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Dear Tom,

Mary Ferrell is okay, to reassure you at once. I heard from her earlier this month. However, she has been deeply concerned about Arch Kimbrough, who had a massive coronary failure early in April, was first given no chance to survive, but then surprised everyone by rallying and is now convalescing at home. Mary's relationship with Arch was so central to her daily life for so long that she was greatly agitated and preoccupied, perhaps that is why she has not written to you.

I had seen your article in The Nation (in fact, I mentioned it to Mary the last time I wrote to her), congratulations. Normally I would have written to you upon reading your piece but, not unlike Mary, I too have been experiencing a personal crisis and grief--the illness and the death of my cat Allegra, two weeks ago. She began to ail in March and anxiety about her displaced everything. As it turned out, she had a malignancy and could not have lived long under any circumstances. It has been a really bad blow.

Just after reading your article, I saw the news of Audie Murphy's death. An ironic coincidence, which thankfully Penn Jones has not taken up for his "list". The press reported the permanent injunction against further prosecution of Clay Shaw but not Garrison's reprise, nor Alford's resignation and blast, which is certainly interesting news.

I have cut off all contact with Lifton since I returned from Dallas, in disappointment and disgust at his machinations and pretences. You have not forgotten our bet, but I am afraid that I have. Was it about Lifton?

Mary was so full of praise for your book on Lewis that it is really disheartening that it is proving so difficult to get it published. I hope that your try with university presses will be successful.

The "Pentagon Papers" are, as you say, merely a confirmation of what many of us knew all along, but shocking and incredible just the same. Especially arresting are the latest revelations about the toppling and assassination of Diem and Nhu.

I have a ten-week old kitten, Mimi, as I could not conceive of being without any living creature to care for. We are leaving in a few days, with Susan (my niece) and her husband and baby son, for a long summer at the beach, my first real vacation since 1964. I intend to do absolutely nothing and be as cut off as humanly possible from the real world, until I return in September. I hope that things go well for you.

As always,