't realize he was doing, or was it all stuff that he'd done years before?

MG: Well—

CL: Because towards the end, you guys had kind of worked on a few things together, just to kind of keep him—

MG: Oh yeah. Well, that was right close to the end. That was when he was...he was still...Well, actually it was closer to when he first moved in there, within the first...I think those poems were written in 2000...maybe 2010, like spring 2010. I think that's what it was. Only two poems. Before that people had tried to do a lot of things for him. They got him these kind of arm-hand braces that you could rest your arms in and your wrists and then come into the keyboard to...But it was way beyond that kind of thing because he had the tremors. He had the tremors from the manganese poisoning stuff, but it was...the problems were more in the head and distractions and just not being able to get started on anything. It was so difficult. He tried to write notes and write a letter, and he'd pick at that keyboard and laying in bed and just not having the energy so.

Anyway, Sheryl and I tried to do one with him one time in which she wanted to transcribe for him. We were going to transcribe for him. That just wasn't working. We got a little something written down—a couple lines, I think—but he was easily too easily distracted and probably by Sheryl too. He liked Sheryl. Anyway, when I finally asked him if he was interested in trying to do something he said, “Yeah, sure.” So the people there at the Village, they had an empty room, and they let us go down and sit in this empty room and it had a window out on the street. So it was a window looking out onto whatever that little side street is off of South Avenue and Fort Street—

CL: I know exactly what you're talking about.

MG: Right behind the Union Plaza Apartments or whatever. That little connecting street there. So there was a window right up front there, and so we can sit in there and close the door—quiet—and then we could look out that window and you could kind of see the valley on the south and east side. Then we just kind of started, threw out a line and he threw out a line and we did that and came up...Another time that that room wasn't available, and we went to another room—it was like a big lunch room or something on the other side of the South Avenue side. We spent longer trying to write that second poem there, and it just wasn't...It just wasn't going anywhere. I mean, it was okay, but what came out of it—

CL: Was that hard to do? I mean, was it hard just as someone who knew what he'd been capable of to see the decline or—

MG: Oh yeah, sure. Yeah. Well yeah, I mean it was basically...Yeah, it was just...by the time I knew that was that. This was it. We weren't going down this road anymore. This was just a waste of, well, both our times. I don't know what exactly he was doing with all the time in his head because he wasn't far away from the Alzheimer's ward at that point. At that point, he was, he was screaming in his room, and they'd come in and he'd have to go to the bathroom and he'd just band. They'd get him up again and he couldn't go, and he'd go back to his bed. Then he'd be in there again, and an hour later he's ringing the bells and, "Help! Help! Help!" Doing that kind of thing. And they're understaffed—those goddamn places. Those people are saints, and the fucking owners of those places should be hung on the same fucking gallows with McConnell and the other cocksuckers.

So they eventually had to move him into that Alzheimer's ward where he would have managed sort of care that was necessary for someone in his state at that point. That was...yeah, that was sad to see somebody go that route. Before that, prior to that...and we'd had conversations about...well, I'm going to say suicide—about exit, about getting the hell out earlier. We'd had conversations about that the first time I ever fucking met him back in 1996 and '97 when we were hanging out in Council Grove. He was severely depressed over there. Out of the blue after about the third or fourth visit, he asked me one day, he said, "Let me ask you. What is your...where do you stand on the ethics of suicide."

And I thought, 'What a great goddamn question,' and he gave me a poem—a poem. Out of that experience, I wrote this poem, and I thought 'God, that's a really good fucking poem.' But it's like I'm mining this guy. I'm using this situation and this human being for this poem or whatever right.

CL: How did you feel about it, and you feel differently now than maybe you did then?

MG: At the time, I felt uneasy, but I also knew it was a really good poem and I was really fucking...Anytime you write a really good poem, you're really fucking excited.

CL: Right, and you don't care where it came from. [laughs]

MG: Well, you do. You care, goddamn it, but you're just so goddamn excited about it.

CL: Sure, sure.

MG: It's like, fuck, you can't just let this thing go. I said, "The least I could do is have the balls to read it to him."

CL: But I just mean about the ethics of suicide.

MG: Oh well, that's in the poem, yeah. Yeah. As the line in the poem says, "It's a comfort to know that door's not locked." It's an emergency exit. That's what it is.

CL: It's a different bell to ring.

MG: It's everybody's right. It's your essential right. It's your life—

CL: To decide when you've had enough.

MG: Yeah. And god knows, those people that choose it—particularly people that are really old enough to make that decision—don't do it lightly and that's 100 percent their business. It's unfortunate if...and they're not in complete control of their faculties. I mean, that's an issue that...I mean to be weighed, I guess.

CL: Well, and the system sure as hell doesn't want anybody going out and taking care of that themselves.

MG: Oh no. Well, that's...that's why you can't get into fucking heaven. The system's been after that one for a long time. [laughs] They don't like that one. Yeah. But I did bring that poem to him and read it to him.

CL: Which book is that in?

MG: It's in *Connemara Moonshine*.

CL: I haven't read that one yet.

MG: It's called "Old Poet Dot Gone." [oldpoet.gone]

I read it to him and afterwards he said...what the hell did he say exactly? He said...I remember the first thing he said. The first thing he said was, "God!" like g-a-w-d [gawd]. "Gawd!" He was like, "Oh!"

I told him, I said, "I apologize for that. I know that cuts awfully close to the bone." But I said, "It was just...it was so...it just seemed so strong, the whole..."

It was afterwards, and he said, “Don't ever apologize for a poem. Don't ever apologize for...” I mean, that's not to say that can't be the case, but what he didn't say behind that was that if you are someone who is writing with a sense of compassion, don't apologize for what you have to say. The truth is not something that is meant to hurt anyone. There's all kinds of things that you can apologize for writing. God knows, I read it in the paper every fucking day. But a really good poem written from the position of compassion, I don't think there's any reason to apologize for that.

CL: Was he a pretty strong supporter of your work, or was that...

MG: Oh yeah. Yeah. He wrote...Oh, I should have brought it with me. I gave you a copy that little tiny chapbook with the odd shape on the front?

CL: Yeah.

MG: *Circling Home*. There's a blurb that that he wrote in there. I asked him if he would write something—this was like the second thing I'd ever had done—and I asked if he'd write it, write something for it. So he wrote this wonderfully large sort of blurb, and it was just...it was wonderful. It was shocking to me because we never talked like that to each other. But it was the kind of thing that you're always happy to see—what somebody thinks or has to say. So yeah, no, he was very, very supportive of what I was up to and kind of I think along similar lines as what he saw in other people doing the same kind of stuff.

CL: Was he aware of kind of that position was held in by kind of your generation of poets—you and Dave and Cheryl—did he know that you guys thought so highly of his—

MG: Oh yeah. Yeah.

CL: Like that letter, you can kind of....He's writing about these other people in the room in a similar fashion to how you describe feeling when you met him at that reading.

MG: Right. Exactly. Yeah, I think that's just standard operating procedure. That's just the way—

CL: For those of us who aren't just raging egotistical assholes, right?

MG: Yeah, exactly. And for those for those of us that are aware that we definitely believe that we have something to say, but we know that it really means nothing. And it has no status in the world of literature or in the world of any kind of broad audience or anything. I mean really, I think of...And we've had this conversation because you're a small-town guy, and I just have this very, very sort of narrow vision of life. I mean, it's not to say that I think I'm small minded, but I just have a small-town perspective of life. I would love to not have that...I think it's disabling at times. It's a little bit confining. It's like I wish I had more ambition. Ed had more ambition than I do. But there's something about, you know...And part of...a lot of it is with me, it's my old man

sitting on my shoulder, saying, "You're a big fish in a small pond. Don't forget that." It's like yeah, yeah. I'm glad you told me that. I feel much better about myself. Asshole!

CL: David Sedaris talks about his dad being like that. Like he'll invite his family to a sold-out theater show in wherever town they're in, and first thing after the show is Dad comes up, "Well, that wasn't sold out."

"Well, yeah it was."

"No, I counted at least 30 empty seats," in a stadium that holds 3,000 people.

MG: [laughs] Well, somebody knew better than to show up for this one.

Always be prepared for the worst. Yeah, okay. Thanks. Needed that.

Ed's mother saw herself as an artist, and she was a very ambitious person and she had high ambitions for Ed. She also had some issues with mental health. It ran in his family. He was that odd combination of sort of...He was very smart, and...He was very smart and he was very ambitious, but he was also so fragile and so flawed and crippled that it made him vulnerable. And that gave him great compassion. But he also had those other things. So he was just such a complex individual. Just when you think you could describe him one way or another or wrap him up in a sort of a kind of a package, he would do something that you'd say, "Well, there goes that theory." Because he was just a very, very complicated man, capable of all kinds of things from the...But the beauty of my relationship, my personal relationship, with him was the fact that I came along at a time late in his life, which were really sort of the glory or golden years for him on all levels because he was an old man and the problems of his past were quite a ways in the past and not haunting those he loved quite so much. And his success for his writing and the attention he was getting at this time of his life also added to his comfort zone. He felt better, and even though he's still living pretty much destitute. But he, at least, had some respect. And receiving the Governor's Award was wonderful for him.

So anyway, it was a good time. I was lucky to have met him and to have known him. He definitely...I don't know if he was...He was a hell of a...I don't know if we were a lot alike, or if I sort of became somewhat in a way like him in terms of just writing or not. I really don't know, and I don't know how we figure these things out. We don't, I guess. I'm just talking fucking out loud at this point in time, but there was a real sort of a kinship of whatever spirit on other levels besides just writing. In a sense I guess, we all have that as human beings in a way, and if you get around somebody and you spend a lot of time with them, you start thinking like them kind of.

CL: Yeah, I mean I...Sometimes, I think about this. You know, you've got Ed and Hugo and those people and then there's your kind of generation of your kind of group, and sometimes I feel like I'm part of a group that's like a step below that. You start to feel just those generational progressions that you stop and think about and say, "Well, who knows in 20 years who's going to be talking to me about you." You know what I mean? You never know who the person is

going to be that in the next generation people are going to want to know about. You know what I mean?

MG: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

CL: It's definitely something that I feel differently now than maybe I would have five or ten years ago.

MG: Yeah. Yeah. It seems like...Well, and it makes perfect sense, of course, that the closer we move towards the end of the line that there's an exponential sort of learning curve that happens. I mean, it seems like there's...things just started seem to be accelerating. That's a common phenomenon that everybody that gets old says, is things are just going faster and faster and faster, and they are in a way but you definitely get a totally different view of life—your life and life in general—the older you get. And that just becomes more and more exaggerated the further you get down the line.

CL: If only because you just start trimming away all the bullshit that doesn't matter.

MG: And it's just phenomenal to think that if you could live to be somewhere in your 90s or something like that, what you would be packing around in your goddamn head at that point in time because it's a...it's...yeah. Of course, you lose track of so much behind you. There's just too much to hold onto and keep up with and stay in touch with, not to mention the fact that everything is growing underneath you.

I think that in the world of literature, poetry, publishing, whatever you want to call it—that world has exploded in a way that people of my generation can't even comprehend. In a way that...I mean, when I was growing up and the canon was huge, but the depth to the canon was huge because it was like you went so far back in time to gather all of these people that were like “the people.” Then all of a sudden you started—as you got a little bit older—you started recognizing that there was this level of contemporary people working that many of them—some were in the canon, some weren't—but they were all exceptionally wonderful writers and whatnot. So then you started sampling all of those people. Then it just...and all of a sudden people around you, and it just kept growing, just growing...It's like, well, “my god, who isn't a poet?” [laughs] You turn around, the guy changing your tires. Oh! “You've got a new book out?” [laughs] It's just astronomical the amount of people who are recording their thoughts.

Teaching kids, that's the conclusion that I came to because you get classroom after classroom of kids, and in 15 to 20 minutes time, they'll write something that's a pretty goddamn good poem. Every single one of them sometimes. It's like maybe not every week, but everybody's a damn poet. But not everybody writes it down. Not everybody takes it seriously enough to think that this is worthy of writing down.

CL: Well, you have any last thing you want to say about Ed?

MG: Well, no, probably not. I didn't even think about concluding remarks because there's...Yeah. I may come back and do something like this again because...if I think of something...You know, that's the other thing too is that it's like when you sit down and start looking at things or telling stories or if I sit down and look at his poems, then you think of something that happened in some place and some time. It's like getting that...I told you I got that recording from Jim Driscoll in Butte that was done in Missoula at a book festival in 2006. And that was the night that Ed had...well, he was reading and there was a part of that Chatham's books done on Butte, and he was reading from his new book of poems *Birds of a Feather*. He got up there to read, and he had...He'd been making trips to Butte for the dentist because he had a pro bono dentist in Butte. He finally got all of his teeth pulled and he got his new denture. And he looked great because he'd been running around with no teeth in his head. He looked great. And of course, his voice sounded normal again because his tongue was hitting the back of his teeth and words sounded like words, instead of when he didn't have it and it was [Gibbons mimics Lahey by replacing "s" sounds with "th" sounds, imitating a lisp], "So, when you say nothings there, but [unintelligible]." He sounded like Elmer Fudd kind of or "suffering succotash"—Sylvester.

Anyway, he's up there and he gets in front of the microphone and he goes [clears throat], and he goes, "Well, if you will pardon me [smacks lips] I just got a new denture, and I think I will remove it because it feels like I have a shoe in my mouth." And he pulled out his upper teeth and dropped them in his shirt pocket.

CL: [laughs] Like right on stage.

MG: On stage. And of course, the audience howls. It's just a great comic moment. Then he [Gibbons mimics Lahey by replacing "s" sounds with "th" sounds, imitating a lisp] "proceeds to go on reading the poem." Of course, just the fact that it has that sound to it is humorous, but then he really does bring the intensity to the moment.

[Gibbons mimics Lahey by replacing "s" sounds with "th" sounds, imitating a lisp] "The old man with the horny foot stuck between the side rails claimed that July night, the one he picked to die on, he smelled sulfur on his gown." That! Oh shit. Yeah.

But no anyway, we can call that a wrap.

CL: All right. Well, if you think of anything else at some point, we'll do it again.

MG: Yeah. They'll take whatever they can get, I'm sure. If I come up with something that needs to be recorded, we'll do it.

[End of Interview]