

24 August 1967

Dear Beverly Brunson,

You are the only person I have met who has expressed the terror that has often afflicted me, usually en route to the public library—the terror that one day there will be no (more) books. Since the case, I have abandoned the branch library (the presence of which influenced my choice of apartment almost 20 years ago) and the delights of detective stories, science fiction, and an occasional "serious" book. (Where but in science fiction does one find consistent and unadmitted social criticism?) Well, if the terror ever comes to pass, we will not be totally demoralized—we will just write our own. (Before 11/22/63, the very notion would have seemed preposterous.)

Your letters are most delightful, the poetry symbiotic with the prose. I will not tap your wrist for your White Goddess, if you will not despise me for ignorance of the mythology. I sense it, which may be sufficient unto the Goddess. Yes, it is a malicious joy to sneek with "She." I never seem able to retain jokes, clean or dirty, but one I never forget has to do with a visit to Earth by St. Peter. Met at the airport by a reverent press-pool, St. P. is asked to tell the people, what is God really like? "Well," he replies, "to start with, She's colored..."

I am grateful for the trouble you took in writing up your two UFO sightings. I am enthralled, by the second especially ("a string of gold lights"), and anxious. It is a liberty, but I am going to xerox just that page, which does not indicate your identity, and send it to my UFOlogist friends. Maybe your observations will dovetail with others in their files, or serve some good investigatory purpose. Maybe we will even end up saddling some geese... a lovely image! My only glimpse of a flying saucer was, alas, in a dream of many years ago, which for some reason is still crystal-clear in my recollection. In the dream, my mother (who was still alive at the time) and I were taking a walk together on a spring night, along Eastern Parkway (a broad tree-lined thoroughfare near where we then lived), at about 11 p.m. or so; and we came to a newspaper stand, where the early edition of the next day's newspaper had just arrived. The front page had an enormous headline, something like "Government Presents Proof No Flying Saucers Exist, All Pure Imagination and Fantasy, Conclusive And Final End to Myth..." And as we read the banner, we looked up and saw a formation of disks with weird green portholes and shimmering pale lights, headed right toward us...

Wishful dreaming; and what I remember also today, many years later, is the feeling (in the dream) not of fear or horror, but of welcome to friends. A commentary on our civilization and species, that "aliens" (purple puffs or lizards with external entrails or high-IQ crystals) automatically seem less to be feared than our fellow-humans... By the way, may I take it for granted that you HAVE read "Childhood's End," by Arthur C. Clarke? I have re-read it at least once every year since it was published, even since the case, with renewed wonder and pleasure; another favorite is "To Walk The Night," by Wa. Sloane (though he is now fuddy-duddy to the point where, in 1965, he was gently but patronizingly suggesting that of course the Warren Report was the ultimate answer—that I forgive him this is a tribute to the impression his book made on me, back in 1952).

The book has been compressed into 500 pages, by skillful layout and judicious selection of type (small but quite clear and kind to the eye); otherwise, it would have run to 650 or 700 pages. I hope that the contents will not disappoint you. Your last letter provides the beginnings of a picture of your theory. If I am right about the motorcycle cop's theoretical role, I can congratulate you most honestly for the originality and boldness of your hypothesis. Brilliant, definitely; but very possibly unsound—prima facie, because the entry wounds were not below the

exit wounds; one head shot came from the right front, not right rear (no shot from the rear, right or left, could produce the backward slam of the head, unless the laws of physics were repealed). I state this with immense authority, but not my own (my forte is not physics, mathematics, or ballistics, any more than photos) —that of my colleague, Thompson, whose galleys I am checking (and to which I must return, greatly as I enjoy this goofing-off). I think that his book will convince you...but I still like your hypothesis (assuming I am correct about it) for its marvelous ingenuity. What a plot around which to build a story! Maybe even this story—I can be wrong, and have proved it all too often.

Back to my labors; excuse the unsatisfactory discussion above, I wish I could be more specific with arguments for these arbitrary pronouncements, but it would take many pages. I don't know my astrological sign, but if my birth date will help, it was July 22nd. Year will be specified on request, if needed (definitely, this century—my, how coy and vain I am, when all is said and done). Fond regards,

Yours sincerely,