

## DON RICARDO'S REPORT FROM THE HIGH RHINE... THE BOOK, FALL MIGRATION... OCTOBER 2015

Along with the *clean, well-lighted place* to write and a good woman to love, nice country around, and wine, yes, let there be plenty of that. And a good guitar—well, I've got several. I know I've mentioned this *place*, appropriated from a Hemingway short story by that name. The writing may yet stave off old age and dementia.

The book goes forward, with about twenty new pages of text since our return from our Danube trip. Edith, who has seen me through three books now, not to mention the CDs, thinks I'm a little over the edge this one, living for days at a time in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. "Oh, you're talking about *that* Tom," she says. She's got used to me talking about Tom and Sarah, the characters in my story. He is a Yankee, a railroad man come down from St. Louis to Baton Rouge, recently promoted to locomotive engineer. He meets Sarah, a local girl, and they fall in love. Both virgins when they marry, they move to Galveston in November of 1899. A storm awaits them.

As I've mentioned, this is my first novel. Firsts are rare these days; with no deadlines other than my own, I am taking my time and enjoying the ride. I find it utterly odd and fascinating to be inside the mind of a character I have imagined, to make that person speak. Laurie Jameson says in time they will tell me what to write.

I don't want to give away the whole story. I don't even know exactly how it will turn out, but the basic core is contained in the song "All of This Was Mine," from our new *Gulf Coast Tales* CD. Encouraged by response to the song, the idea came one day that it might be expanded into a novel. Markus Stevens wrote a novel, *Useful Girl* (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill) after a song I wrote that was recorded by Montana Rose. I have no idea how well the book sold, but I hope it did. This was an astonishing event for me as a songwriter. I owe him thanks, and for the inspiration to turn Tom and Sarah's story into a book of my own.

I'm going to have to put the manuscript up soon. I expect to be able to continue research while we're gone, including a couple of days at the Rosenberg Library in Galveston. We arrive in Austin on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. First gig is on the 6<sup>th</sup> with W.C. Jameson and Mike Blakely at the Badu House, Llano... Saturday, the 8<sup>th</sup>, full band house concert, Elgin... Monday, the 10<sup>th</sup>... with W.C. at Poodies Road House, Spicewood... 15<sup>th</sup>, return engagement at the Badu House with Mike and W.C. ... Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>: Catfish Concerts, Austin. A known listening venue, trio with Franci Files and Lynette Perkins... Friday, the 21<sup>st</sup>: Full band at the Old Quarter Acoustic Café, Galveston. These are all dear friends and our musical reunions always turn out special. Come see us if you can. (Full schedule, with numbers and email addresses, show-times in a separate attachment). We will be in Nashville in December and fly back from Texas in January.

Since we won't be back until the New Year, let me take this chance to wish everyone a great holiday season. With Christmas soon upon us, I urge everyone out there to support independent art and artists. Go see their shows. Buy their books and CDs. And while I'm up here on my own coffee table, you can find my stuff at My Texas Music dot com, Brambus Records CH, and Amazon. We'll have books and CDs at all the gigs.

Peace from Switzerland. The Rhine is down, snow in the mountains. Early snow in Siberia portends a cold winter ahead for Central Europe. I expect it will still be warm in Texas.

Richard J. Dobson

Diessenhofen am Rhein, 28 October 2015

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