John Howard Griffin

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Fort Worth, Texas 76109

June
~~May~~ 12, 1967

Dear, dear Nell,

It is very late now, almost 1 a.m. and back through the haze of the cutting this afternoon, I remember that I wrote you a letter this morning. By now, I am little more than a zombie with feelings, but the pain is in good control and since I cannot sleep (I always fight sleep after sedation) I wanted to write you again.

I finally told the children this evening that we would not be able to go to Europe. The boys could not really care less, but the immediate start of tears in Susan's eyes almost undid me. I told her how sorry I was and that we would do everything possible to try to go next summer. She denied that she was a bit disappointed and said it would be better for her to go next summer anyway, because she could then be that much closer to college and maybe we would have time to visit the college (conservatoire) she would attend. We were at peace, deciding then that she will work very hard on her music this summer and then go to the summer sessions at Fontainebleau Conservatory until she finishes high school in this country, and then she will be very much at home going to the conservatory in Paris for her major studies. It was really her generosity, her gallantry about it that undid her mother and me. She had counted so on going. If, God forbid, I am still unable to go next summer, I will send her and her mother at least so she can begin her summer studies in France.

And dear blessed Gregory. I walked into the store room when I got back from the doctor's and there he sat on a floor inthe corner, smoking a cigarette. The stricken look in his eyes as he tried to stash the cigarette went to my heart. I apologized to him for giving him a start like that, told him of the time I had hidden in a cave and smoked a whole packet of cigarettes when I was about his age, and got so sick I went home and told my mother I had sunstroke. Well, he was placated; his heart stopped pounding; and then I told him that I would have to do everything to keep him from smoking, because I would indeed be a poor father if I allowed him to continue in such a dangerous habit; and he promised to wait until he is an adult to decide. He is a little disoriented with school out and with my being so horribly snowed under with promised work, but by tonight he was fine and while I sat here in my studio doing nothing, he worked in the darkroom and every few moments brought me out his latest print, each of which I praised to the skies - and they deserved every bit of the praise.

Well, this must be all for tonight. I expect I can sleep now that I have got these things out of my mind. I think of you there with the stitches and the tinfoil-like bandages, and my heart goes out to you. Best love from all of us here,

John

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