



Oct. 26, 1968

Beloved Nell,

What a wonderful letter from you. I came in at 2 a.m. this morning from Flint, Michigan, where I lectured to a racially hate-torn community on the subject: Don't poison the children. And it was a blessing to come back to the silence of this sleeping house, to find your wonderful letter, to read of your November 15 recital of Schubert. You are so right. Our most deeply effective and desperate confrontation now is to hurl all the love and beauty we can into the atmosphere in the hope that it will counter the ugliness and hate that engulfs like a huge lust the hearts of men, often of innocent men caught up in it. One of your images can do more ultimately than all my words. One Schubert song can be more healing than all my acts. I believe this with all my heart. I envy Symonds and Bennie - what a great thing it must be to them to know that the sounds they put into the atmosphere are the ultimately curative ones - curative finally even of those who may not physically hear them.

When, as last night, I sit surrounded by old black women, their eyes closed tight, their heads nodding, their moans accompanying my words as I talked of the feelings of black parents; and the old black men saying softly yes-yes, never opening their eyes: it is Schubert without ~~melody~~ melody and with words that say the same but sound different: and I am profoundly aware of it, and interiorly apologetic that I have not the gifts to bring the other to them. I strive after an equivalent.

It helps me to know that you do these things there - to know about the leaves and the bird feeders and the letter from Casals about your marvelous book.

All of us join in sending you our great love,

John

Write Greta