

Dear Laura

This is that lovely thing

I told you about!

Elvira

DOS:e
enclosure

January 14, 1974

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LAURA GILPIN

by ANSEL ADAMS 8-18-74

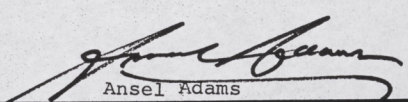
At first meeting a few men and women infect you with a sense of total confidence and security of spirit. Such was my first impression of Laura Gilpin, and on many subsequent encounters my reactions have been strengthened almost exponentially. My most recent visit with her in 1973 gave me the conviction that her health and spirit seemed boundless - with total disregard for her 84 years and her ongoing work under definitely rigorous conditions.

I make no pretense of evaluating Laura and her work from a high critical or scholarly level. As with all great people of this world, one is impressed with the simplicity, the complete honesty, the lack of pretension and the ever-tolerant aura of sympathy and understanding. Add to this a determined twinkle, a gregarious intensity and a personal glow which seems to come from stored-up shining light on mesas, canyons, vast skies and thunder clouds, Navajos and pinion trees -- all this is a part of Laura Gilpin, one of the important photographers of our time.

Most photographers, while on a professional or a personal assignment, make a great variety of images. Many of these have "continuity" value, relating to the project at hand, rather than emphasizing specific single-image qualities. Out of such projects over the years may emerge many compelling photographs. As time passes, what was once thought of as perhaps a "record" or "documentary" image may be seen in a clearer light; perceptive qualities are recognized and the personality of the artist modulates the message of all he does. Time seems to heal a confusion of categories.

Laura's work displays an impressive consistency. Her early platinum prints remain rare poetic expressions. She still utilizes and teaches the platinum process! Passing through many decades of the professional crucibles her techniques were perfected in many directions. Her interest in the Southwest was first revealed in the Colorado area. Increasing devotion to the Amerind people, their cultures and habitations, drew her to Santa Fe from where she would explore by mule, Jeep and airplane (and frequently by foot alone) the remote and overpowering beauty of the Southwest, living in the wilderness or with the natives of the regions explored. She also traced the Rio Grande from source to delta and is now engaged with a book on the Navajo people.

Her indomitable integrity, spirit and quality of eye and craft compels our admiration and affection.



Ansel Adams