

9/19 Eaton

dear Sally,

I gotcher postcard. I'm sorry to hear about your son. Hospitals are, at best, not so fine. I recall once spending 87 days in one that looked and mainly smelt like a Burmese telegraph station. & surely under the knife is no place to be, though better there than under the sod. What a place for an abcess! I have always wondered how infirmity can creep into the secret places of the body, inaccessible through any orifice. The clever bacilli, dressed in midnight black, concealing daggers, flat bottles of poison taped to their thighs, stealing through the labyrinth of gates and the phalanges of guardsmen, to set up tiny kingdoms of misery in bone or spleen or thalamus. It's enuff to give ya bad dreams. I hope the victim is better soon.

Az for U. of P. and their corpses: once more I must bring up the question of whether Chatham wd/ care to have me come and do a gig on their premises. In fact I must rather press that question, because I'm broke. C'est a dire, I hemorrhaged away most of my dough into my dācha this summer, & then found, suddenly, that I was minus one of my 3 jobs (net worth ca. \$4000/ann.) through the imbecility of some imbeciles other than myself. It will prob. take me till Xmas to restabilize. Had hoped for Anthology to purchase (nostalgia) this Fall, for maybe a grand, but they (!) are broke too. It comes down to the fact that Richard needs the money for more cobra helicopters & free gifts to GM et al., and his pet lawyer John is trying to hound the foundations to death & mainly succeeding in that noble ambition. So. What is to do? If Chatham is broke too, then of course I'll still come, but that wd/ seem to cast it into early November, & I can't imagine how long U of P will be willing to keep the hors d'oeuvres chilled, if you'll pardon a somewhat tasteless mot.

Meantime I think I've figured out how to do what I need to do there by myself, if I can dig up someone to load cameras for me there. Maybe Mike can be persuaded.

Next problem is to get myself invited to play with a Buchla synthesizer for a week. Or that's one of the next problems, or part of one of them, since I don't know whether a Buchla, or indeed any existing synthesizer, will do what I want. In fact it is all part of an intricate nexus, upon which I invite you to speculate, as follows:

Willy-nilly, one lives in a society. (Like the lonesome ambiguous baboon I am already of two minds about that.) The chief attraction of living among other people is that they are not like oneself. Part of their unlikeness consists in their being able to do things that one cannot do, and that they know things one does not. Among such things are the technologies of electronics, video, computer programming. Let us suppose that one is considering making a very large film that needs to use such things. Call it CLOUDS OF MAGELLAN. Suddenly one discovers that the social benefits are not forthcoming.

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One inquires about computer time. That is available in quantity from 2 different institutions, maybe three. What about software? At least 3 programs are anticipated from the outset, probably several more will arise. One is told that 2 of the three do not exist, and the third does exist but is "classified" because it may have possible code-breaking applications. Who will make those that don't exist, and devise an algorithm for the third? It is suggested that one learn Fortran IV or Cobol and punch them out oneself.

One contemplates making 9 hours of sound track for this film. Most of the sound will need to be modified electronically. Make inquiries. Discover that nobody seems to know more than how to build an echo circuit AND they don't know how to vary the period of the echo. Even. And so on with video: imaginative competence extends as far as, maybe, tone reversal and pseudo-solarization a la Scott Bartlett. It is suggested on every hand that one must learn three new technologies oneself, acquire the tons of hardware, etc.

Well. With a few technologies under one's belt, and a 36th birthday approaching, one hesitates. Can it be done at all? Can one simply withdraw and dig in one's own garden? What about the vaunted wizardry of the social ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ congeries?

It's mildly depressing.

Meantime some stuff is getting done. Melons very successful. Tomatoes overpoweringly likewise: the new Burpee VF hybrid compares favorably with good old Heinz 1320 & seems to resist verticillium wilt a little better. Greek beans got out of hand & into the adjacent late corn, & ~~HHHH~~ clomb same, to apparent detriment of neither. School has begun in all its awfulness: why are adolescents so middle-aged & listless? I finished TRAVELLING MATTE, finally. Sitney sez it's "ugly", I find it rather elegant. 32:30 min. CRITICAL MASS goes finally to the lab next week. NOSTALGIA will be at the NY Festival this year, wch suggests I have gassed the slobs twice running. I have been invited to apply for a Guggenheim, & am at the farm alone doing just that, in duodecublicate. It's raining. There are still lots of zinnias. I saw a Gt Blue Heron go over at about 50 feet yesterday, making for the bullhead pond over the hill. I'm scheming about ways to live up here all the time & jettison N.Y. where I now find I can't sleep, because of the noise. This is going to be some year. Have you seen the Sept. issue of ARTFORUM? it is a film issue, & fat enough. Or did I mention that last letter? Had intimations last week of another movie, didactic, half-animated in a dumb sort of way, & half "live"...but just a glimmering & no time to really work it out at the moment.

It would be nice to hear from you when things are better. Don't worry about it till then: embarrassment is a bourgeois luxury.

X2ipe H

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