

Personal:
Key Melvare to
Ted Bloecher

April 21, 1982

Dear Ted:

I haven't written to you, or to Isabel either, since way back last fall, which is too bad, since various catastrophes could well have occurred in all this time. In fact, one has actually done so, at this end of the line--I hope not at yours also. Things were going along quite well--my mother had recovered herself remarkably in August, and could perfectly well have been doing some Spanish translations for you again, though I fear I never informed you of the fact. She was once again going to the nearby church on Saturday evenings--not on foot now, but pushed by me in a wheel chair, an easy enough task.

(Except that--now that I'm forced to stay through the service--I've heard such patent contradictions, false reasonings, and false prophecies reverently read out from the Judaeo-Christian holy book that I've developed a strong allergic reaction to this so-called "Word of the Lord"! I've looked for some basic contra-Biblical text to give to our local library, which of course has shelffuls of devotional volumes, but haven't yet been able to find anything but some of old Robert Ingersoll's pamphlets--and you can't reasonably ask a library to shelve pamphlets. I fell for a book promisingly called "Deceptions and Myths of the Bible", long featured by Publishers Central Bureau in their catalogues, but was incensed to discover it to be the ravings of a crank, and I must regard PCB as knowingly running a swindle. Have you any suggestions here?)

However, that's by the way. To get back to the abovementioned "catastrophe", it is this: in the early hours of March 18th, my mother fell in her room, breaking her right hip as well as her right arm. (Such a tumble onto carpet wouldn't even bruise anyone of our age or younger, but you know that old ladies' bones become fragile, something called osteoporosis.) I called the ambulance, which came at once, and had her in the hospital within the hour; after a 30-hour wait for no apparent reason, an excellent surgeon opened her up and did the necessary repair operation, putting in a metal joint. (The arm only needed immobilization to heal by itself.) Recovery was normal, and the only remaining task was to get back the use of the injured limbs--which, unfortunately, has proved to be a long-drawn-out affair. On April 4th, her 90th birthday, she was still in the hospital--not so grim a matter as you might imagine, though, for our hospital is as agreeable as it is possible for such a place to be, and the nurses all sang "Happy Birthday" and presented her with a little square birthday cake specially baked in their kitchen. At this time, though normal otherwise, she still had no muscular control over either the arm or the leg, and I had to feed her at lunch and dinner (the nurses did so at breakfast, before visiting hours.)--Of course my life has been very different since this began: the sudden cessation of the regular cooking chores has rather bewildered me, and I accomplish very little in the spaces between the two long visits to her every day--just "relaxing" instead of doing something useful, such as answering the cards from all her friends. I find that a hamburger and some fr. fr. pots. seem to constitute a sufficient dinner, a great simplification of the matter, especially since I don't have to cook it myself. The pussycats knew that something was wrong, and were very subdued for some time, but I think what they now feel is boredom: their world has become too dull.

On the day after her birthday, she was suddenly bundled out of the hospital, down to a "nursing pavilion" about 2/3 mile to the south of it--a one-story place with about 150 patients, mostly aged, in 2- to 4-bed rooms. This seemed pretty rough treatment, but it turns out that the hospital is chock full, and that they can't take in a new emergency case without evicting someone already there--so, since she was past the critical stage, she had to go. Actually it turned out not

to be too bad a place--except that the kitchen isn't as attentive to her taste as the hospital's was (which means she gets less to eat, and our cats more) and that some of the old biddies are losing their minds, which is not agreeable for their neighbors. One woman in her room used to have spells of shouting and crying during the nights--but has now been switched somewhere else, so now she can sleep better. She's now able to use her right arm again, to eat by herself, and to write (rather shaky) notes to her friends--but she's still not at the point where she can get into a wheelchair from bed, or vice versa, without having to be bodily lifted--and this is unfortunately beyond my strength: she's got to be able to stand on her own feet for a moment or two, before coming home to my care. (In future, of course, she won't be using the ~~walker~~ walker any more: it will be the wheelchair exclusively, and a bedside commode instead of trips to the bathroom during the night. I hope it won't come to a bedpan, as at present--but if that must be done, I will just have to get accustomed to it.) Meanwhile she has developed bedsores, from lying on her back too long--and today they say she has caught pneumonia, though it seems to be minor (she thought it was a cold, but passing off.) These are consequences of the over-protracted bedfastness. But it looks now as though she'd be fit to turn over to me within a week or so of further exercising ("physical therapy")--I hope the pneumonia doesn't prolong that estimate.

Of course, the place is in serious need of vacuum-cleaning (and flea-spraying), which I have deferred for far too long. I suppose I'd better be getting at it.

To switch to a different topic (sorry: I gave you more than was necessary of the above one): I suppose you know of Wm. Loosley's 1871 "Account of a Meeting With Denizens of Another World" published by David Langford in England in 1979? (He saw a UFO land and later encountered two polyhedral robot devices, which showed him a succession of holographic pictures.) I'd suspect it of being a "mystification" by Langford, a well-known SF fan (there's no photograph of the manuscript, to prove its real existence), except that he appears to have a career that might be damaged by indulging in such a jape. If authentic, it's a most interesting case because of its variation from the usual CE-III pattern, and because so much sense can be made of the things Loosley reports being shown. I imagine you heard of this two years ago; if not, let me know.

Has INFO perhaps vanished from the scene? Having twice sent them money for a set of the Gould books without receiving anything, I thought I'd write to Paul Willis (rather than to their office) to report the circumstance; but I've been unable to find either him or the organization in the complete set of recent phone books at our library. This looks rather ominous, and makes me wonder if catastrophe has overtaken them.

I hope none has overtaken you, or Isabel, since we were last in touch!

Yrs,
Lex.

P.S. Weather here now hot & summery--lavender jacaranda, magenta Bauhinia, queer orange-flowered Grevillea trees in bloom (the three go very badly together in the matter of color harmony.) No feeling of Spring, of course--that's for you, not us subtropical folks. A few days ago I saw, for the first time, an afterglow (what Minnaert calls "the purple light", but it's fiery-looking instead of purple) due to volcanic dust in the stratosphere. Mt. St. Helens must have produced these for millions, but not in our latitudes. It lasted for 3 days, then the cloud moved away. Have you ever noticed this phenomenon? One needs an unobstructed view to the west.