

19 Dec 71

Dear Lil:

The day after we received the note saying the blanket had been packaged - it arrived! (Yesterday.) We couldn't find any indication that it had been sent by air - was it? - but otherwise it seems unbelievable that it was mailed on the 11th and was delivered on the 18th.

It was even more extraordinary to find, when we unwrapped it, that what had been an idea in our minds had traveled intact across the country and returned in tangible form exactly - exactly - as we had visualized it. It was all as familiar as if we'd watched you making it. Except for the colors, of course, because while we knew what they were from the samples you sent, we didn't know how they'd be distributed. We both like the muted effect.

The name and date were easy to anticipate, both in form and size, because we had clues from the description of the blanket you made before this one. It was the Ma which really stunned us, being completely right in proportion and balance. This is a real compliment when you realize the Chinese (and one might just as well consider Gilbert as Chinese, too) regard calligraphy as they do painting, judging it by the same standards. Even stylized calligraphy in a seal, as this is, must have balance and symmetry.

Interruptions, interruptions -
it's now the 20th.

I've looked and looked at the blanket but (not surprising, since a simple chain stitch is the outer limit of my crocheting ability) cannot figure out how you did it. I understand why the border is thicker, because you used a heavier wool, but this seems to us to be an advantage since

it should stay tucked better in a crib. To pre-22Nov63 weavers it all looks like a great deal of work. We hope there was pleasure, too, in the doing, but it can't compare with ours in the receiving.

We hope you won't boggle at telling us how much the wool cost, because we'd be very uncomfortable if we couldn't at least pay for that. What we'd really like would be for you to let us pay also for the time this must have taken, but we're very hesitant to mention this on the chance it might offend you - the last thing we'd want to do. If you would be willing to figure it out, we'd be delighted. Put the shoe on the other foot and see if you wouldn't feel the same way about something so unique that it's not only the only one in the world but can belong to only one person.

We can scarcely wait to turn it over to its rightful owner and wish it could be tomorrow, but this won't be possible until at the earliest a week or two after Christmas when we have a tentative date with her parents. They're at Sunnyvale, about 70 miles south of here. Not so far away as the crow flies, but the crow flies and doesn't have to contend with the traffic on a freeway serving the airport and bedroom suburbs. Nor does the crow have to juggle our schedule to meet those of other people. Anyway, we'll certainly let you know what the reaction is, but I think I'm completely, utterly, absolutely safe in predicting that the blanket will be A SMASH! Especially the Ma!

I've been sitting here trying to think of a way to tell you how grateful we both are, and the best way seems to be simply to say, Dear Lil, we thank you very much.

P.S. -- We do, we do indeed. No way to say how much. And let us not omit to thank Him who dreamed up this magnificent deal, with assurances we have not forgotten Him -- just caught in a holding pattern until a certain whiskery gentleman can get down and get it over with and we can get back to normal.