

John Howard Griffin

3816 West Biddison
Fort Worth, Texas 76109

June 12, 1967

Dear Nell,

How Piedy and I wish you were here so we could take care of you during these surgeries - we have become experts at the care and feeding of this problem. Though I know that you are in equally expert and loving hands right there. In the many months when I was unable to take any solid nourishment, we found that Carnation Instant Breakfast (always with an egg and some vanilla and a little sweetening) made about the most palatable and energy-sustaining diet for me. We will pray for you now that the physical pain (it is really more a kind of internal shock) may be as little as possible, and that the long, sustained surgery will not wear your nerves down. Bless your heart, the main thing is not to fight it too much - to give in a little to it. I dread it for you; and from here we will be pouring out all the strength of our awareness in sharing these things with you. How we wish we could be there to do it in the flesh, but since we cannot, then I make one of the few requests I ever make and ask that Christ go and stand there beside you, knowing that this is a request never refused and that it is the best help that can come. You, who live so deeply in the realms of human and divine love, now have the opportunity (which I wish you could be spared) of offering up pain (in an expiatory manner), and perhaps like me you will choose to offer it for the intentions of the world's haters - that they may be touched, reached, made a little less miserable in their sickness of hatred.

Now, your letter arrived only this morning, the 12th, which means that you have already undergone the first session.

How wonderful that you could find a copy of The Bare Feet to send to Jacques. How we will love to have a copy of this at hand. He so loved the copy I kept for him on his bedside table here at the house when he was with us.

I am sure I told you that my doctors turned thumbs down on my trip to Europe. They are right, of course, and privately I knew they would not find me in good enough shape for such a strenuous trip. So, we will stay right here through the summer and I am feeling well enough, when there is no added activity to work very well. In fact I have been working from about noon to about 3 or 4 every morning these past few days and with good energy and enthusiasm. So, I am delighted. A writer should write, and I have had so little time to do that, and now I have the time to do it and I look forward to it with the greatest happiness.

Our best and special love to you, Nell and to Chris and to all of those who are close to you and good to you.

American Society of Magazine Photographers
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John