

1976

## ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

NEWS DEPARTMENT

7-27

Dear Pa &amp; Aline --

I seem to have misplaced Aline's card, but I guess it doesn't matter. I shan't be able to get away this summer until September, or atleast that is how it now appears. Jane, Jack, Boxie & Alex will be driving to Machiasport next weekend for a month's stay, but their plans do not, to the best of my knowledge, include a visit to the Island. Anne, now visiting an aunt in Vermont, will join them.

It was a big year in St. Louis for (a.) Antarctica (b.) Pa's pictures and (c.) photography in general which seems now to be taken very seriously by people who a few years ago weren't much interested. The season, so to speak, began with a performance of an oratorio, composed by a modernist named Robert Wykes for a poem, "Adequate Earth," by a St. Louis poet named Donald Finkel. It was an extremely elaborate production with two choruses and several solo parts and the entire St. Louis Symphony and will probably not again presented in our life-time, if ever. The conventional Symphony subscribers, most of whom are made uncomfortable by anything later than R. Strauss, did a good deal of sotto voce grouching, but more sophisticated concert goers, of whom there are a few, felt the Symphony was to be congratulated for its audacity. Finkel, the poet, was in Antarctica under the same program as Pa, though I gather at a different time, and wrote quite a good thing, I thought. Wykes, whose never been south of the equator, may have missed the mark, though I know far too little about music to make useful comment.

Simultaneously and ~~at~~ altogether coincidentally, there was an exhibit of Papa's antarctic photos along with some paintings by a man named Lang at a local gallery. I went to the opening with Jane and noticed that the one who seemed most pleased with the photos was Finkel -- the only person who'd been there. Lang's paintings, it seemed to me, rather resembled commercial sketches.

Later there was another exhibit of contemporary photos, including four of Pa's Iceland pictures (which we lent) at the University of Missouri's St. Louis campus, organized by a rather flakey, but amiable, lady named Jean Tucker. Some of the photos (not Pa's) were a little difficult -- imitations of paintings that imitate photography, one might say. Mrs. Tucker agreed that it was a "tough" show which is what people say, nowadays, when they mean avant garde, it seems.

Some of the notices on these events are enclosed. I must accept apologetic responsibility for cropping the whalebones since I was, at that time, editor of that page.

No longer, though. I quit that station in May to return to being an honest reporter; chastened, defeated, sadder and wiser, having been unable to fulfill a quixotic ambition which was to make the visible arts -- or rather reporting of them -- comprehensible to any but a tiny portion of the Post-Dispatch readership. The problem was simply that there are not enough people writing about art who know how to write.

(more)

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I suppose what I should have done ~~was~~<sup>was</sup> to write it myself, and indeed I did do a good bit but I found I couldn't be everywhere at once.

Boxie enjoyed himself at the Island and ~~now~~<sup>now</sup> realized he should have stayed. His plan to take ~~off~~<sup>off</sup> a raft to New Orleans has fallen through -- for want of planning, I believe. With respect to projects and adventures, his eyes tend to be a bit bigger than his stomach.

E. F. is still hold up at his music school in Boston, a phase in his life I hope will soon come to an end. It is my belief that he isn't sufficiently talented to have a satisfactory career in music but I've refrained from telling him so, hoping he'll just find out in his own time.

Thank you for the offer of the use of the house. I'll be here in St. Louis and if you're driving, I'd love to see you if you get a chance to stop.

Love,

B.