

10/1/78

Dear Sylvia,

Art Kevin has told me of the kind things you said for his coming show.

Thanks.

Relatively little of the chicken-famer bit has gotten back to me. When it has my (thruthful) response has been that I was the best-officially.

I also have no reluctance in adding that in addition to raising the best chickens I was the national barbecue king (1959) and for many years was Maryland's chicken-cooking champion. In the national competition I never placed higher than 10th, although once I believe I wuz robber.

(That was by a prejudiced judge who actually did not like chicken browned. Such things do happen, if she never was a judge again because of the protests of the other judges.)

Lane seems to have been a popularizer of the irrelevant effort at put-down. I regard it as his accurate self-evaluation.

If I never told you there came a time when I grew disgusted with research employment in which conclusions were built in, with the dishonesties required for successful non-fiction writing and in general with the pre-McCarthy McCarthyite atmosphere. I was intended to be one of the first victims of those authoritarians. I emerged battered, upright and entirely clean. Totally victorious in terms of honor and reputation if not wealth and future prospects. So I decided that making no compromises with principle was more important to me than an easy life with a good salary and I sought to live the dream of many other World War II soldiers of what then was called the citizen army. I began with a piece of land abandoned for more than a half century and cleared it with my hands and then started building.

It was great!

There was an earlier period in which Martin Dies and his allies attempted to ruin me. I turned that around on them and got his agent indicted.

So I'm not unaccustomed to battles against odds and great power and I will never grow too old or too infirm to battla when battle appears necessary.

I regard raising chickens and providing food as an honorable calling. I regard those who believe otherwise as unworthy of even contempt. Those who pretend this provides a measure of my work are bankrupts and not worth any emotion or response.

Come to think of it, recently a Wash. Post writer referred to me as a present chicken farmer, so I guess it lingers. But it makes no difference to me.

The Blakeys of the world of evil and untruth - any of those who might be worth a response - prefer total silence. They would rather not entice any response. I regard this as a more dependable evaluation.

I've been amused and pleased that these official whores have made no mention of me or my work. Which in one form or another is virtually all of what they have represented as their own, where they have presented anything reasonably described as information. Even their "jiggle" theory. But I leave them to those who are responsible for them and their existence, at least for now, except when I am sought out. As a former farmer I believe I am expert on which it is time for the seaprate of the pigs, not only the sheep from the goats ... Many thanks and best wishes,