

June 9, 1961

Dear Folks,

This is really the first moment of peace since Monday's departure. I'm sitting at a picnic table, my sleeping bag on the ground besides me, a small quiet fire burning, the sun slowly going down behind, in a pine forest on the side of a mountain in Yellowstone. Slowly growing is that old moonbeam feeling of confidence and the knowledge that I shall be able to take care of myself. Cynthia, whom I sort of fell in love with and who instantly repelled my advances, and the other girl (a weird specimen, but fun) are gone, now probably hundreds of miles further West, and I am here for the next few days with David, the fellow who also accompanied us on the trip.

To say anything about the trip is difficult. It was too big and too fast for me even to receive, let alone transmit. We traveled 650 miles a day, slept - and swam at dawn - on the shores of Lake Erie, in a hotel in Oauein, Iowa, on the desert of the Badlands of

South Dakota and last night here at
Yellowstone. The country, which I saw on
the screen of the moving car's windows
for about fifteen hours a day, is so large
and variegated and macrocosmic that
I felt at times that I committed hybris
just by seeing so much of it. The beauty
of the Palisades River + Railroad Tracks, or
of Putnam Valley or Mozart or making
love, has meaning, for in apprehending it
you add yourself and become part of it
and can assimilate it, but the Rockies
and the hundreds of miles of Black Soil
in Iowa or the light and cloud form-
ations over the barren Great Basin.
can lead one only to cry or panic or find
God or close the eyes with fear realizing
that hear a man means nothing and never
can. Not Faust, nor existential man
is here, but 'Know thyself' and 'Nothing in

excess!

Meanwhile, back at the ego and the
campsite - here we are the only ones without
cars - categorically, and almost the only
ones from N. Y. and the stares and the
smiles and the words of admiration are
ravenously eaten up by you know who.
Sleep is sound and delightful, face is
sunburned to a turn, sweatshirt and
hat have not left my person since New
Jersey. Tomorrow morning is overnight
camping hike to top of 10,000 mountain.
Yellowstone before the season is unutterable.

June 22, 1961

Dear Folks,

I received Mom's letter of the 20th this morning; it seems that mail gets from the Bronx to here faster than it does to Manhattan. First of all, please excuse all the typographical errors. I am wrestling with Alice's old typewriter and anyway I've been out of proactice for a while - it ~~hal~~ already seems years away from Columbia University and Messrs. Smith Mazzeo and Co. The only reason I'm sitting herewith the typewriter and not out being a tourist is that it's just too hot - over a hundred in the last three days, and yesterday I tried reliving the past and air-mattrass-floated down the Merced River like a fool in the sun, although I enjoyed it as much as six years ago with Kathy Kohl, all of which I remember like yesterday, and got a tremendous sunburn and ~~am~~ ^{am} now red as a lobster and peeling like an onion (which sounds like an interesting dish).

Well I don't know where the hell to start; I got out of description last time by being philosophical but that's not going to work any more. God damn! this typewriter. Maybe I'll be modern and forget syntax and let everything flow in one sentence.

The first part of the trip; the driving, was really a Good Thing. All four people along had so much in common(I started whistling 'laudamos' from the Bach Mass and two others joined in, we all had sleeping bags and an itching for adventure and wild summer plans and Dave had taken philosophy and a long discussion about induction and ethics in the Yellowstone Canyon Lodge and the recognition of the most spectacular thing we had seen was a skyscape crossing a hundred mile wyoming basin and dirty clothes and smell and slovenliness and the wierd girl from Sherman Ave. turned out to be a real swinger although ~~and~~ ugly as sin and I bumped into her two weeks later at an exhibition of the German Expressionists at the Daigang

an exhibition of the German Expressionists at the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco; she was staying in Berkeley and was the only person in the world that I knew that was staying in the Bay Area.) Cynthia turned out to be really schwingend and urbane and experienced as hell and wouldn't take crap from anyone, especially from me in any of many ways. It was her car and she was oldest and was boss and although I took a heavy fall for her, she left no doubt that any advances would be futile. A good healthy blow to the ego. I hope at the end of the summer to come back with her to New York: she may drop in at Merced Lake since she is coming to Yosemite anyway, to pick me up.

You must sometime, even if you go as fast as we did, take the trip across the country by car. There is so much to see that is more than attractions, just the space, for example, that you don't really have to stop and spend too much time for. The trip is what's important and not necessarily ~~the~~ the destination in this case.

Two days we spent on top of Mount Washburn. Deserted fire lookout with all the paraphernalia, view for hundreds of miles in all directions, seeing the rain in one part, clouds in another, sunshine in another, above it all, with stove

last years food provisions and melted snow for water. Relaxed got used to the altitude, cooked, fooled around with the fire station toys, read and chewed the rag. We were sick with exhaustion from the ascent, being out of training, not used to the altitude and carrying fifty pound pack. But oh that freedom of having everything with you, absolutely no commitments and the ability to do whatever you want, wherever you want whenever you want. On the way down the mountain came the end to it all however, before the real adventure started I had planned to hitch freights or the mail train to S. F. The bus ride was passed in a kind of half delirium - I slept most of the forty hours and didn't put a thing in my stomach for four days, but it was kind of fun sitting in that one seat not knowing day from night, the blinding Utah sun blending with the passing neon lights of Elko and Reno Nevada. The bus arrived in San Francisco on Wednesday morning which turned out to be the hottest day in the city in the last seventy years. As I staggered off the Greyhound and into the nearest Barber shop I was wearing the same shirt (the blue wool one) dungarees, Red Hat, socks, underwear and, hiking boots, ~~xxxxxxx~~ beard and hair in which I had ridden across the United States and climbed Mount Washburn and slept every night and gotten sick. My face must have been a pale shade of chartreuse. After the partial rehabilitation of a shave and a haircut - the damn oriental barber exposed my raw soul to the elements by giving me a crew cut - I phoned the Werths and got instructions on how to get there by bus. My pack had gotten stuck somewhere along the line and wouldn't arrive until the next day, so I was condemned to roam the city in 95 degree heat in my mountaineering clothes. Once at the Werths, I begged for a shower and a bed and to be left alone till my stomach subsided, all of which was generously granted. When I next revived consciousness the disease had passed over and I was ravishly hungry.

HIGH SIERRA

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK



CAMPS

CALIFORNIA

Dear Folks,

July 13, 1961

I'm suitably celebrating my birthday by not telling anyone about it and taking the afternoon off to hike, eat, sleep, swim, watch the clouds and mountains and write letters.

My writing desk, lunch table, bed and swimming pool are provided by a slope of polished granite, over which a few feet from here cascades the Merced River. It's futile to attempt description; there is too much here even to see. I have been talking to hikers again, and now am determined that I shall

HIGH SIERRA

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK



CAMPS

CALIFORNIA

August 15, 1961

Dear Folks,

It's been a long time since I writ
last and a great deal has happened
that's worth writing about, but I
am so tired that I shall have to
let most of it pass until I see you
again in fall. Except for the last
3 days we've been tremendously
busy, working almost without interruption
from 5:30 in the morning till 10 PM.
Then came this present period of grace
which is approaching an end too
quickly, and every body got a second

crack at a day off. I decided to
take mine in the valley and left
day before yesterday at about
ten a.m. and arrived at Happy
Isles at 4:30, climbing to
the top of Hay Dome on the way.
After a pleasant stay with
the Crumers including Pilot
Nugwon at the Ahwahnee and
about 3 hours sleep, I left
at 4 a.m. to catch the warehouse
supply truck up to Tuolumne.
After breakfast there I began
the 16 mile trek back and
arrived in camp again at 4 P.M.
36 hours and about 35 miles
with alot seen and enjoyed and
ook that steak.

HIGH SIERRA

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK



CAMPS

CALIFORNIA

You can imagine my first reaction
at seeing the fat gaudy tourists
after 7 weeks of isolation
(I felt about 20 feet tall in that
Valley) as well as Alice's
reaction at first seeing "that
wild man" with the 3 days
growth, Boots, Levis, dirty work
shirt and smell. The decision
to eat at the Ahwahnee was
made only after I had showered
shaved and changed into

bad legs. I figured out that
in the days travels, by foot, I
had ascended 4500 ~~was~~ feet and
descended about 8200 feet.

I was quite muscle bound. Working
pots last night again, but in
return for the pain ~~for the~~ got a
wonderful massage from
Judy (with a y) the schoolteacher
I think I mentioned once.

While I write here in the ~~Amagreen~~
store-kitchen tent there is a fantastic
display of chipmunk warfare
going on at my feet. Oscar,
our mascot, who is getting so fat
he can hardly move, is having
more trouble every day keeping