

October

Istanbul, Turkey and Manchester, England are vying now for the World Soccer Championship. In the first of the 2 playoff games, the score was 0-0. That was held in Manchester. Today in Istanbul the final game is being played. I think Turkey is winning.

There are television sets and radios going full blast in buildings all up and down the alley here. The streets are humming with excited voices and talk, interspersed periodically with wild yelling, clapping, stamping, bell ringing, drum beating and singing. The entire city is tuned in to this soccer game, sort of like us in America used to tune in to astronaut launchings and Presidential elections. I can see into at least five rooms in the street, and all five are filled with tense, intent Turks watching tv and listening to radios. I feel a strange kinship with them ... I can see into their homes. If only the building across the alley weren't demolished and black, there would be more neighbors to commune with and more people to join in thinking, "We're winning."

Hitler...has only got one ball.
Rommel...has got two, but small.
Himmler...has something similar,
But Goebbels has no balls at all.
(sung to the tune of Bridge on the River Kwai)

29 September

Dear Family,

Bought this card in Flea market – they have dozens like it for only 6¢. I love Istanbul – the view across the Bosphorus at sunset is one of the most beautiful sights I've seen since I got to Europe. And I love the Turkish language. The bazaar is fantastic, if a little unnerving. I am very glad I came back here again – have much healthier attitude about the Mideast now, tho the men in the streets are the same. But Turkey itself is fabulous (gush gush gush). Poor Kitty has dysentery. We are buying our boat tickets for Israel tomorrow. Cost \$8 from Izmir (see map). We leave October 9. Kibbutz life, here we come!

Love to all, Tif

(Postcard of black-and-white photo of Hannelore Bannert) 5/10/68

Dear Family,

We discovered the fare to Israel is \$28 one way instead of \$8, so we have given up Israel & will instead spend more time in Greece & Italy. So send our mail for next 3 weeks c/o AMEXCO, Syntagma Square, Athens, Greece.

We are really enjoying Istanbul. We are leaving for Greece on the 7th. I got a letter from Harold Bleich (my old philosophy teach) who says Kitty's Pete is now in DC. Hooray. Love to all & write. Tif

Ps This card is Hannelore Bannert, the woman who ran the Heim.

Greek-Turkish Border (Greece)

Is it them and us?

I'm so tired I really don't want to write.

But I'm back at a night border again.

And you? Where are you, you? Whoever you are who have never been at a night border watching a bust?

They busted a girl at the Pudding Shop. They came upstairs and searched us, table by table, in a friendly, methodical way. They came to the girl in the corner table by the window. They opened her purse and while I watched out of the corner of my eye, they found something. You could tell by the fast, snappy click of their fingers that they had found something. She got up from her table in the corner by the window and went away with them. I watched them leave.

I look in his eyes, the eyes of this tall, blonde British (?) - American (?) they are busting now on the Greek border (the other boy and the girl don't count, they are us) and he's a crook. An international dope-smuggling, passport selling, Rabbit-but-with-all-the-brains-and-canniness-Rabbit-doesn't-have CROOK. He is talking so suavely and serenely about his crimes (he must be a manic at least; then, he is speeding). He also talks causally and off-handedly of a 3 hr. back operation he just underwent today in Alexandropoulos without anesthetics. In the next breath

“You can always tell a Turk by his pajamas.”

- Kitty

Thessaloniki, Greece

Where are the people who are running the world? Off to Israel, to Crete, to India, from Munich, from Paris, from London, from Home. Home of Spiro T. Agnew (“is YOUR kind of man. . .”) and the Flying Nun. And how pointless the world seems in the face of Crete, “blood money,” shepherd’s pipes, the sun. Only we keep running into it while we run away from it, it may be as omnipresent as the sun.

These English boys can play our shepherd’s pipes so much better than we can. Perhaps it’s time to go home.

“I like you too much. Will you go to dinner with me?”

- anonymous Turk on the street

- Two thousand hippies in ---, India,
They threw them out of Bengal,
Can you imagine? They must have shit. . .
It’s . . . here. on the coast see, just north
of –
(This is a good map. Where’d you get it?)
Everyone in this city is going East. I’ve met
so many
(You never meet anyone coming back).
“German boy looking for hitching partner or ride to
Teheran or Kabul. Leaving Wednesday. Contact
Hans at the Gülhane.”
“Two Englishmen with car leaving tomorrow for
Katmandu. Seek passengers to share expenses.

Will be here between 2:00 and 3:00 today.”
“Carl: I waited 3 days and finally got a lift today
as far as Ankara. Sorry to miss you, but get
in touch with me at American Express in
Teheran. See you then. Good trip.”
“Girl seeks boy travel partner to Baghdad
or Teheran leaving next week. I am 20
years old, American. Ask at desk.”
(When do they come back?)
Two thousand hippies in ---, India.
Sitting, faceless, on a beach.
White coats from Afghanistan, silver and turquoise
from Persia, gold from Kuwait,
Burning Indian incense, smoking Burmese hash
Using their left hands
Sitting, faceless,
On a beach.
But the faces are all looking one way
and not at each other.

13 October 1968

Dear Family,

Here we are in sunny Athens. Greece. And I am covered with little red bites which came from the Youth Hostel in Thessaloniki, I think. And my feet are sore from these horrible uncomfortable sneakers we had to buy in Istanbul because our other shoes gave out. At any rate, we are going to buy some “Poet sandals” here, which are custom made sandals made by a famous (?) Greek poet because one thing you have to have when traveling is comfortable shoes. Another thing is that the only pair of jeans I had left, my brown ones, have finally given up the ghost, with a great huge rip just below the seat which I patched up on the road but which have ripped again. So I have to get some more somehow, tho they don’t even sell men’s jeans in Greece. Other than that, all is well.

We left Istanbul last Monday and had very good hitching up to the Greek border. We had to wait overnite there for a lift, but that wasn’t so bad as there was lots going on there. That is, the border police were in the process of arresting some kids on their way into Turkey. It seems these 2 boys and a girl were driving into Turkey with a package they had meant to mail in Munich for a friend. When the customs men opened the package, it naturally contained hashish.

Since one of the boys had long hair, they apprehended him for this crime. Meanwhile the other boy was rushed to a nearby hospital for a serious back operation (without anesthetics). Further investigation of the car revealed that it was not their car – they had borrowed it from a friend but had no way of proving it. Also, the guy with the bad back had 2 passports – one English, which had been “made up” for him in Athens 2 years ago for \$400 & which he is now using; and his original American passport. Then 2 more passports, 1 French & 1 Australian, were found in the car (I might add that black market passports command quite a price in Istanbul). Plus while the car was being searched, one of the guys quick grabbed 50 grams of hash that was in the car & threw it on the roof of the customs building. Anyway, by the time we left the next day, no one knew yet what was to happen to these people exactly. It was quite interesting, tho I felt very sorry for the girl, who was not involved but was the girlfriend of the long haired boy. But at least the customs guards weren’t as rough as the German ones.

So we spent the next night on a lonely, cold, deserted but beautiful Greek mountain near Kavala. At about 3:00 am the dew fell and we FROZE. Bleeah. It was agonizing. But it was quite picturesque – next morning we found we were camped right next to the village beehives & the beekeeper came out to get the honey. Anyway, we got to Thessaloniki that day & checked into the Youth Hostel. I had some misgivings about that because of the stolen blanket episode last spring with Charlie, but, tho I am sure the warden remembered me, he didn’t say anything. In Thessaloniki we sold our blood for 400 dr. (about \$13) for a pint & spent a day on the beach. We also encountered all kinds of kids on their way to ISRAEL, for which we were eating our livers.

And yesterday we hitched to Athens, & since the main Youth Hostel is closed we are staying in a cheap hotel near the ACROPOLIS (!) which we visited today & it was really very groovy altho I bet you all don’t know how hard it is to climb UP to the acropolis let me tell you it’s no short easy slope especially in cheap Istanbul sneakers that hurt your feet & a hand me down striped terrycloth beach dress you have to wear because of a rip in your jeans.

(Tell Janet to call up Peter at 6613 Allegheny Avenue (Al Teter & Clint Killin), Takoma Park, Maryland & tell him about the elephant on her birthday card. You know, Peter James, Kitty’s Peter. The elephant is an old joke Kitty, Pete, Pat DiRubbo & I have including “Is that an elephant looking up my dress?” “No, I’m a teeny mouse with tusks.”; “Is that an elephant

coming out of a cornucopia?” “No I’m a teeny mouse with tusks.” “Is that an elephant doing the stomp?” and “Is that an elephant looking for 30 pfennigs to buy a coke?” He heh very stupid but when you are in Europe & sometimes have very little to laff at you have to do something & besides Kitty draws nice elephants.)

So – Wednesday we leave for Crete to see those 2 great tourist attractions, the Palace at Minos and the hippies living in the caves. Then we return to mainland Greece to see Mycenae (2nd time for me) & Delphi, then to Corfu, an island between here & Italy, then to Brindisi, Italy. We’ll hitch up Italy, spending a couple days in Rome and Florence. Then back to Munich to visit friends & pick up our paychecks from the hotel. After that we hitch to Calais via Paris so I can see the Opera House (of Phantom of the Opera fame) & Kitty can see the Louvre, & from Calais to Dover, London, & maybe Ireland & N. Ireland (Derrick Porter, here we come!) Well, this is really beginning to sound like a whirlwind tour of Europe, isn’t it?

So far this has been a wonderful trip. I have learned so much about traveling in the last year that I know the ropes enough to get around, find hotels & restaurants, figure out the bus systems, learn the general layouts of cities, master foreign currencies, etc. etc. with very little trouble. I am also used to traveling & hitching now; I am used to being uncomfortable for certain periods of time without even thinking about it. Actually I suppose the truth of the matter is, I learned how to really rough it when I was traveling on no money with Charlie; anything is easy enough after we went thru that. And Greece is just as beautiful as I remember from before.

Remember Robert, the tortoise Charlie got in Greece that I was keeping at the Heim? I brought him down to Istanbul and to Greece and yesterday, in the approximate area where we got him, I put him back. Poor Robert, he looked very confused – he was really a very funny traveling companion. If I could have only got him thru American customs, I’d of brought him back with me. But at least he’s home again.

After October 23, you can write to me c/o AMEXCO, Rome, Italy, as we will be leaving Athens for the last time around the 27th. Please write.

It looks like Nixon is going to be President. Incredible.

How’s Jenny & her pregnancy progressing?

Ha ha you all are suffering cold crisp fall & here it is HOT and SUNNY!

Oh well, love Tif

ps Please notify me when my box comes home.

Athens

Somehow Greece is not as creatively stimulating as Istanbul. Maybe it's that the atmosphere and environment here is so classically soothing, balanced, and somehow complete that one does not feel the need to reach for something beyond, maybe, in the light of the creativity of the ancient Greeks, that's only a rationalization. Maybe since I'm running low on paper in this notebook, it's just as well.

Still there are thoughts to think and things to say: our trip is losing steam. It must be because ordinary travel is an anticlimax to me after Charlie's & my harrowing experiences. Why can I never simply make a statement without explaining it afterwards? It must be my years of training in analytical writing. (I hope I don't have a plantar's wart on my heel; it feels like it.) And anyway, to return to the subject, there comes a point when you are washing out your brown shirt and you think, I must have washed out this shirt by hand a hundred times since I've been in Europe. For a moment you toy with the idea of trying to figure out the exact figure. You wonder if you ever led any sort of life outside the realm of knapsacks, passports, and wet underwear strung out across a hotel room; or if it was all a dream anyway.

There are images of traveling that I take for granted, images like washing out underwear with hand soap in a basin of cold water. Or standing beside a road with your hair, skin, and clothes the same color & texture as your knapsack, shading your eyes against the sun and waving your thumb at trucks. Or staggering wearily under the weight of your knapsack down a city street with a finger on a map, saying, "If we turn left at the next corner and walk two blocks. . . ." Or waiting in line at a bank, passport in hand, to cash a travelers' check. Or rolling things up to pack them a new and more convenient way in your knapsack. Or trying to swing your knapsack on your back in a crowded, tiny café. Or sewing patches on holes in your clothes. Or sitting in a park in some anonymous city, waiting – for something to open or someone to come or something to do. Or taking the first look out the window in a new hotel/hostel room.

Modern Day Odyssey: “Kitty and Tiffy in Istanbul Sneakers”, or, “The Girl Who Stood on the Burning Foot.”

On Saturday, October 12, 1968 at about 3:00 in a little village about 40 K east of Thessaloniki named Gefyra, I put Robert (George Samson Houdini sometimes Humbert Humbert) back. It was on the outskirts of town, on a little road to the right of the road to Pella. There was a field at the end of the road dropping down to more fields and occasional groves of trees. I put him down on the hilltop and left him. A Kylona. I’ll always know Robert. He has a crack in his shell on the right side.

I hope the picture comes out.

Iraklion, Crete

It is sunny in Crete.

Kitty held her water-blue alabaster egg up to the sun and studied it.

“I’d like to drop it,” she said, “and watch it shatter into a thousand pieces.”

I thought of a thousand little precious slivers of watery blue alabaster.

“I just want to see it break,” she continued. The sunlight pierced it and it glowed cheerfully. “Of course, then I’d want it all whole again . . . but it would be a very impressive slight. It wouldn’t be destruction, you know. More like freeing.”

Intense sunlight is sort of a paradox. You lay there in it, seemingly opening yourself up to its warmth. But it also makes you turn off and break away from everything and go into yourself. A communion with sunlight that excludes all else. And at the same time, sunlight seems to flatten everything while deepening it, too. It sort of flattens its outward, objective dimensions and deepens and intensifies its real significance. No shadows. Stillness. Intensity. The sun is such an elemental, primal thing. The sun and the earth. It’s hackneyed to say that we are getting too far from the sun and the earth – but we are.

It's raining in Crete. Why is it raining in Crete?

We talk a lot now about going home, now that our struggles, tragedies and lessons of the Great Trip to Europe are behind us and we are coasting by on the last two months. There is nothing more to do now but wait. And it's something you wonder about, and anticipate, and fear because it's getting so close. Because how many of your friendships are going to survive a year of different, unshared laughs and pains and joys? How many will prove to be friendships of habit and convenience, without any real substance of like feeling and mutual concern? How many? And which ones?

I came away loving Wiljo. "I love you, Wiljo," I wrote, "Goodby." And I did love him. I still do. But what was there to our relationship, except that I needed so much to give and there was so much he needed to receive? And have we not danced our dance, beautifully and perfectly, and did it not fulfill itself in its complete circle, so that there are no more steps? I think we left each other satisfied with what we did. Our relationship was a ritual with a beginning and an end, a satisfactory end, and if a thing is ended, it no longer exists. The Tiffany of today does not exist for Wiljo; nor does the Wiljo of today exist for me.

The people in the apartment, Larry's friends, our friends. The people to whom we have become legends because we left – retired – at the height of our popularity. The people we smoked shit with and blew minds with and played records with. I have to wonder if they want to hear our story, or if I want to hear theirs. Or if they are still smoking shit and blowing minds as they were when we left. And envying us the excitement of a year in Europe. How can they know what we've been through? And do I want to know what they've been through?

Then there's my closer friends and my family, the ones I turned to when Charlie died. I feel I've been so far from them and what they've been feeling. I feel I've grown so old since they knew me, as tho I did it sneakily and tricked them. More than anything, I am afraid of facing them, the ones I turned to when Charlie died. I am afraid of seeing them with new eyes, afraid of finding them lacking and inadequate and therefore of finding that which I came from less than what I had thought. I've met so many people in a year. Do you know how many people I've met in a year? How will my family and close friends measure up to the people I've met? I don't want them small – I am afraid that they will be small. And that I will be coming home to nothing.

I am afraid of the United States of America. I am afraid of our arrogance and plenty. I fear the pages of Mademoiselle and Good Housekeeping, American cigarettes on every counter, new dresses and quarters, huge pastel cars and Sears, television commercials (and television), everywhere American English, newness, countless, unimaginable nameless things I've forgotten – that I will hate. I am so alienated from my parents' generation, from my generation, from America, and the alienation scares me because I know it's my country, the only country I have. I have learned to care by being over here and experiencing what I have, I have finally been made aware of so many things that are wrong. The test will be when I go home and can begin to act on my concern, & I fear failing. Seeing the world has made me want to take part in it. But can I?

I have experienced so many things that are second nature to me now but which are totally foreign to those at home. I have been alone, thousands of miles from anyone I know, hungry. I have worn the same clothes, day after day, washing and patching them because I have no others. I have covered thousands of miles carrying everything I own on my back. These are the small, material, trivial, everyday things that have made me a little different from the people at home. I am more afraid of the other things.

I am so eager to go home because of all the friends and family there. I am afraid of going home because I am afraid I will be alone there.

“Man must not live by stealth alone.”

Profundity and pertinence by Kitty

Matala

Kitty: There's a duck out there, too.

Tiffany: A duck? Where?

Kitty: Right out there. See.

Tiffany: I don't see a duck . . . in the sand or on the water?

Kitty: In the water out there.

Tiffany: A plastic duck or a real duck?

Kitty: It's . . . (pause). It's not a duck. It's a kid with a snorkel.

(They lose interest.)

“Far past the frozen leaves
The haunted frightened trees
Out to the windy beach
Far from the twisted reach of crazy sorrow.
Yes, to dance beneath the diamond sky
With one hand waving
Silhouetted by the sea
Circled by the circus sands
With all memory and fate
Driven deep beneath the waves
Let me forget about today until tomorrow.”

- Dylan

- or maybe it's Donavon's “timeless place.”

We got here last night at about five o'clock. It had been raining, and there were still gloomy clouds hugging the rocks that rose. There was still fitful wind, and the sea was temperamental, gray, and inscrutable. From the road into the village we could see the sheet wall of pale yellow rock rising high above us and extending meaningfully out into the sea. Primeval, lonely black slits in the wall of rock were the caves. You could see tiny, isolated figures here and there on the wall, and one or two small fires. The figures, the fires, and the caves were all dwarfed by the sea, the sky and the mountains of rock. It seemed very quiet, and, so far away, the figures seemed to move very slowly.

In Matala it seems futile to go anywhere or do anything. There is no movement and no time. When people talk, it's only a tiny, meaningless, garbled echo immediately swallowed up by the silence and the endless pounding of the surf. It is as tho something is always listening, but it is not for our voices that something is listening. Something is waiting, but it is for some alien, awesome force and we only witness the waiting alone and insignificant, seized with aching, with awe, with longing.

There is no point in trying to be “groovy” here. Anything beyond just living is pretentiousness. Here, at last, one is “put in one's place.”

And so I thought and thought about Matala and could think of nothing to say. . . but it's coming so in Matala there is nothing to do . . . but wait for it. I see that there are two islands out in the sea, so far out. They seem to be unreal. They are uninhabited – in fact, unapproachable – and that seems fitting because they are sitting out there on the edge of the sea, where the sky and the sea come together, like a mirage they are . . . and when the sun sets, it lights the one in the back but leaves the near one in shadow

Matala is total idleness without boredom. This clothesline is strung between the kitchen window and the outside tap. A few towels (Kitty's included) and what may be a shirt dangle languidly and lazily and perhaps even listlessly. There is nothing to CARE about here, nothing touches you here, nothing matters, how can I explain that? It's like being stoned all the time but with no drug. I could throw up. Matala is a dream. Matala is a dream. Matala is a dream.

I have a desire for places where I am not known and have no story and where no one has a story or a time. I have a desire to be no one and everyone, here, where the sky meets the sea and the tiny figures move very slowly, for it is the end of the earth and the beginning of the end. I have a desire to be a rock on the beach in Matala to be tossed and worn and caressed by the sea until I am smooth and featureless.

We are separated here from each other, from yesterday, from tomorrow, from what we were and what we are going to be. You stay here and gradually, so gradually you are drained of what you were, you are soothed and smoothed and nothing, you need nothing, you have nothing, and there is nothing here. We are so small and nothing matters.