

Dear Jim,

10/4/79

After not feeling up to tending her flowers most of the summer in recent weeks Lil has done much work with them, particularly the large bed I made for her a year ago between the porch and the road. She is out of shape, so it has been hard on her, but she has seemed to enjoy it and the favorable comment resulting from it.

After heavy rains late yesterday morning she went out to continue weeding the higher side of the lane, working toward the road. At about 12:30 Rae went home to take the medicine she'd forgotten to bring with her and I went out to start sweeping up the pine needles for mulch and to prevent their blowing into the pool. I worked my way toward the road, from where Rae had parked near the pool. Just before I reached where she had been working Lil stopped, with a full cart of weeds, and started going toward the house with the cart. Usually she leaves it there for me to add to the compost in the woods. We had a brief conversation in which it became quite clear that she had no recollection of yesterday, hinging around the absence of my car, which I'd taken to the garage for the repair of several leaks and for winterizing. She had no recollection of having seen Rae leave, for which she'd had to get out of the lane, and of other matters certainly she'd know about.

Not knowing what to do I decided to wait and make nothing of it, to continue what I was doing as though nothing were amiss and then explore further, after Rae returned.

When I returned to the house Lil was not aware of having been out, what she had done, what she had done with the cart full of weeds, of conversing with Rae and Rae left or that Rae had left and had returned. Otherwise she seemed fine and was in rather good spirits, or seemed to be. At about 1:20 she asked me if I'd like lunch and I told her it was 1:20 and I would. About five minutes later she called to ask me if I'd like half of the pear she was then eating, without having started lunch. She usually likes to have lunch at 1:30, when she looks at a soap opera while eating it.

I was from the first a bit concerned about the possibility of a stroke but I did not want my concern to show. When I spoke to Rae she had the same concern, so I phoned and was able to make an appointment to see one of our doctors. Lil proceeded to make lunch, through which I had to rush her a bit to get her there on time. She could not understand why but was not really unwilling.

His opinion is that it could be a stroke or a blood clot or a temporary obstruction in the supply of blood to the part of the brain that deals with recent events and memory. His comment that when this happens recollection of the past is clear seems to fit because while we were waiting to see him she was talking to Rae about her old family doctor, accurately and with clear recollection and in good spirits. The immediate examination showed that all her reflexes were good, her strength unimpaired, her blood pressure her usual blood pressure, about 145 over 95. (She had no recollection of this or most of what happened at supper yet he did the blood pressure three times to be sure.)

This morning I'm taking her in for some blood tests and an EKG.

Lil took her out for supper. She then had little recollection of the visit to the doctor. When we got back from the doctor's, about 3:30 or a little later, she could not find some Montgomery Ward bills I'd returned to her only Friday when I thought I'd gotten an automotive flimflam straightened out. I learned at the garage that I'd still been gypped and needed a Baltimore number to phone. She never did find them yesterday.

She was in apparent good spirits at supper and we discussed what had happened some. It is clear she had only partial recollection. When we'd gotten to the building in which the doctor's office is she turned the wrong way, often as we'd been there. At first she didn't recall the name of the one we were to see, not the one we usually do but the only one who could see her. Then she said she'd never seen him, but she had.

After supper she said she was a bit tired and would go to bed early. At supper and after on a couple of occasions she said her head was a bit fuzzy. It was not long after eight when she went to bed. She read for a while and turned a movie on at nine. The doctor had told her not to try to recall and to try to relax so I did not encourage to try to remember and did not ask her what she was reading. I left her entirely alone. Before I went to bed I went in to ask her if she had a good movie and she was all smiles

when she said "Melinda "arcouri." Which was very good. She appears, from all I can tell, to be sleeping well and not to have been ~~up~~ during the night. When I awakened I closed the bedroom door not to disturb her, as I do all mornings. She usually sleeps late, often from not having slept well. I'll let her sleep until about 8 unless she gets up earlier.

She had no recollection of having been up much of the previous night because her hiatal hernia had been bothering her. She'd had a headache and had it when she went out to work at weeding the lane. But when she finished the weeding and I spoke to her she had no headache and made no mention of any the rest of the day.

It is not uncommon for her hernia to bother her if she weeds longer than a short time. Nor are her headaches uncommon.

There is no full-time local neurologist. One has an office here two days a week. He is a hard worker, fortunately. The doctor was able to make an appointment with him for 8 o'clock tomorrow night.

He is Chinese. Fortunately I'd know his name and when the nurse told us the arrangement the doctor had made I'd corrected her on the pronunciation, "ao not like Kayo but like Cow. I'd know of him through some of her tax clients.

I'm trying not to show my concerns and think I've succeeded. I went about things as I would have, not staying with her all the time. I walked several times in the lane, but each time I got back to the house, while she didn't detect it, I observed her. When she was not where I could I pretended the need to go to the bathroom and did see her.

In all ways except this absence of recall of the immediate past she seems normal. She has lost Tuesday entirely, yet there is much of it that she should recall. She was still confused about what day it was last night. When the doctor asked her she responded, without hesitation, Monday. He said fine. What month? She knew October. But when he asked the date she was uncertain so he asked the time of the month and she said about the middle. He again said fine. She laughed when I told her about this at supper but ask of the time she went to bed was still confused about the day, asking last all of the day before yesterday and much of yesterday.

But there is no slurring in her speech, not uncertainty in her walking. no impairment in any functioning that I could observe.

I go into this because sometimes she has a strange attitude toward herself and her health, almost a machismo and I don't want any conversation she may overhear when we talk by phone to be an annoyance to her - as it may not be - but I want to take no chances. Nor if it might not annoy her do I want any emphasis on any of it in her mind. I did not lead the conversations we had after we saw the doctor. I responded.

Meanwhile, I hope it is nothing and will pass off. I'm sure I'll have the reading of the EKG before we leave the doctor's office because the technician usually takes the tape to his before the patient leaves, from my experience. The only specific I recall about the blood testing is cholesterol. There are probably others, and she is to go there with an empty stomach.

I'll keep you posted.

Hopefully,

*EIC & normal 10/4 H*