

May 1, 1968

Dear All (as Charlie would say),

Well.

My experiences in the past 2 weeks have been so varied, so unusual and so exhausting that I can't even begin to describe them in an air letter. But I'll give a rough sketch.

First of all, now that we're finally in Beirut, a beautiful, clean, safe city, my memory of Iran & Iraq have become a vague sort of nitemare mixed up with desert, filth, vast tiredness, and one indecent proposition after another. I mean, things just weren't too bright there. It always rains on Charlie & Tiffy, they always [] & it did, literally & figuratively. To begin with, of course, Ahab ditched us in Teheran without paying Charlie, leaving him low on funds, since he was supposed to get []. Then I found I'd lost my \$20 travelers checks (\$60 worth) leaving me with [] to get them back [] process takes 2 ½ days []. So we decided [] Baghdad, as we were [] way back to Istanbul. [] from Teheran to the [] made it to Baghdad [] at 3?). We discovered [] there is no American [] (in fact there isn't [] – we have no diplomatic []). The nearest one was [] many reasons we then [] Baghdad and strike out [] Northern Iraq, on our way back to Istanbul, & on back to Europe. [] in Kirkuk for 8 years & [] his old home. We got to [] consists half of military policemen & half of plainclothes police, & found that the fighting between the Kurds & the Iraqis in northern Iraq is so bad that we couldn't get to Turkey that way. Back to Baghdad we went, planning to hitch west through Syria & on to Beirut. But we found that Englishmen & Americans are absolutely forbidden access to Syria (please get a map of the Middle East so you can figure this out) – so we were rather cornered. We couldn't go North – the fighting. Nothing south but Arabia. Couldn't get back to Iran – no visa. Syria effectively blocks the west. So we took a bus to Amman, Jordan & from there flew over Syria to Beirut (the bus ride was like nothing I've ever experienced – 21 solid hours on the most beat-up, cramped, stuffy, slow – [] bus imaginable. Imagine continuous jarring bumps for 21 solid hours. Plus the night before we left Baghdad we got only 2 hours sleep. Then on the bus I couldn't sleep at all. And last night I had to sleep at the all-male YMCA, as that was all there was, & since it was clandestine, I had to sneak out at 7:00 in the morning. Now I am at the Youth Hostel (oh blessed beautiful youth hostel may your name be writ in the annals of history for you gave a tired girl a home!)

Anyway, everywhere we went in the Middle East, men assumed that I was going to sleep with them. No exaggeration. Every single man we met would be nice & friendly & helpful and then expect me to sleep with them – they didn't even bother to ask. At one point we were staying in a family's home in Baghdad and the husband – in the next room from his wife & 3 kids, grabbed me. I didn't trust anyone. Jesus, border inspectors, policemen, students, businessmen – in true democratic fashion they all wanted a little share of Tiffy.

God, I hated it.

Anyway, I need the rest of my money – my last paycheck & the income tax return. We may get jobs here in Beirut (don't look now but the guy who runs the hostel is beginning to make advances) [] even so, I need the dough, as there [] way out of here either, except by plane. [] follow these instructions, [] me by American express here, to [] later: Well, never mind, it seems all you have to do is make it a check to me and send it to me c/o The American Express Office, Avenue de Phenecie, Beirut, Lebanon. Please send it as super quickly as possible because I will need it right away in case we decide to leave Lebanon sooner.

I have just got a temporary job (this is several days later) typing a 400 page manuscript – in French – for some Lawyer. On a manual typewriter. For 13¢ a page, what fun!

Hurry with the money, Love to all.

Tif

Beirut May 2

When did I first love Charlie (do I love Charlie)? Sometimes I place it as early as the night on Leopoldstrasse in Munich when he suddenly kissed my hand. But everyone knows love doesn't "happen" like that, it's not a look, a touch or a word but a growing closer, an understanding and trust based on long association . . . other times I make it a little later when we were driving through Yugoslavia in the Mercedes eternally behind the eternal Peugeot manned by the eternal Ahab; I place it on that night when I was drugged with sleepiness and the pain of cramps and all I could see was the radio dial gleaming in the dark but what I was thinking was the same scene with me saying, "I love you Charlie. But don't worry because it won't hurt me." Then maybe it was in Teheran in our hotel room (filthy, bare, blue-and-white walled lice ridden cubicle that it was) one night when he asked me to tell him "home

truths”. That was a night when my thought had changed, in this scene I was saying, “I think I am going to love you more than I have loved anyone and I think you are going to hurt me more than I have ever been hurt” (well, after all, isn’t love vulnerability to hurt so isn’t the most love vulnerability to the greatest hurt?)

Or was it really the other nights and days, the times when he asked of me more than I could give, the times when he gave nothing in return, only indifference, the times when I knew that he would commit the worst hurt of all, to make me doubt myself – and when, in spite of all this, my various struggles to come to terms with it and to find a solution always ended by my staying with him. In Munich, in Bulgaria, in Teheran, in Baghdad and now in Beirut I had to wonder what I should do – should I go back? Or would it be copping out? And worst of all, does it matter to him or could he care less if I cop out? To have to wonder these things in every city, to put myself through the struggle of wondering and deciding (because it sure is Hell to decide things) for another person leads me to believe that that person means a lot to me.

I have Charlie’s passport. It says he’s 5’6” tall, has black hair and brown eyes, was born May 27, 1948 in Tripoli, now resides in England, and is unmarried. Profession: none. It doesn’t say he has white hairs with the black ones, and the picture doesn’t show the peculiar gap between his front teeth. It does show that his hair is thick and long, and that he has a mustache, and a V-necked yellow shirt and a denim jacket. His eyes are fabulous. They show every shading of his emotions from hypocritical congeniality to tender pity. His nose freckles in the sun. He is highly susceptible to mosquito (and other) bites. He is very picky about hairs and the like in his food. He is usually a tender, affectionate bed partner (though not the slightest bit romantic). He is a fanatic about rings, and can spend hours in jewelry shops just staring at and pricing them. It takes him a good hour to get across the boundary from sleep to full consciousness in the morning. He lacks patience, likes to be doing something with his hands (which always shake), and doesn’t trust anyone, women least of all.

I am now in the terrible bind that the whole concept of love throws you into if you believe as I do that one must love and respect oneself before one can love another. What do you do if you love another person but he demands from you acts which pick away at your self-respect? What do you do if he wants you, for example, to flirt with (and perhaps sleep

with – does he want me to sleep with them?) other men for a free meal or a cheap, free outing? I want to help him, I want to do what is best for him to be a happy, fulfilled person, whatever I can do in a small way for a few months, for I know and accept that it can only be that much. I must do what is best for him, or the world will be just as he thinks, a nondescript crowd of isolated, greedy pairs of hands and gaping mouths, each grabbing and gulping for what he can get and the hell with the other guy. But if it destroys me to help him – then what good will my help be? What good would the love of someone with no self-respect do him? Am I doing him any good, anyway, at the most. Am I giving him any moments of peace or security or amusement or even simple relief from boredom? Am I just a drag on his trip (he doesn't trust women, remember)?

I am afraid that at this point a drag on this trip is what I am, and that is why I am leaving for Athens when I get my money from home. I can't give him as much of what he wants as the fags he picks up by the Hotel Phenecie. I thought perhaps I could help by using my winning smile and ample bosom to hustle meals and job tips for him but I found tonight that I can't go through with it. He doesn't need me around for anything except to carry his passport (God, that sounds peevish!) and to love is to respond to need. If the need is for nothing, then nothing must be given.

I guess.

Greece (Lamia-Athens)
Molos

Adana to Komintini in three days
Was being back in Turkey again
And sleeping on air mattresses on the roof of the American
Consulate.
It was the cheapest yoghurt and best sesame seed bread.
The slowest lorries, but the most reliable: the lorries that
Went all the way and covered 500 k's a day,
The lorries whose sweat-faced, dusty drivers (who had worked
a year in Germany) bought you chickens or grilled meat with
onions, fat spongy bread and tomatoes –
It was delicious, and served in places with many flies.
It was more mountains but green mountains, not the grayish
blonde peaks of Iran and Iraq,
Not the snow-streaked lonely crags of northeastern Turkey,
But green, powerful, friendly mountains whose roads were good.
And it was the sharp Turkish sun, and it was cement dust

On your clothes, in your eyes, hair and ears, and even up your nose.

It was a night spent in a red taxi outside Ankara,

It was cigarettes offered by a dozen men (and accepted),

It was also the Bosphorus again with its jellyfish, and being back in Istanbul,

Istanbul: So vital, so total – what other city could absorb a hippy onslaught with indifference?

In what other city does the anonymous Turk offer “Hashish? A woman? Student cards?”

Adana to Komintini in 3 days or 3 dollars was a fresh border guard on the Turkish side

And mosquitos on the Greek side of the bridge,

And paranoia on both sides.

It was friendly Turkish adolescents with beautiful smiles and Fruko.

It was entering Greece by moonlight in a van with an Israeli, an Englishman, and a Swede.

It was driving two hundred and three kilometers in that Greek moonlight: God, I expected gods –

-And I was tired!

Adana to Komintini was the happiness of indifference and of heading west to Europe.

And the fabric of these days was thin between happiness and pain –

-And it sometimes wore through.

May 29, 1968

MUNCHEN!

Dear Mama,

Well, as you can see, I made it back to Munich safe and sound – relatively. We ran out of money about 4 days before we got here but we could sleep outside and people gave us food and money on the way. What happened was this: We bought plane tickets in Beirut to Adana, Turkey, leaving Charlie \$5 and me \$3. We gave blood for \$10 in Beirut and flew to Turkey. Then we hitched to Nafplion, Greece (took us about 6 days) where we rested for 5 days. Then we hitched from there to Salzburg, just across the border from Germany (about 130 kilometers from Munich). Yugoslavia was sickening – took us 4 days to hitch it and it rained 2 nites while we slept out. But then on the border between Austria and Germany, we had trouble, to say the least. Charlie was carrying some hash he bought in Beirut and when the customs police searched

his knapsack they found it and arrested him there on the border. This was about 9:00 at night. They searched me and my stuff but since I was clean, they let me go. So I hitched from the border to here – got to München at 1:30 am but got a lift from the autobahn to the Heim from some GIs and thank God they let me in even tho it was past curfew. So K, L & I had a joyful reunion and Laura's loaning me some money till I can cash my check, which I got today (goody goody). But the Munich American Express is more stringent than Beirut & won't cash the check. So I'm returning it so you can make it a bank draft and try again. Please hurry, I guess I need not add.

Anyway, the police here in München took me down to make a statement about the whole business today, as well as re-searching my stuff as well as the room I'm in. Don't worry, tho – there isn't anything they can arrest me for. I guess I'm sort of a witness. They tell me it will take 1 or 2 months before Charlie is even sentenced, so I'm going down to Bad Reichenhall (a town just inside the German border) tomorrow (that's where they're holding him) to talk to him and see what I can do about getting his money out of the bank in Munich where he's keeping it.

I have to mail this letter right away so I'll close now. Will write again soon with more detail on whole trip.

Glad to be back in Munich –

Tif