

December 9, 1970 Noon

Beloved Nell,

I wrote you early this morning, and then your lovely note came, and now at noon I am back here alone in the studio. Strange what sedation does. I am in quite great pain, but it makes things reduce themselves to small, intimate, awareness and activity. Almost unmoving and static. I hide from the pain now in\* this tiny office, where I listen to Scarlatti sonatas and smell the odor of bread rising on the other desk near me. That is enough. The world outside is lost. I am in here, in this strange peace and happiness, like an animal hibernating in its hole for the winter.

I am sorry you were not notified immediately. I thought you had been. But things were so hectic and I remained unconscious so long (2 days) and Piedy was there from morning until night - so it just didn't get done. Things were ominous the night before the surgery. But there was no hemmorrhaging and as I said, it all went splendidly and have life to face now, like being born all over again. The only thing I remember vividly is hearing someone tell me "It's all over." and feeling a great flood of astonishment that I had survived. And then the awareness later that they were doing things to me, but that was shut out beyond a wall of concentrated thanksgiving that occupied all my attention.

Mail stacks up, some of it important and needing answers. I can do nothagg about it. I sit here in the dizziness and listen to the Scarlatti, rest my head on the desk, smell the primordial fragrance of yeast bread rising in its crock next to me, and feel the deepest happiness.

Love,

John