

John Howard Griffin

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Dearest Nell,

At the end of a long day of great change, I sit here listening to the Martins recordings of the Preludes and Fugues of Bach and trying to absorb things.

Houghton Mifflin called today, agreeing to my terms and so the Merton biography is now settled and sealed and we are very happy here. I have spent the day writing letters, telling my agents to accept no more lecture or travel engagements for the next two years (beyond those already committed - a couple of weeks in late Oct-early Nov, a couple of weeks in April) and answering all those other requests with the joyful announcement that I must live in seclusion for the next two years ~~xx~~ in order to do this work properly. I will see you, of course, and a few other dear friends, but now I will be at home with my family most of ~~the~~ the time, and I will be working with something enormously curative in this man's life, curative for all of us. I will not retire from the things that have concerned ~~me~~ me, but rather transmute them into this work. It is beautiful. I filed away tonight for a while the things I have had to study so carefully in these past years - the hate materials, the Klan materials, the materials from the American Nazi party - all of these human wounds and aberrations. You, dear Nell, above all others, must know what a blessing this new thing is for us - what a blessing to have two years out of the public life, what a blessing to have two years in which to work on something so mysterious and edifying. Something tremendous can come of it, God willing, if I can find the strength and the wisdom to accomplish the task as it should be accomplished.

Except for friends like you, who will remain close to me, I will become a kind of hermit in the family in order to write of another hermit, to understand him in depth, to present him whole finally.

Piedy and the children are very thrilled, but none of them so happy as I. There will be a respite from the hard and cruel years - we will be together again without so much separation, without their having to worry when I am gone.

All for the moment. I had to share these things with you, to share this happiness with you.

Love

John