

4/10/71

Dear J&J,

That beautiful Sony arrived today. I fondled it, examined it, admired it, and look forward to being able to use it with witnesses. It is beautiful! I do, very much, appreciate it and the thoughtful, if expensive, touch of sending it by air. It arrived in perfect condition, something I've not been able to say of a package in some time. And it expanded my knowledge. I didn't know there was such a thing as a sensor tape and an alarm system. Now I won't have to divide my attention when interviewing, to be sure I don't run out. Even the case is a great asset, for it means the machine doesn't have to be in either my luggage, where it is never safe, or in my attache case, which weighs 35 pounds packed.

The first thing I'm going to do is get the patch cord so I can dub directly. I have 2½ hours of Ray to go over.

The Cook review also came, and I enjoyed reading it. The Saturday Review and Cook have both, for the first time, publicly acknowledged that I do exist.

This great generosity helped make a very good day for me. I began, while the dew was on the ground, catching up on things. I even slept until after six. Then I dug some holes for a luxury in which I indulged two years ago, back-ordered, three Oriental persimmons. We have and I enjoy the wild ones. The first hole was partly in earth, so it wasn't too bad. The second was in rock. And to get some good topsoil, I did some grading along the roadfront, where there is a hump I want to remove and where I want to transplant some day lilies. We have them in profusion. We can't see the road-front from the house, but everyone going along the road can. Then I'll have something else to plant where the excess day lilies were. Meanwhile, it was about 600 feet uphill with the wheelbarrow of good soil, and it was no easy matter to remove the rocks to where I can use them, in our driveway, rutted by a vagrant truck that ran off of it during heavy thaw- and he wasn't even coming to us! The physical work was good for me, as is the healthy tired feeling, something better than the emotional fatigue I feel only too often.

The mail also brought ~~me~~ a copy ~~of~~ of a totally dishonest "review" by John Barkham, which will give me something I've needed for a while, a chance to tell somebody off. Having to live in silence with dishonesty is uncomfortable. His crookedness is so open he is a mark. I'll wait until the morning, when I'll be fresh. Whether the New York Post (and I fear he is syndicated) publishes it or not, I'll feel better and he will not. (For some years I've dreamed of a book, "Letters to Finks", beginning with an index instead of a table of contents. I've got quite a collection by now!)

For the coming better season I'm going to have to spend part of each day in what for me is vigorous exercise. I think it is the only

way I may be able to retard the rapid physical deterioration that is probably an inevitable consequence of the pace of my life and its character. And it has other values. Tomorrow I'll plant the third persimmon, a companion Chinese chestnut (we had one) and a bonus, something of which I'd never heard, a "Blake" peach.

Plus hundreds of tulips I dried after Easter a year ago, when I got them for practically nothing from a man whose Easter business was a disaster. Those I did get in last year are coming up and we'll soon have flowers all over, inside and out. A vase of hyacinths in my office is delightfully aromatic. A spray of forsythia before a mirror in the living room is dramatic. But what comes in is Lil's department, so we have no jonquils in the house yet. First the forsythia, which will soon end, then weeks of jonquils, daffodils and all the other delights that will soon be so colorful. We even eat some of it (here again, Lil is expert, so we benefit from certain vitamin-rich or mineral-laden weeds, and from the looks of the violets, it should not be more than 10 days before they are in our salads).

It meant much to have a good day. I did not forget the bad. It was simply that the good over-rode it for a change - and gave me a chance to think about what I'll do about the bad. I think it may have meant a bit more because of the depressing effect of having to mark my 58th year by going to the vice president of the bank and asking for an extension of time to pay my quarterly interest on the debt. Had the publisher paid the "advance" when due, I'd not have had to. Had they kept their word when I phoned and asked for at least enough to meet this obligation, I'd have been saved that humiliation. I fear I'm going to have to try and straighten them out. If you have ever tried this, you know it is close to a futility. (And they have yet to place an ad, no matter how small, or to arrange for a single promotion. They are better at blowing the dream opportunities when they present themselves.)

I even sat down and read after supper. Tel Taylor (who Lil knew well when she worked with him for the Senate and whose wife I knew less well when she worked with me there) and the Emperor Hoover bit in LIFE. (Incredibly, when Fensterwald as Ray's attorney asked for access to Louw's pictures, which LIFE bought - LOUW was in a nearby room, for PBL- he was told to get a subpoena; but they have promised me a chance to study them, the sole prerequisite being two days notice!)

And I'll be getting to New York again early next month, despite the publishers. Young friends are arranging a book-party/press conference (I've asked them to invite the FBI NYC bureau chief!). When I was last there I lined up a TV show and three on radio, so I can do much besides go to LIFE, much as I look forward to seeing the unpublished pictures. Fortunately, Louw couldn't stand the blood, so he shot other things. I just learned he made not just the few pix LIFE used. He shot a whole roll. One, at least, has to have evidentiary value....But before going to bed, I wanted to thank you again for the thoughtfulness and usefulness of the fine gift. Best,

