



Dear Gail and Bonnie.

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Fall, 1970

c. Nov. 18, 1970

Dear Gail and Bonnie:

Cid Corman, editor of ORIGIN, Japan, here Sunday with his Japanese wife, a day or a day to be remembered. Shizumi is the tiniest thing - tiny, Cid said, even for Japanese women. The weather got cool (in Calif.) so they bought Shizumi a knit dress - well, the skirt isn't any more than 8 or 10 inches long, a mini-mini even for a little girl. Her early home was in Hiroshima, a rather wealthy family but the bomb caused them to lose everything - probably the father died in that bombing or because of it - the mother and the children including Shizumi were away in another city at the time.

Al behaved quite well, overdoing his role as host only a little bit. Every time he wanted to address himself to Shizumi he pronounced it differently until it got to be something like Shoshone ("Oh", I said, "we have a Shoshone woman here?) and that little woman went into peels of laughter. I got tired before it was over - you see I'd prepared this dinner of roasted capon with of course dressing and gravy the day before as I really expected he might fly into Milwaukee on Saturday - and yams, German potato salad, cottage cheese, green beans, cranberries etc.... but when I waited till 10 Sat. night and NOBODY CAME I said to myself: well, tomorrow this meal gets pulled out of the refrigerator and used, day old or not. I can't talk and cook same time so that it was all easy Sunday. They stayed at the Black Hawk Hotel so when we took them back up there Sunday night and Al insisted on buying drinks (I had a grasshopper which I love) and in the dimness of that bar I suddenly saw I was sitting next to Fred Hobe. He then said Thank you for the Jonathan Williams book of your poems - I was afraid he would never do that as it's been a year and no word from him so it was another moment of happiness for me.

Cid and Shizumi really had no warm clothing so Al gave him ~~him~~ a very nice all-weather longish jacket and I hung a corduroy coat on "the little girl" (it hung rather loosely of course) - they had bought a Rembrandt etching for a fairly big amount of money in Calif. and they are living only on what he earns reading at the universities and colleges. (He reads at Madison tonight (Nov. 17) and then goes to Indiana Univ. and a couple more places around there including Kent State (He thinks Kent has set up a program that is not good but he says when he talks to the young "revolutionists" and they say "when we get into power" and he asks What is it you want? - "I know", he says "what you are against and for the most part I sympathize, but what what is it you want?" - they invariably give a vague answer, they don't know. (Cid is in his forties) Then from Indiana to Buffalo, NY, then Ottawa and then New York where his dentist brother lives - he stays there most of the winter and then Europe and back home to Japan.

A thing you'd be interested in is the rather new gadget he has for recording - not a tape recorder - a box called a Cassette or is it the recording plates you put into it that are called Cassettes? Anyhow he calmly said "Read from your poetry" and I calmly read ! ! ! Amazing - not good reading, I think. I fell over an entire stanza as tho it was a sand bag to keep the flood out. But what an experience. My voice did not sound like mine as he played it back but he says that's the case with everybody. It seemed to enunciate much better than I thought I had. I think a person conscious of a listening audience would write just a tiny bit differently from the way he would for print i.e. my line that says "Martha (Patsy) stay" I should have read aloud as "Martha (Patsy, that is)" and actually

too much

it wouldn't have upset the poetry any.

So this fall two things happened to me: I took a gun (not one of those big loud-sounding ones) and at something like 25 feet, ^{with my first shot} ~~toppled~~ a tin can off a post—the first time I ever took a gun in my hands—and I read aloud. This doesn't mean I'm going to be a hunter or a reader—for me I could accept it if the ballad type of poem with fairly obvious music but I like planting poems in deep, silence, each person ~~XXX~~ gets at the poems for himself. He has to come to the poems with an ear for all the music they can give and he'll hear ~~that~~ ^{that} like Beethoven heard ~~the~~ the deaf.

Cid says in Japan the woman walks a bit behind the man. Al spoke of the man, here, walking on the outside, ~~XXXXXX~~ the traffic side, a hang-over from the days of the horse which might want to take a nip out of you. In Japan today everyone still takes off his shoes before entering a house. Some of the older people might still sit on the floor but mainly the people sit on small chairs—no matter what furniture store you go into these little chairs are the same, never a change in style, and the tables are small. I asked about the walls of the houses rolling away or lifted out in hot weather—this is done now only in the homes of the well-to-do. Most houses are cottage-like and ~~hardly~~ almost no land, close together, hardly air enough for all those millions of little people to breathe. The average workman in Japan, might earn \$500 a year. Food just now is if anything a little higher in cost than here.

We talked—LZ's Little (novel of Paul's childhood and his education, mainly of the violin) just out—enchanting in the way some of those TV Munsters was but of course I was close to all those experiences he mentions and it all means ~~more~~ ^{much} to me. Spoke of Basil whom he saw in Vancouver before flying here—Basil is the grand old poet of England—Northumberland—he had operations on his eyes and now he sees without glasses! He'll come to Madison to see his daughter during the holidays and maybe I'll see him again. This time, tho, I shant be working all day to get a meal and waiting and wondering—I take him to the Black Hawk Hotel where it all seems quiet—a lovely dining room—what kind of food I don't know, however.

Well, now Gail, it's been very cold to work on the hill—I hope you have some warm days up there before winter. I can't get that place off my mind. The person who wrote America the Beautiful must have had something like that in mind.

I think you're both living there already

and I'm visiting you!

Lorraine