

June 17, 1968

Dear Mama,

I got your letter today with the clippings. Thanks for all of them and also the ones you sent before.

Charlie is dead. He committed suicide in the Bad Reichenhall jail last night by hanging himself. I loved him and he's dead, finished. That's that.

We wouldn't have known except that the German police notified the British Consulate. The consulate was not planning to notify anyone except his parents, but the boy who operates the switchboard there is Allen (who is the one I told you about many letters ago who was in Africa) knows me and the people at the Heim, so he called this morning and told Peter (a guy who works here who Kitty is "going with"). Peter told Kitty and she told me. The two of them have been wonderful about it . . . any doubts I ever had about Kitty's depth and generosity are gone now.

Charlie killed himself, but it was a stupid, pointless law that killed him, too, and I have to tell you these things because it is your generation that believes in the law. Charlie is now dead because he was carrying ten grams of hashish in his knapsack, and it is against the law to possess hash. Why? I have never told you in so many words and you never asked me, but you must have realized that I have smoked marijuana and hash many, many times. Dozens of times. Sometimes I enjoyed it and sometimes I didn't. I am not addicted. I have not lost my mind or my health because of it. It has not turned me into a prostitute, a sniffling junkie or a gutter degenerate. My smoking of these things has done nothing to change my personality, beliefs or goals. And yet it is illegal, and lumped in the same class with heroin, cocaine and amphetamines. Hysterical, ignorant lawmakers and enforcers are doing their best to make punishment for possessing and using hash and grass stiffer, jail sentences longer. I have never known anyone who died from smoking hashish – but now a 20 year old boy is dead because it is against the law to possess it I know and I have tried to tell myself that "This is the law and it therefore should not be broken." But – The Law is Wrong. The Law itself is what helped to destroy Charlie, and is destroying more people than the smoking of hashish or marijuana ever did.

I know that Charlie was disturbed. I know that he has tried to kill himself before and that he spent last summer in a mental hospital. I know that an ordinary, stable person would not

have taken his own life because of being arrested for smuggling hash. But that doesn't change the fact that he took his own life because he was arrested . . . for carrying 10 grams of hash. I have been so afraid of this, so worried because I know Charlie's history and know what could happen. I knew he had to see someone, had to talk to someone, that he couldn't make it just sitting there all day thinking about it, surrounded by people who don't even speak English. I tried to see him and they wouldn't let me. After all, he was a common criminal. And I worried and worried – but at the most I only dared fear that he would crack up, not this.

And now he's dead. I hope every goddamn son of a bitch in the world screaming for stiffer marijuana and hashish laws is satisfied. Justice has been done.

Think about it. And God save your generation (not you) from my hate and my bitterness.

And my sadness. Charlie was an unhappy person, but he was a good person . . . and he had his whole life to get straightened out in.

Love,

Tif

CHARLIE

Charlie #2

why are you dead?

we played summer games.
we raced bottle caps down summer
streams –
my boat and your boat, and your
boat always won.
we flicked stones in the sun by the
road
and played nulls and crosses in
the velvety dirt
(how could Hercules do it with

70 virgins in one night, my
love?)
we walked between the sky and
the sea.
you got tiny orange cactus spines
in your thumb
I picked them out.
we climbed – I want to share it with
you! –
we climbed a wall of medieval stones
under a midnight moon.
we invaded the violated sanctity of
an old prison
whose old prisoners were long dead.
long sharp shafts of sunlight pierced
the windows of this dungeon
and the courtyard was a wilderness
we ate cookies.
you called them biscuits.
we did. you did.
and it rained. it did.
you don't remember. you are dead.
then why do I?

oh my love
oh my
where is the big dipper? which stars?
we were under a blanket
and I showed you, but you didn't see.
I wanted you to, now.
where were you? which good?
I touched you, with my brown hands
on your warm back
I showed you, but you didn't see

these are not my memories.
they are ours
but I am alone with them.
how can they exist?

oh my love, I am loving you to
depths of my pain.
the fullness of my love is upon
me
and you are dead. there is no relief.
there is no relief in sunshine or

memory
no relief in cherry pits or pity

you did it with your own hand.

may I deliver myself from the nights
of your pain that night.
I wanted to take your pain and hold
it
I wanted to carry it forever in my
strong brown hands
but you couldn't give it to me
and it leapt from your own hand
and struck you.

A person is living memories
half of me is dead.

I touched you under harsh lights
and harsh stares.
I touched your shoulder, your blue
denim shoulder.
then you were gone.

I wanted to tell you something once, listen.
it was full on my lips, love, listen.
I wanted to say that,

20 June 1968

Charlie #3

Little things –
watermelons (they weren't in season in time)
my second-hand German book
(I gave it to him)
“We'll Meet Again”
Red River Rock (he loved it)
Room 61 (he lived there)
Bus 54 (to Schwabing) –
- hurt.

20 June 1968

I don't want to forget things because what I remember is all that is left of him. For everyone. It is my responsibility.

The Ultimate Robot, Mark I (try to remember Mark II)

The Astounding Puzzle Ring

The Zippo Lighter (lost in Nafplion)

The row boats in Nafplion he couldn't ride in

"I'd like an ice cream"

"I should have done." "I will do."

"Bloody 'ell."

The Sound of music filmed in Salzburg

The Union Jack waving machine (Beirut)

21 June 1968

I want to hear from his family. I need that so badly. I need the acknowledgement from someone who knew him that our life together mattered because otherwise I am so alone with my pain and with these memories that I must not forget but can't bear to remember. Because we were always moving and with always different people, I keep feeling that it's all gone. Two months of life and a relationship which was as real as a human being gone. I want to talk to them, I want to be allowed to share their grief or I will have no comfort for my own. I want to talk to someone who really cared about him. I'm so alone with my grief. There has to be a respite, and I feel that the only one is by communicating with them. I want them to care about my memories of him because otherwise I feel that they aren't real, only a horrible joke played on me by my imagination. My love mattered, it existed and breathed, but the only witness to it, Charlie, is dead. Our friendship and laughter, even our arguments and sulks mattered, but there are no living witnesses. I need them. I loved him more than I thought or knew, and I am learning each day how much I loved him and needed him. I never knew how reciprocal our relationship was; I never knew how I needed him. And now I am so torn between the need to remember and the need to forget. Please feel my need, Charlie's family, please know my pain. I loved him, the 2 months we spent together were the story of my love and you must hear it and believe. You must acknowledge it. You have each other but I have no one. Please. I want the

Charlie I knew to be real, I want you to know of him, your son in the last months of his life.
They were happy, I want you to know, often I was sad but he was happy.

Please don't let me cry alone for brown eyes and needful hands that no one else remembers.

21 June 1968

I want to remember how he hated people
who sang on outings.

I want to remember Molos.

21 June 1968

I want to remember his birthday, May 27 and the names of his friends, Mark, David and Tony,
and of his girlfriend, Anne.

21 June 1968

I remember Molos. I remember how we sat by the sea at night (because I only liked to smoke while relaxing, or at least not while walking), the little waves of the Aegean only inches from our feet. Sometimes those little black and white waves grew bigger and more tumultuous; we gazed out at the mountainous island (perhaps an island, perhaps the other side of the bay) and glanced to our right to follow the line of the village out to the sea. I think that was the night he told me about the significance of his birthday (perhaps it was Nafplion), how important things happened then. Two years ago he "packed up" working at the bank, and a year ago tried to kill his girlfriend and himself, both on his birthday. This alarmed me, and he wondered what would happen this year. "Maybe something good," I said. I told him I wouldn't let him do any harm, I wouldn't let him commit suicide; I felt fear for him and I rushed inside myself for strength to help him. We were going to smoke that night but as it was windy we gave up the idea. Instead we went back to our pension and while I washed and combed out my hair and wrote "Adana to Komintini," he fell quietly to sleep. Maybe I covered him before I turned out the light; he often fell asleep so and sometimes I covered him and sometimes I didn't. I lay down to sleep too, listening to the steady lapping of the waves under our window.

22 June

I am possessed by the desire to put every thought and memory of him on paper, maybe to try to bring him back, maybe to somehow cheat death and reconstruct him, maybe to convince myself that he did exist. I don't know, but these memories give me no peace at all until they are in writing, and then only some. I don't want to erase Charlie from my mind, yet I can't bear the pain that comes with the memory. I want to be able to think of him without the pain, but I can't find the consolation ("No, no, you won't get 'round me that way," he always said with mock firmness when I would stroke his hair, his neck, his ear teasingly. "I'm not trying to get around you," I would insist, laughing. "I just can't resist the temptation.") (There was our rape of a Greek cherry tree somewhere near Edessa, earlier on the same day that we found Robert. At the invitation of the orchard workers, we mercilessly stripped the tree and crammed cherry after cherry into our ravenous mouths, big, red-black, wet, sweet cherries, too.) (and the painful memories. The night we slept out of the rain under a bus depot shelter in Zagreb. Patrick was with us then. I was jealous of Patrick and Robert, hurt and bitter. As we settled on our stomachs under the blanket we shared, Charlie put his arm around my waist and drew me closer. I lay unforgivingly, bitterly stiff and still, oh God I am human, too and just couldn't be forgiving enough.)

I didn't know what to do for Charlie. I was too young, or too inexperienced, or too ignorant, and I couldn't figure out what to do. I tried to at least inform him of the things I believed in: tolerance of others and yourself, being able to laugh at your failings and not take them too seriously, being able to forgive others for their failings because you recognize your own, being able to take depression and misery by believing that eventually you get over the worst of things and manage to go on living. I tried to make him laugh at the things I knew bothered him. I tried to satirize his inferiority complex and tease him about his desire for wealth and success. I tried to make him tolerate himself, I tried to emphasize to him his good points and make him realize that everyone has failures and bad points as bad as his. I went so far as to unconsciously make myself less a person so he could be more. I didn't even want him to know how much he hurt me (until Yugoslavia, God help me for I am human too) because I knew he would count that as an unforgivable failing too. I never told him I loved him for I knew he would leave me out of fear for what he would do to me and I needed him and he needed me.

(We both knew I loved him, I think, but as long as no one actually said it, we could ignore the fact.) And it was difficult because I was always seesawing back and forth at the boundary between helping him and violating his personal integrity. I was always afraid of going too far and robbing him of his independence; maybe I didn't go far enough, in the end. Maybe none of us did.

I thought I was helping him sometimes. He seemed happy a lot of the time. I made him laugh a lot, when I could; when I could, I tried to cheer him up when he was depressed. His hands shook less and less as we went along, and he said that he never seemed to fall into a blank mind anymore. I tried to relax him by rubbing and scratching his back, and I know I did relax him quite often.

But my own failure began to obsess me, my failure to get him to see me as a human being, even though I was female. I can see now, thinking back, that I succeeded more than I thought, but at the time I felt only failure. Part of my need to gain his respect was selfish. I cared for him so I wanted him to care for me. I wanted me to matter to him. But part of it was that I felt that only when he had begun to really forgive and tolerate himself could he begin to respect me, a girl. And I thought he never did, and I felt my failure deeply. I became convinced that he didn't need me – no, that isn't it, I knew he needed me, but I became convinced he didn't want me. And I thought, realizing how much I had lost of my own Self, My God, I have gambled my Self on helping him, and I have lost the gamble and my Self, too. And I panicked and that was Yugoslavia. That was sitting by the dirt road in front of the peasant's cottage and, book in hand, watching he and Patrick walk away. And I closed the book and cried, and knew I was wrong but my pride and my weariness were too strong to allow me to follow. I hated that separation, it nearly broke me. But now I cannot regret it because at least when I rejoined him, we were friends again – delicate, gingerly friends, but friends for the last day and a half we were together. Had I not left, my silence and bitterness and resentment would have continued until the border, and I would never be able to forgive myself.

But the most regrettable thing about my relationship to Charlie was my uncertainty. I wanted to help him so badly, I wanted so much for him to be happy and fulfilled, I think it got so that became the most important thing in my life. But I didn't know how, I was never sure just what I should do, how I should act, or what would be good for him or bad for him. I remember Nafplion, I remember him stretched out on the bed at the youth hostel with the sun streaming in

the window over us. I was rubbing his back, his long, narrow muscular warm back, with steady, rhythmic, sweeping strokes as he lay there quietly in the sun. And as I bent over him, pouring my emotion and my love into this act, this one act which I was sure of and knew was good and right, I was filled with an aching tenderness and sadness for this vulnerable, searching, needful human being under my hands. I was so aware of him in that moment as a lost human soul, trite as that may sound, and a soul both literally and figuratively in my hands, because I had chosen that responsibility. And I felt a terrible, overwhelming helplessness because I wanted to be able to reach his soul and heal it the way I soothed his body with my rhythmic hands, but I realized in that moment how alone human beings are. Beyond a certain point, I could not even fathom another person's pain and I trembled in fear for his own ability to handle it. I wanted to be resigned, but I couldn't be. He turned over then and, as if reading my thoughts and consoling me, gently drew my head down on his chest and held me for a moment. Charlie was not insensitive and blind. He must have understood what I was trying to do, and perhaps he knew, because he knew himself so much better than I, that I would fail. He may have often been disgusted and offended by my efforts, and oftener still, just didn't care one way or the other. But I think, too, that he sometimes appreciated my trying, forgave my mistakes, and pitied me my failure. He never really wanted to hurt anyone, and he was unwilling to cause me pain, even by sharing his own pain with me. Perhaps he was right, perhaps his hurt was more than I ever knew and I could have done nothing at all for it. At any rate I couldn't if he was unwilling to share it with me; he wanted so to be independent and not need anyone or anything. Perhaps, then, this will be my consolation: he understood that I was trying to help him, but he also felt that it would probably be too much for me, tho he let me try. In fact, he practically said as much to me many times in his many warnings about his having been hospitalized. But I tried anyway because I loved him and I cannot now regret a day of my efforts, not a moment, a gesture or a word. That is all I wanted from him, really, the chance to help and love him, and that is what he gave me, though he may not have wanted to, knowing how it would hurt me, knowing himself. And I, then, chose this pain I am feeling now. I chose it every time he confided in me about himself and I listened; he was warning me against him and I was acknowledging the warning but choosing to commit myself to him anyway. He knew better than I the price I would have to pay, the hurts he would inflict, and tried often to tell me. As I think back now he was constantly giving me a chance to reconsider by telling me about himself but I was proud and firm in my commitment,

and I cannot regret that now. I did all I could but he was beyond the power of my help, no one could help him but himself. And he knew it but allowed me to try because I wanted to. With time, oh God with time, he might have done it, too. But he didn't have the time, and that was the injustice that I can't reconcile, that is what keeps me awake at night with memories and doubt, that and the terrible incongruity of his happiness in the last weeks I knew him and his suicide.

22 June 1968 Saturday

I want to remember Nafplion, and how we bounced each other on the top bunk of the bunk bed by kicking it with our feet from the bottom bunk. How much he enjoyed it and how it gave me hysterical giggles.

22 June 1968 Sat.

How he loved Winnie the Pooh and wanted to write a really happy fairy story for children, a story without ogres and beasts and fears. And how he began one in my notebook in Teheran but couldn't believe, couldn't believe and he ended it with death and destruction. And so he couldn't believe in people, in joy, in accomplishment, he was afraid to believe in them because they might let him down, so sooner than risk believing in them, he would destroy them just as he destroyed the creatures in his fairy story. He would only allow himself to want that which he didn't really want; then he would be spared any disappointment if he failed. He had to deny or destroy that which tempted him to trust or believe. I told him that once, on a bus in Iraq. Oh my God, Charlie, what is it that made you that way? Who or what hurt you when?

22 June 1968

We stood in the bright white glare of the Iraqi sun. It was on the roof of a hotel in Baghdad, and a breakfast was awaiting us in the room of a school-teacher inside. We surveyed the drying black mud in the crowded streets below. There was a metal bed frame with springs and without a mattress in the middle of the roof, which I remember as being white and otherwise empty. Charlie lay on it for a few moments and we decided to go North to Kirkuk if we couldn't find our student friend. I feel like he put his arm around me or touched me some other way, but I cannot remember for sure. We left Baghdad in a Mercedes Benz bus later that morning, and pretended we saw mirages in the desert towards Kirkuk.

22 June

Remember the King Feisal coin.

Our second day in Baghdad, about 5 days later. We lay on two mattresses in a nearly empty room. It was an anonymous Iraqi family's home and I had just been attacked by the husband. I was shaky and scared and just recovering from near-hysteria, and I needed the comfort of touching him. All I needed was to have some part of my hand touching Charlie. But he seemed disinterested (tho he had comforted me earlier). My first split second reaction was anger, but I suddenly looked at his profile there beside me staring vacantly at the ceiling and I forgot my misery in an overwhelming pity for him – because he could not pity me. Has he got a blank mind now? I thought, and I asked him what he was thinking . . . I don't remember what he replied. But he didn't have a blank mind.

22 June

Sofia, Bulgaria 2 pension

Teheran, Iran 3? 4? Hotel

Kirkuk, Iraq 2? 3? Hotel

Baghdad, Iraq 1 Menahhil & Nazar's

Beirut Lebanon 2 Youth Hostel

Nafplion, Greece 1 Youth Hostel

. . . we slept together. It seems so little. I wish I were pregnant.

I remember sleeping together in Kirkuk, I remember our little bug-ridden hovel of a room with one window leading out to the 'roof-yard' and a curved ceiling. I remember his hand reaching confidently over the ends of our two beds and taking my hand and then I got into bed with him. But the best times were in Teheran and that one happy night in Baghdad at Mennahil and Nazar's, bless them for that happy night . . .

22 June

I want to remember the "werewolf" in the Turkish mountains.

“He was one of those people who would be neither a follower nor a leader, but only an aspiring heart, impatient in the failing body which imprisoned it.”

(The Once and Future King)

22 June

The mosquitos in the Beirut youth hostel and in the Nafplion youth hostel. He was constantly after them. They drove him crazy, and he would spend a half hour at a time doing nothing but smacking at them with pillows and splattering them & our blood all over the wall (my blood, B RH+, his blood O RH+).

23 June

The night we had to sleep in the car in the Turkish mountains. It was black, cold and raining and the location was completely isolated. There was a mountain behind the silent, deserted (?) building on the left. Across the dirt road to the right was a gloomy group of trees spaced evenly apart standing in a pool of black water caused by the rain. We slept fitfully and both awoke in the middle of the night. We both began to talk about werewolves and tease each other by pretending that we saw them peering in the car over each other's shoulders. It may have been Turkey, but it was werewolf country.

23 June

All thru the trip: We were forever planning to have an “orgy” (he pronounced it with a hard “g”), but could only do so on a beach with beer (so we could throw the cans around), crisps, coke (so we'd have something to drink, neither of us drank), and perhaps a bonfire. 23 June

In Lebanon, driving back from Saida down the beautiful Mediterranean coast. In the Egyptian's rented car, we heard “I'm a Believer” again on the radio. And Matthew sang Kum Bye Ya.

23 June

And in Teheran sitting together reading on David's couch. Playing David's little collection of "Western records," unconsciously taking turns changing the records ("I've done it now twice in a row," he complained, "Okay," I said, delighted that he had noticed the little ritual (neither of us wanted to really play the records), "I'll do 2 in a row next.")

23 June

Making love in Baghdad in one of the beds in Mennahil and Nazar's little room, and then talking till 5:00 in the morning about relationships between male and female, about him and his family, me and my family; telling jokes, talking about sex (I asked him then about is the hymen over the vagina or uterus), about what we would do on his birthday.

Remember "skegs and greboes," "Snap" (meaning So am I)

Making love one night in Teheran, more of the same. Talking about him and his girlfriend, his problems, the hospital he was in, the stories his father told him and Keith about Scripshank's castle in Kirkuk.

23 June

How he hated the earrings I bought in Teheran and my coat. 23 June

In the pension in Sofia. Quiet and boredom. Me writing to Wiljo. Charlie reading "London" in Field's and picking out God Save the Queen on the piano with one finger. 23 June

Charlie #4

An intellectual exercise in a Mideastern bus.
A theoretical discussion
to pass away the miles of time like
desert
Is there a character quality that, of itself,
guarantees success?
There are no absolutes, I said. No.
Intelligence? No.
Courage? No.
Wit? No.
Personality? No.
Forcefulness? No.

Can you think of one? I asked rhetorically,
 serene on my peak of mature wisdom,
My point made.
There was a brief silence.

“Yes,” he said quietly, without triumph. “The quality of escaping.”

23 June

The way we would lay together side by side across one of the beds in our room at the Hotel Iran in Teheran. Sometimes in one of our beds, with our legs resting against the wall, our toes stretched high to the ceiling. Sometimes on Ahab’s bed with our legs resting on the windowsill, our feet hanging out the window. We would lay either way for hours just talking or perhaps reading or perhaps just thinking.

23 June

The way he liked Persian ice cream (well, he liked all ice cream) and would sometimes twice a day want to have some.

23 June

The way little girls adored him; with their great, wide innocent eyes fastened on him, their shy, giggling mouths and grubby, fluttering hands. His rueful, embarrassed attitude.

23 June

His father was going to give him an Omega (he pronounced it Ómega) watch that told everything from the temperature to the season of the year for his twenty-first birthday. 23 June

A week ago on this day he was most unhappy. A week ago today he decided to do it, he decided how he would do it, he looked out at the half cloudy, half clear southern Bavarian sky and knew

that he would never see it again. Maybe he also thought, maybe, that it would also be the last day of his pain and unhappiness, maybe he was looking for peace and maybe he found it.

I cannot accept the evil in the world now. With his death, all my defenses and blocks against greed, selfishness, thoughtlessness, and above all inhumanity, are gone. I see them everywhere and I feel so helpless. I cannot tolerate them but I don't seem to be able to fight them. Everywhere I look I see the things that killed Charlie, and I feel so powerless.

Robert George Samson Houdini sometimes Humbert Humbert is gone. Someone, some thoughtless person, took him out of his yard and then wandered away with Robert loose in the Garden. And now he's gone, tho we looked and looked. They thought he was funny, but he was all I had left of Charlie that was concrete.

I have not heard from his parents.

24 June

I want to do something. I want to make something beautiful for Charlie so people will not forget. Or I want to expose and fight the things that killed him. I want to breathe again and I want every breath to somehow make up for his death. To make it right – and oh God, that line sticks in my throat because it is too late to make it right, it is done, it is a fact, hard, cold and pitiless.

24 June

There was a pretty, friendly town square in Nafplion with some palm trees, a statue and a fountain with colored lights on it in the park in the middle. There were tables and chairs served by a nearby tavern set up on the sidewalks winding through this little park. At night people gathered in this park to drink coffee and ouzo and talk; with the quiet talk, the slight wind dryly rustling the dusty leaves, and the artificial lights, the effect was something like a movie set. But not unpleasantly so. We used to buy 5 or ten caramels for a drachma after our spaghetti and yoghurt meal and walk in this park (once we bought ice cream instead – or Charlie did). We would always look at the eagle (or hawk? Or falcon?) kept in a large, round-topped wooden vine-covered cage at one end of this park. This eagle fascinated Charlie, he would stare at it and discuss it while we sucked or chewed the caramels.

This is the first thing I have written without almost unbearable pain. Perhaps I will be able to remember Charlie, love him, and carry with me always him and what I learned from him without suffering hopelessly. He and the love I had for him may become a good, lasting part of me, something to give me strength because so many of the memories are happy. It is never evil to love someone, even if there is tragedy at the end. My love was good, whatever came of it eventually, and it helped to make his last 2 months happy. I have never been so totally sensitive to feeling, pain, and suffering, and I was very near to callousness, as so many people are now, before. I have never been so aware of man's inhumanity to man and what it could do, my eyes were blinded or closed before. Is it so bad that I am sensitive and sore where I used to be hard and unfeeling? I loved Charlie so much. May my love, my memories of the last 3 months, and Charlie remain always a part of me, always. In a way, they will have to. When you love someone as much as I loved him, you are marked, you have absorbed some of his essence, and you can never be the Tiffy-sans-Charlie you were before. You cannot forget. You can only learn.

There will be times when I will nearly forget the pain, times when Charlie is only a cardboard memory for me, and my heart will grow dangerously hard again. But then I will see the sea, or hear a perfect English accent, or catch a glimpse of a Turkish puzzle ring, and the beauty of his eyes, his gentle humor, and his bewildered hurt will come alive in me again. My love will then wound me afresh and I will be vulnerable and whole again. 24 June.

"Nobody told me, love would come to own me,
Healing and wounding me too.
Nobody told me, no not even you.
Nobody told me. I knew."

(No Strings)

24 June

"The Happy Wanderer": how we hated and ridiculed it, but how we sang it anyway so happily in the mountains of Austria the day he got busted. 24 June

I have heard from his family.

Charlie was going to be sent home within days from the time he did it. The British consulate didn't even notify them until June 12. Had they been more efficient he might be alive now. But that line of thinking is infinite and pointless – had the Germans been more efficient, had we entered at another border or in another car, had we never bought it and on and on.

They wrote the way I wrote when I wrote to them. Carefully and formally, writing words and sentences that seem unreal and unbelievable, that you want to deny even as you write them, writing about things that seem unreal because they concern Charlie and he is dead. They acknowledge my pain and allow me to share theirs which helps because I don't feel so alone now.

He is to be buried today.

He is dead but before he died I knew him. I knew him as well as a person can know another person. I knew his voice, his face and body, his movements, his laugh, his moods, his hopes and fears, his hates and loves, his beliefs and values, his past, his touch. All that I have known is left with me like a fingerprint on my soul where he touched it. Wherever I go, whatever I do, part of me will be because I knew Charlie as I did. Nothing can change the fact that he's dead. But death cannot change the fact that I knew and loved him. 25 June

Then there is the Donavon song The Trip that I played on the juke box in a little Austrian roadside café where the Persian who gave us a lift to Salzburg took us to eat. He made us little sandwiches made from his meat and half-brotchens and poured us small glasses of wine so we could say "Salamati" as we drank them.

26 June

How he talked in his sleep (and wanted to know later what he said but I could never remember. 10 July)

"Mah handi maku fluss." (Arabic)

"Benin para yok." (Turkish)

"Nichts poule." (German-Persian)

26 June

Robert's back. Robert's back. Robert's back.

Morning 26 June

The 3 (or 4) piece band at a little gas station in Turkey not far from the Greek border. We were in the back of a truck, which was empty at the time but was later filled with some absolutely massive heavy piece of iron equipment, which Charlie dearly loved (“I want it,” he said, patting it possessively as we bounced along. “I want it always.”)

I don’t think I will ever know another person who has the quality of appreciation of humdrum things that Charlie had. For that I most dearly miss him. Like no other person I have ever known, he could look at a person, a scene or a thing and immediately see its humor or appeal or grooviness. He could groove on so many things, things that I had always thought I was alone in grooving on. Things like that heavy piece of equipment, or a fat, amiable-looking teenage kid in the Munich Zoo, or a Teheran store which sold nothing but bricks, or a Nigerian who loved a joke about “before the war” and “after the war” or a Pakistani who was convinced that Charlie was “mistreating” him, or a Californian named Dennis putting on a whole busload of Arabs. I would see these things that other people see and pass over uninterestedly, and I would get this certain feeling about them and I would look at Charlie only to discover that he had the same feeling. Oh God, I will miss that rapport, I have missed that rapport for how can I ever find it again?

26 June

The day I found a knife on the dock at Nafplion and gave it to him. He caught some sea urchins with it, round, glossy-black, spiny things which fascinated him because his family has some dead ones that turn all sorts of pretty colors when the spines fall out.

26 June

Beirut taxi drivers (and Immanuel) “Do you need anything?” 26 June

It never ceases to amaze me now how much he knew about me. Anecdotes that I tell people now, people I’ve known for ages like Kitty, I suddenly realize that I have told to him. Like about the litter of puppies all named George; fantastic as it may seem, he knew about that.

And so many other things.

26 June

I want to remember how he hated my knapsack because it was clumsy and unmanageable.

6 June

Remember Molos on the way back from Nafplion. Hitching by the road alongside the village on the opposite side from the sea. There was a watering place for trucks there. A big mountain stream came coursing down the hillside over some rocks right above our heads and then was concentrated into one violent gush of water coming down into a large drain or grate into the ground by the road. Trucks would be driven under this gush to cool them from the hot Greek sun. We were enchanted by the water; we raised our hands and faces to it and played a little on the rocks. There was a solitary rubber sandal on the grating. "Do you want it?" Charlie cried.

26 June

A restaurant in Teheran, long and narrow, a place where you buy grilled meat on sticks. We sat at a table. "In Italy it's nice in the summer," Charlie said, and we laughed at the unexplainedness of the statement.

29 June