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Our full first day out of office. I came wide awake at 7:15^{and} going to the kitchen for coffee saw a long vale of mist draped over the river, and mist settled over the fields. It was really just getting light but it was going to be a beautiful day. I took my book, "Everything to Live For" by Paul Horgan into Lyndon's room and we had coffee. The papers had not come yet, so I read while he telephoned and watched TV. I luxuriated in the thought that we didn't have to get up.

I think I embraced the change, the golden coach turning into a pumpkin ~~and~~ the ballgown into kakhis and boots, but does one ever know? We shall see.

Rather early Lyndon and I started walking up the airstrip, I, taking all sorts of ~~little~~^{little} detours to see if the bluebonnets were actually peeping up yet, and they were, particularly up in the area of the ~~the~~ little tower. We walked to the end of the airstrip and then left up to the Malacheks and then thinking it was about time for the Krims to be up, we rode home with the Secret Service. There were three or four cars across the river on Ranch Road 1 with people aiming cameras in our direction or sometimes waving, ~~and~~ in fact everytime I lifted my eyes in that direction, there they were, or rather their successors, all day long.

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But close to lunch, something funny happened. I looked down to the cattle guard going to James' and there crouched on one side were a sizable group of little children, all Negroes, all wearing blue jeans and red shirts, and all the little girls, great big red Christmas ribbon bows in their hair. Across the road there was one Negro woman sitting. They weren't moving, they were just waiting. I had no idea how long they had been there. We asked the Secret Service about them -- "they're from some school", he told us, and they were hoping they could see us. We were with Mathilde and the three of us, Lyndon and Mathilde and I walked down there toward them and at that point, they all got to their feet and began to jump up and down and scream "Mr. President, Mr. President, hello. Mr. President!". The lady who was leading them, the most excited of the lot, and then they broke into song and began to sway back and forth. We stood there and clapped when they finished the number and then their leader came up to us and said, "Oh Mr. President, we're so glad to see you. We've driven 500 miles. We just hoped we'd get to see you. " And then turning to the children, "He's done so much for us, hasn't he, children." And they all sang out, "Yes mam". And then they would break into another song--I remember one of them was "Button up Your Over Coat"

which was funny because ~~by~~ ^{by} the ^{by} now was a cloudless bright gold in the low 70's. Lyndon sent someone in the house quickly for some of his pencils and then he said, "Children, don't you want to walk through the yard with me?" And like the Pied Piper he led them into the yard and then into the main living room and onto the little study, stopping for a sentence now and then and then ^{out} the front door and back into the front yard where he lined them up and gave everybody a pencil. One little fellow, about nine, hung his head and would not take a pencil, and the leader said, "Tell him why ~~sonny~~, tell him why you won't take a pencil." It appeared the little boy had been a member of a gang of robbers. He had been arrested several times, the leader told us. Did he think he would be accussed of having stolen it? I do not know, but at any rate, he was quiet and shy. But nearly all of them had great big smiles and were ^{so} outgoing as happy puppies and they sang well. Their leader said they were from St. Paul's School, and she handed me a letterhead and said, "Oh they'll never believe we've been here, they'll never believe we saw you. Won't you please write to--" and she called the name of one of their benefactors. She said they only took in Negro children who had no place at all anyplace else to go -- many of them children who had been in trouble with the law. They kept them through high school,

gave them some kind of training, and then helped them get jobs. We asked how they had gotten there, she waved her arms at a station wagon and said, "one of our white friends gave us that and we take trips in it." My mouth dropping open, I began to count the children again. There were about twenty. Later on I asked the Secret Service, yes, ~~ev~~everyone of them had come piling out of that station wagon. One final song and exclamations over and over of "how much you have done for us, Mr. President, "God bless you, we thank you, we'll never forget you." They were gone. The whole episode had not taken more than twenty minutes.

And then we went in for lunch with the Krims and the Truesdales joined us. And after lunch, the day was so glorious, as though nature had conspired to welcome us home, we didn't want to waste a bit of time indoors, but on our way out, we saw another delegation--this time a group of men approaching from parked cars. Hastily Lyndon sent Mary Rather to see who they were and she brought back a message that they were a group that Dale Malachuk had given permission to come to the Ranch, he was supposed to show them around. And feeling somewhat rude, but determined to have the freedom of the day, we departed in the opposite direction, realizing afresh that an open Ranch Road 1 would bring us it's problem.

We helicoptered over to the Scharnhorst in a Huey. The big, elegant helicopter has departed from our lives, but we will have some limited use as a Huey. One will come out in the morning bringing mail, papers, and stuff, I believe, and go back in the afternoon.

We walked from the highway over past the big rocks and on into the far pasture. And then we helicoptered on over to the Krim's house. It is such a welcoming, delightful place. Mathilde had asked us to have dinner there. We left Lynda, who had a sore throat, and then we all piled into one station wagon. Most of the cars and nearly all of the support personnel have gone with the change and Clarence will have his problems taking care of our gypsy caravans. The little boat was waiting for us at Mary Margaret's house and the Krims, the Truesdales, and I got in with Lyndon at the wheel. And we started up the lake at a peaceful moderate pace. Every now and then a wedge of ducks would fly overhead and presently when the river narrowed, ~~there was a sea of~~ ^{we would see a} big blue heron standing motionless in the water, waiting for fish. Once we saw one that must have been three feet high, he was so still that he was like a piece of modern statuary.

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And now at last I actually did something I had been trying to do for about five years--that is, investigate the old hotel. I suggested it to Lyndon and as we passed its big Victorian hulk looming up behind the trees, we saw a little dilapidated wharf and landed. And Mathilde of ever curious, and Mrs. Truesdale and one of the secret service men and I started up a little path to what we thought must be a caretaker's cottage. On the way we came across an interesting sight, a big brand new ant hill, apparently just being built, and marching up to the top of it, a steady line of ants each carrying a green leaf about three times his size. Mathilde and I were immediately intrigued and followed the line back and back and back until we discovered they had been climbing a tree and yet again a further tree, muscites they were, and way up on them, they were getting little bits of miseltoe and bringing it down to their nest. Why do they carry it so far, why didn't they build their ant hill right at the foot of the tree? These would be interesting things to ask anybody who might know. By now the agent was already at the caretaker's house and soon there emerged from it a pleasant looking old country gentleman who introduced himself, a Mr. Harmon. And I

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introduced myself and said I'd just been wondering about this old place for years and could he tell us anything about it? Yes, it had been built by the railroad, he didn't know when, but it had ceased serving as a hotel back about 1912, he thought. Before that time, he said there would be excursions coming out from Austin on the railroad with the big steam locomotives to a dance hall which was across from the hotel in a field, and he said they'd have the biggest parties and dance all night and then most of the people would go ^{on} back on the train to Austin, but quite a few off and on during the summer would spend weeks or weekends at the hotel and fish or boat in the daytime. It was cooler there in the summer. But mostly the hotel was used by cattle buyers, ranchers bringing their cattle to market there and loading them on the train, buyers coming to inspect them. We could walk around the grounds, he said if we liked. The place had been bought years ago by an estate that had about six children, and they still use it he said, in the summer. Each of the children had an apartment inside--there were about 15 rooms beside the lobby and dining room and other main hotel areas. There was a big front porch for rocking chairs and huge American Elms in ^{the} front yard, some still handsome

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plants, oleanders, vendinas (sp?) and narcissus that were just getting ready to bloom. I noticed with interest the trees that had the hand of a tree surgeon rather recently. With the old building a sort of country Victorian, the balconies and dormers and some gingerbread had had little care for years and years--it seemed sort of a ghost from the past --a ghost that had ~~inter~~ beckoned to me and interested me ever since we started coming to the Lake. We said goodbye to Mr. Harmon, ^{and} ~~we~~ got back in the boat. By now the sun was setting ^{over} Pack Saddle Mountain and there were great drifts of pink clouds --a beautiful sunset, as perfect a day as I've ever seen. In fact why go anywhere else now?

Then we went back to the Krim's house. Fermin Bayh had a fire going in the main living room and another in the Presidential suite. Arthur made us drinks and then Lessie cooked us steaks and after two low calorie meals only, we relented and had an abundant dinner, bulwarked by the thought of the at least three and a half miles walking we had had.

We went home lighted by the silver sickle of the new moon and were in bed by 10:00 on this the first day out of office.