

14 Nov. 2000

Well, It's 5:30 in the morning. I just heard my first chicken crowing. I'm sitting in my bed in the little bedroom off Martha's master bedroom. I call it Elton's Room, though Martha often used it when they were both here because she could indulge her insomnia proclivities. 2:00 AM telephone calls to the state, menu planning, and expedition organizing. ~~etc~~

Over my bed hangs a wonderful large portrait of father Hidalgo. On the ^{very} nearby ~~picture~~ are what look like wax portraits of Benito Juarez and Porfirio Diaz. On the ^{very} nearby dresser is another wax portrait bust of Hidalgo and some Greek or Persian icon of the virgin. How very Martha. This room has always been one of my favorites. It's almost monastic in size, being not much more than 10 ft by 12 ft. With wonderful rubbed ~~down~~ blue walls the color of faded denim. A Katin on the floor. A large ceramic sculpture of a human fist with a number of walking sticks stuck in it. Over the stone fireplace and mantel is a really good copy of Goya's famous painting of the Spanish Royal family - a close up. The bathroom just behind my bed is almost as big as the bedroom. Outside I can hear the

a fantasia gurgling.

Our trip down on the morning of the 11th was smooth and uneventful. I was extremely tired from the nearly twenty hours of frantic preparation for my talk and slide show for the 14th in Mexico City.

Ernesto, Elvira's son was somewhat late in picking us up at the airport. ~~but~~ we rolled into San Miguel street at about the usual time 2:30 p.m. I really wanted to get out of Denver it would hurt Carmen Cona's feelings if I didn't at least make an attempt to make the journey way up the hill to her new gallery which was having its inaugural opening.

I left Henry napping, and walked to the square, got a cup and was soon stepping out onto the Coloidal street in front of the gallery. A number of people were there all dressed casually because of the heat. ~~the~~ ^{the} tables ~~there~~ spread out under the trees had once held a feast of orchids but were now in complete disorder, all picked over. Clearly the opening was winding down or perhaps even over.

I saw Carmen and Emiliano standing in the patio ~~area~~ holding forth to a small gathering of art lovers. We didn't see me, and I didn't want

to disturb him. - Perhaps he was making a
sale. Carmen ^{and} her partner Ophelia were
in when in sigilas I explored the
three small gallery rooms and soon found
myself ~~for~~ back out onto the patio. Emiliano
was still talking. Even though we had one
of our small ^{Agave} ~~Eagle~~ ~~from~~ pink Hongsing, I
almost felt like ~~at~~ I had wrongly walked
into someone else's party. Much of the art
was pretty good - and very Mexican.

Since I was completely ignored and feeling
almost invisible and Carmen was nowhere
in sight, I thought "Overful" I can just
slip away and get some much needed
sleep. The walk down the steep hill was
warm and dusty. Up my lower walking hand
in hand. Cacophonous music everywhere.
I went to my favorite restaurant and had
my usual chicken leg and rice and was
home by four. Nancy dead asleep. Martha's
room resplendent with the best Antiques, ~~and~~
certainly the best Articulos in the house. Wonderful
pillows and ancient ~~textured~~ velvet coverings.
The glint of old gold and silver and baby eyed
Saints. That was about all I could see
in the faint light ~~and~~ I wondered if I were
actually looking at the room through
my memory. Martha was the only decorative ^{good}
I knew who designed as much for the door

as for the light. Truly this was the sumptuous living space of a creature of the night. A nocturnal rook for the daytime.

I felt my way through the darkness to my little room and immediately ~~day~~ dozed off. It was dark when I awoke. I could hear music coming from our patio and several people talking and laughing. I dressed and hurried down.

Carmen lit up when she saw me. She gave me an umbrella and a bin and introduced me to the assembled guests as the great artist. I was introduced back and forth to as many people whose names I'm not likely to remember. But it was a wonderful group. Everybody talking. Some kind of activity was going on in the kitchen. "Oh Oh," I thought. Severiana the cook here for forty years was a tyrant as far as her kitchen was concerned. Our friends had taken over the place, and I feared the worst. But not to worry. Mark, our master chef for the evening, had obviously made a deal with Severiana, for she seemed quite content with the whole business.

During the evening and before our excellent but simple pasta dinner, ~~we sat~~ ^{sup on the upper} a dining room with a glorious view of San Miguel's distant hills, we sat in the loggia by the living room. Throughout the

evening, new people come and went, brought their
wide-eyed children to oggle Martha's handiwork.
Emilia said ~~that~~ he was impressed that nevertheless
saw the home as a monument to obscurity.

Emilia and I had a very good talk. He
informs me with enthusiasm about art. Both
he and his mother are truly unrepentant idealists.
As Carmen told me, "I have dedicated my life
to art. It's as simple as that." Her son
wants me to look for a gallery for him in
the States. I told him that was like looking
for a wife. If things didn't work out I'd get
the blame. He said that he didn't want to
be typed as a Mexican painter. I replied
that it might be a good idea to stop painting
busts and landscapes. He's an unseen artist.
At times his really very good, with an
improvisational flair to his paint. At other
times his work looks amateurish, not like
the same painter at all.

Aphelia, Carmen's partner a gracious elegant
lady whose Spanish is so good it was some
time before I sensed she was originally from
the States. Dittsburg and Philadelphia she said.
Although she has a place in San Miguel
her home is in Southern Mexico City near the
Zacatepec. She was pleased that I knew
the area and that it had figured prominently
in the recent Latin Religion. I described the

rides of Quetzalli to her. She was fascinated.
Zacatepec is famous for "Straw or Grass
Mountains." ~~I told her~~ She told me that
people still made pilgrimages to the mountains
to gather grass. They would never tell her
what for. It was all very mysterious she
said. "Grass Mountains" said her friend
Nith, next to me, a cousin to Carmen I think.
He was brother for much indulging Diego Beltran
eyes. And he would have made a wonderful
priest. "I've lived most of my life next
to that place and never knew its name till
now." I wish I could remember his name.
Very witty, a lot of fun.

In fact all the people there were
interesting, and charming. All spoke English
though I tried to praise my Spanish
as best I could. At about 10:30 Mark
had prepared the meal and the table
was beautifully set upstairs. The evening
was beautiful. I was sorry that Nancy
couldn't seem to pull her self together to
come out. But no matter. Nobody's
feelings were hurt. Everyone had a good
time. I was struck by how similar
this evening was to one of our many meals
here when Whilam, Martha and Elton hosted.
Same type of people. All doing something
interesting. I was just an onlooker.

at the Conventioned fringe.

Before we adjourned to dinner I brought out ~~the~~ your orange notebook. People were glabbergasted. ~~Also~~ I also showed them the 8" x 10" photos of the green model of Tumbulituba. No body would believe that your model was so small until I brought out your little palm model at the Chicacalli.

One man, a gringo from the Embassy here said that he would like to see the original drawings that he thought were printed in your notebook. Again, everybody was amazed to find out that your notebook's drawings were not prints. I also brought out an black notebook. ~~for~~ They went crazy over an watercolor. You know, we a right to show these pictures when we show our Aztec stuff. The surmation of the Aztec views is really put in proper context by our other art.

By the way Mark our Cook came and sat down next to me for a few minutes and told me ^{in a} spellbinding way without his going to the Temple Mayor Museum with Armer to see the Aztec clothing. He knows nothing about Aztec Culture but his description of the items was so graphic that I thought I could see them myself. I can't wait

to have a look for my self.

By the way, Sweet, I asked Carmen, since her gallery was at Tizatlan if it was near the house of Miguel and Rosa Coronel. El Aire is in the Coronel's house... And better yet. The building was designed by Bonagum. And their tearing down a wall to make a larger room for my talk. I hope Bonagum is not spinning in his grave.

Carmen has told me some very interesting stories about the old great artists of Mexico's golden age. She remembers many of them at her father's house as a child.

Monday and Tuesday -

I may not have shopped and rested. For once I really need a rest. I haven't even thought about the Agrest talk. I've been reading that wonderful Book "Under the Tuscan Sun". It is now 7:00 and I must push for Mexico City. Adios.