



29/9/89.

Hilda my Lu,

This note is really to encourage you to write to me and give me the go on your life there. I have of course heard much about Resty's disappointment — how nothing has really come off as planned, which comes as no surprise to me. But I would like to know how you are making the best of a lousy situation — Are you managing to be creative — drawing, painting, writing, etc. I was happy to hear from Beryl that she had received the first tapes from you, so I know that your interviews, at least, have got off the ground.



Claudia will bring you up to date on my boring medical history. I now only hope that the next operation can be out of the way as soon as possible, so that I can face the world again and prepare to leave for Zimbabwe. I don't think I could really bear it if it stretches out into weeks and months. I will know more when I see the surgeon next week. I have been back at work for 2 weeks now, but fatigue very easily. Went to a General Members Meeting today and after 2 hours was practically falling on my face. Mind you that is not difficult even in the best of health - with the Mervyn Benners & his world popping up to bore the ~~hell~~ out of everybody every fifteen minutes.

Findest & warmest love
to you & Rusty.

Reena

Rica Hodgson

SOMAFCO

About the 15th Oct 89

Dearest Rica,

This is a Swedish typewriter that Babu has let me use (we havent received our luggage - it's only been at Dar for seven months) and it has a lot of funny extra keys, so please excuse mistakes.

I was pleased to receive your note and also hear indirectly through your children (I was in Lusaka and missed them when they came herte) that you had the operation, although you had to go back for some cosmetic something or other. I was thinking about you all the time and the sad things over which we have no control, and truly hope you will be free of more ordeals.

I was really sorry to have missed Claudia and Spencer, especially as I wanted to proposition Claudia about the possibility of her doing some work for me. I will write a letter to her and enclose it with this one, as I do not have her address. You should read it and forward it to her for me.

I finally got to Lusaka (after waiting months) to have interviews with representatives of various departments that should be concerned about the Exiles book. TG sent a telex saying meetings had been arranged. Spent a week in Lusaka in a Guest House, without phone or transport. Had one meeting during that time with three people, (TG's secretary, who can take NO decisions, TG too busy) (someone from DIP who knew nothing about the book, hadnt seen any of the letters, budget, explanations, etc thaty I have sent, and Reg from Pol. Education, that really has nothing to do with it, and the less said about him the better). It was an awful boring, exhausting and entirely wasted week except for a meeting with Barbara (culture) she being en thusiastic, and very helpful with suggestions. I had reached a stage when I regretted ever having launched on the whole thing, but Barbara lifted me up again a bit. Can't tell you what it's like in a Guest House with 6 or 7 other young SA's recently out, all hanging around like I, waiting to be taken somewhere, and talking venacular the whole time and playing pop tapes full blast. Nothing much to read and Zambian TV news - words fail me!

Am I managing to be creative? Well, you see all my expensive art materials (before we left I went a little mad & bought sable hair brushes, paints, lovely paper, etc at enormous cost) are still with our luggage at Dar customs. I have nothing but one small pad and some pencils, and although I have done a few sketches, nothing much. I have been getting on with the interviewing, some of it I think totally unusable, some interesting, but feel I will soon have exhausted Mazimbu - plenty of people, but a lot of it fairly repetitious. Have a few important interivews to do in Dakawa, but so far no transport - Rusty still can't get there, anyway the buildings for his institute are only now being finished, not yet furnished, and as far as we can guess will be occupáied by others before he even gets started because they keep sending new batches of families and students from Lusaka, Angola, etc, I think on the whole that Rusty's year will be mñoe wasted than mine, which in a way is tragic, because his institute is the one thing above all that is needed in this politically barren wasteland. Rica, I can't begin to tell you about the regional Women's meeting we had a few days ago. I couldn't stay to the end, & I've been seething ever since, but have no way of venting my views. If I were younger, felt physically mñore energetic and had no other work to do I would try to get stuck in, organise, etc. But no. It's not for me at this stage.

As for how I'm making out - well, I suppose it's tolerable, a few compensations (some worthwhile people, friendliness, a glimpse of a different world - after all, England is pretty boring too

if a lot more comfortable. I find Mazimbu politically, culturally, socially, personally isolating, much of which I guessed would be the case, but still difficult. However, as far as I am concerned the one thing above all that convinces me I could not stay here beyond our allotted year is the climate. After spending 25 years maaening about the weather in Britain, I've finally come to the conclusion that if you can't have Johannesburg, a temperate climate has a lot to be said for it. I wilt in heat and can't work, and I find the general climate too harsh, too strong, too extreme for me. Also I don't want to spend the rest of my life on domestic chores, that occupy most of my time - the washing machine, steam iron, all the kitchen gadgets and tools that we bought are still . . . you know what, so inevitably it's a primitive way to live. I don't need it.

Please tell Freda I'm well into *Eight Months . . .* andf much appreciate her sending it. Also, I want to try and get back some of the tapes when Beryl has transcribed them, as I cannot go on buying new ones indefinitely. Perhaps Freda could get some from her and if anyone is coming here, to get them to deliver them to me, otherwise Toni or Freda might be able to post them. I hope this reaches you before you go to Zimbabwe. Give me your address there, who knows, I might get there while still in Africa - I hope to, in any case. Now I must write to Claudia, then go and see if the post office is open, and if it is, whether they have any stamps - usually they don't.

Rusty is well, although very thin since he had malaria, and of course finding his life boring as he can't get on with anything very much. He seems to have been adopted by the only politically active groups here as a sort of elder guru, and is always asked to speak on any special occasion. They never ask me, of course, but then I'm femaloe, ain't I? I reckon this place is pre-wark in its attitude to women. (War 1 or 2, you may well ask).

Much love to you

611 Preston Place
30 Alexandra Street
Box 2198 JHB
22/8/91

My dearest Hilda,

So sorry not to have written all this long time. Please forgive me. My flat is gorgeous, I love it and the sun streams in all day. It's the place for you to visit and enjoy it. To add to my happiness, I was asked to come and work as secretary to Walter Smithe, a job I simply could not refuse, albeit I was not exactly thinking in terms of a 9-5 job. But I am delighted to be back in the thick of it — especially at this most exciting time in our history. As a special bonus, O.R. is in the office opposite and just around the corner on my floor. I S. Ronnie and so many did a new front, close by or come to visit, so I see them more or less daily. Our offices are 1991 style — very posh and well comfortably furnished, air conditioned etc.

Yesterday we had our first staff meeting to officially meet our new S.G. — He is so good and seems extremely efficient. He briefed us on the new structures being set up and we then had a political briefing by Valli. All very democratic and good for staff morale. Even our brass like Winnie attended! (By the way I passed on your letter when it arrived).

So sorry you could not get to Conference — something I would not have missed for anything. A most stimulating and inspiring event — but terribly exhausting. On the last day I was truly a stalwart and stayed up to hear Nelson deliver his closing speech at 5 A.M. Then returned to the hotel to pack, sleep for 2 hours & then go on to the Rally.

Spencer and Claudia have just bought a small flat in Durban, where Spencer works for a progressive organization called 'BESGORK' something to do with Environment & low cost housing. Claudia starts work next week, so they are happily settling down to life back in S.A. Tina is doing a 4 year course in Town & Country Planning at Wits, where she stays in residence, with medical student boy friend Venter, close to her. Since Venter has joined the SACP he is an acceptable Venter and they have each taken the other to meet their parents at Phalaborwa & Durban respectively. Seems quite serious!

I don't honestly know yet what my job entails, as Walter left for Australia very soon after I started, but I have my own ideas of what I should be doing, not least of which is to try to keep him alive for as long as possible. He & Albertina are off on another trip to USA & Canada next month for what seems like a hell of a strenuous programme, so from this distance, I can't imagine how I will manage to protect him and Tony goes my resolution.

Good news to-day on Jacobson! What a non-handed coup.

Love to you, Hestia, Tony, Ivan & the rest.

Re well.

Rica.

To open, cut this flap first

Only metric mass and length units

Aerogramme
Aërogram



Strelitzia reginae

Disa uniflora

Zantedeschia pentlandii

Otium bulbisperrum

To/Aan Hilda Bernstein
Old House Farm
Dorstone
Hereford
HR3 6BL
England

Second fold—Tweede vou

From/Van

Riva Holyday
611 Preston Place
30 Alexandra Street
Berea 2198
JHR3 SA

Seal the two side flaps first, then this one
Verseel eers die twee syklappe, dan hierdie een

Enclosures are not permitted
Insluitings word nie toegelaat nie

First fold—Eerste vou

n/1/92
My dear Rica,

I nearly phoned you this morning; then I thought it is better to write and explain things more fully. After I received a letter from Toni, I felt I could scarcely bear to wait another week before visiting SA. And so I am absolutely determined that I will come soon, regardless of what Rusty does - although I think in the end he will find it difficult to let me go without him.

What has been stopping us? In my case it was simply that I had to finish my book, & spent much time the past two years travelling - the final trip was to the USA in May of last year. After that, it was all writing, editing, compiling, and I was working harder than I can ever remember, getting up 6.30, going straight to the word processor, working all day, every day of the week. In the last few months Rusty was also working with me, as he is very good at editing, and in the end we borrowed a second word processor from Patrick, and both of us were at it all day. I got the manuscript to the publishers - as contracted - at the end of December. However, the work has started all over again - the manuscript is 670,000 words, which is more than three times as long as it can be, so we have the difficult and painful process of chucking more and more people out and cutting those left. This I have begun doing.

But in Rusty's case, he says he doesn't go because we can't afford it. Of course it is not as simple as that, there are many unstated reasons behind it. I think he feels that he has been left on the sidelines, particularly since after a first approach, Raymond Suttner didn't respond with the suggested offer of a visit to see if he would fit in with the education dept. I don't have space to go into it all here, but you know him well, and part of the trouble is that he feels he doesn't have a role any more (and this applies both in the CP & ANC) but part of the trouble is his own introspective and obstinate personality which makes him withdraw instead of going out. We actually are strapped for money, as whatever we had we gave to Patrick who is still struggling with trying to overcome bankruptcy & build a business in these depressed times when everybody small is going under - he has his head above water - just - but our money - no! So we live on our pensions, and whatever I am collecting for the book - quite a big advance, but obviously it doesn't last for years. So the worry about money is legitimate. However, I don't care - I will take the last portion of my advance (expected soon) and go. Maybe book tickets for us both & confront him with a fait accompli.

In this connection - and in connection with the book - my editor is anxious for me to obtain one or two further interviews with people who are 'names' in the western world, and I am therefore anxious to interview Hugh Masekela - I chased him in Britain and the USA & wasn't able to get him. We think it would make a good final interview - in view of his return. If I do arrange to come soon, would it be possible for you to tie him down to an interview for me? I hate to ask you to do work for me - you must have enough - but I can rely on you either to say 'no' to me, which I will understand, or else to get on with it. I would also like to interview Zabele Mbeki, who dodged me with promises in Lusaka and London, but has so much information about the early young exiles. I also saw that Lewis Nkosi has returned, and might consider him.

I don't want to leave it too long, as it seems mad to go to SA in winter - after the horrible winter darkness here. I would try to get one of those cheap flights where you can stay for a certain time. I would HAVE to visit the Cape - everywhere. Camera and drawing pad. After all the work on this book is finished, I'm just going to be an artist again. I must also add - trying to sound modest - that I have the most wonderful material in this book; it is moving, precious, sometimes almost unbelievable. My editor keep saying it is 'brilliant'. I do really feel that it encompasses an essential segment of our contemporary history. But it won't be out for about another year.

Please write and tell me what you think about us coming - what we can do to make Rusty feel more strongly that he must go. This letter is confidential to you, but perhaps Walter or Raymond might ... Rusty has various grievances, one of which was that others (Brian, etc) got tickets for the ANC congress & we did not, and we both feel bitter that we were left out.

Toni says you have a beautiful flat, & I'm planning to ask to stay with you. This has been a rather difficult year physically speaking. I had a thrombosis in my leg in July, had to go to hospital. I have quite a lot of arthritis, and because I have osteo-porosis, I get various pains and problems from that. In other words, although my mind pretends I'm an active middle-ager, my bones tell me I'm really an old, old woman. I keep thinking how a bit of SA sunshine, and seeing the country again would improve my health.

I hope you are well, and happy in your work. And send my love to you

20 July 1922.

My dearest Hilda,

I had the most wonderful holiday in America - it was a whole new experience for me and I fell totally in love with New York. Nothing I had ever read, seen or heard prepared me for the impact that city had on me. If I ever had to leave SA again that is where I would wish to stay, preferably in the heart of Manhattan! You know that I like to be where the action is and nowhere on earth surely, can there be more action than there.

I spent two nights and a day with Dunja in her marvellous Marjorie Morningstar flat - not a minute was wasted and I suppose she helped to get me hooked on to NY. It was also very good at the beginning being able to relax at the family home in New Jersey. I was exhausted after the 80th birthday celebrations and had practically not slept for worry during the last week of the preparations. As you may have heard it was a resounding success - everything was just perfect except for the speeches of course, but then they never are!

In addition to the party we managed to raise sufficient funds to send Walter and Albertina for a well earned holiday and to give them a substantial cheque as well, so I felt my mission had truly been accomplished.

Spencer and Claudia have just moved into a larger duplex flat with a bit of patio and garden and extra bedroom. I think they were feeling claustrophobic in the first one and anyway, the realities of capitalism have finally reached them. After one year they were able to sell their flat at quite a substantial profit, enabling them to improve their lot with more space.

No sooner had I returned from America when I was asked to go with the group (including Spencer) to the handing over ceremony of SOMAFCO to the Tanzanian Government. We, together with OR left and returned on an old second world war Dakota plane chartered flight that took 11 hours, 9 of them in the air each way. I felt very sorry for Oliver who didnt manage to even get off the plane when we stopped at Malawi. No wonder he has not been too well since then! They were gruelling trips but I was happy I had gone - it was a kind of bitter sweet feeling and the end of another chapter. It was good to note that the Tanzanians were already running the hospital efficiently; the furniture factory was producing furniture for sale, advertised in a glossy brochure, and the animals were in good nick. Otherwise, the place was starting to look a bit run-down and it was really strange with no kids and no students around.

Tell Rusty Walter passed on a copy of his memo to Trevor Manuel and had him down to discuss it.

Hope you and your family are all well. Much love to you Rusty et al.

Rica

24 October 1992

Dearest Rica,

You were very much in my thoughts at Freda's funeral, and I could guess how you were feeling, having been so close to her for so long. What disturbed me was that we all say these lovely things about people after they die, but we never tell them when they are alive. Modest as she was, Freda could not have known how much she was loved and respected by all who came in contact with her, how indispensable she was, how much we all benefited from her good nature and reliability. At least she had come to us for the weekend just before, after promising for years, and she loved it here.

But we are leaving. We are in the throes of packing up and moving to our new home:

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I have become deeply attached to the beautiful countryside here, yet cannot wait to get closer to 'civilisation' - however you may define it, in terms of friends, meetings (and) exhibitions, cinemas, lectures ... Oxford is only an hour from London by train, coach or road, and we can be in closer touch with the emasculated SA community; also it offers plenty of 'culture', and as I intend to devote the rest of my life to painting, I do feel the need to be in touch with galleries and exhibitions - I'm starved of them, and they have such wonderful ones, both in Oxford and in London. I cannot tell you how much relief I feel that next Monday will be the last time we will make the tedious long journey from Dorstone to down south, which, particularly when I was still interviewing people for the book I was doing over and over again.

Our new house is a squitty little Taylor-Woodrow post-war 'garden city' development, the totally conventional semi-detached that lines the suburbs of all British cities, with the disadvantage that those built between the wars were more spacious. Ours has mean little rooms. Then why did we buy it? Because it is on a corner of the respectable, lower middle-class estate, and at the back has a garden that opens out into a beautiful triangle, ending in the Oxford canal, along which float ducks and swans. The outlook is just lovely, but developed trees. After living nearly 10 years in the country, I shuddered at having to look out at someone else's wall. Rusty is planning to make alterations to the house - we hope to extend its small living room and tiny kitchen by adding a conservatory that will push us out into the garden. Well, like everything else in this life, it's a compromise. I daresay we shall stay there until one of us dies; particularly as since we came back, we have not heard anything at all from SA, except from Alan Lipman who does at least respond to R's documents about the housing question.

I saw Dunja before she returned to NY, and she told me how well you two got on, and how you were indefatigable in seeing NY. And I was interested to hear about the visit to Mazimbu. Can't picture it without a bunch of kids on every street yelling 'How ya? I'm fine! Also pleased to hear of S & C's move to larger flat. I sent Claudia a print of a miner - don't know if she ever received it.

Can I please make two requests? One, please pass on our address to the various departments (Raymond, Kathy, Frene) as posting separate notices costs so much from here. Two, can you find out JN Singh's address in Durban? I very much want to write to them, but haven't got their address. Perhaps Kathy would know.

For once British politics has grasped our full attention, the events of the past two weeks certainly stirred up the unstirrable British public. You would be amazed at the letters pouring in to the press - people were truly upset at what the Tories were doing, and Tarzan has not only lost his glamour but probably fouled up his ambitions to become Prime Minister with his absurd, lying handling of the whole mines situation. We are also watching and reading everything about the US elections, and I'm rooting for Clinton, who begins to look better and better than when he started. We saw the debates on TV - quite amusing.

We hear all the bad news from SA. If there is good news, it scarcely seems to arrive. Toni gets the Weekly Mail, and we've been taking her copies because she is still in Mozambique. Ivan's in the Crimea, Keith has been to Yugoslavia twice and intends going again, Patrick is still struggling along, and Frances and family seem OK, she has a new, more responsible job with the Leeds City Council at the same pay as before.

And we are two aging people with our arthritis, falling hair, fewer teeth, slower steps, and undimmed feelings that in spite of this despicable world, there are good people everywhere who will go on fighting for what is right.

That's all of us, isn't it?

Much love to you

Dearest Hilda -
we missed you
so much. We must
meet soon.
I'm a bit worried
about your health
please - TAKE CARE
I want you to sur-
vive for many years
Love Valerie

11 November 1992.

Dear Hilda,

This is a very rushed note before I dash off to the hospital to have the plaster cast removed from my arm.

I am mainly writing to give you the address for JR and Radi which I had almost forgotten. It is: 23 Elwack Road, Reservoir Hills, 4091 Durban.

Brian was absolutely thrilled with the etching - couldn't thank me enough - as if I had something to do with it. His wife also thinks it is great.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you and Rusty all happiness in your new home in Oxford. I hope that by now you are well and truly settled and enjoying being closer to civilisation, family and friends.

I have heard nothing more from Tony since she left for Mozambique and hope all goes well with her film in that troubled land. I assume that Ivan is now back in London.

My kids and their special German friends are having a year-end holiday in the Drakensburg and Cape. I will use the Xmas/New Year break to stay with my niece in Sea Point, spend Xmas with them then take a lift back to Jhb in their hired vehicle so that we can also be together for New Year. I particularly want to drive through the Karoo again and am very much looking forward to seeing all those wonderful sights once more. Tanya will remain as she is returning to Varsity in 1993.

Hope you and yours are all fit and well,

Love

RICA

12 October 1992

My dear Hilda,

Tanya is doing this letter for me as I'm afraid I have a broken wrist and a useless right arm and hand which is in plaster from the elbow to the fingers - I hate to tell you this but I broke it while I was dancing.

Its been a really dreadful few weeks with the tragic news of Freda's death, Mimmi Sepel's accident and Pauline Kahn's loss. I hear you made a very good speech at Freda's memorial service.

Rusty will have now had a definite reply from Walter and I do hope you'll both be considering coming here in the very near future. DELAYED DUE TO FINANCIAL CRISIS!

It was lovely having Tony stay here. We had one wonderful evening with the Kasrils family and some people from America who were here to see the ANC about professional election campaigns.

My nephew Brian Bernstein saw the picture you gave me - the one called Benches and he absolutely has to have one. I hope you have a copy. He didn't bother to ask about price and has phoned me again to check what's happening about it. Please send him a copy direct, I am sure that he will be able to pay you in England in sterling. His address is:

1 Chelmsford Place
Chelmsford Road
Durban
4001

I can't even sign this letter, send you both much love and look forward to seeing you soon.??

Rica

lots of love,

Tanya and Rica

21 January 1993

57 Lock Crescent
Kidlington
Oxon OX5 1HF

Dearest Rica,

Sometimes I feel I would like to have you just for an hour or so to have a good chat, gossip, whatever. Like today, when a report by Victoria Brittain about what has, and is, happening in Angola makes me feel so sad and so angry. And, of course, helpless. I don't resign myself to depression about the world, but the big battalions of greed seem to get more powerful every day. Anyway, nice that Clinton's there, only I feel like writing to him to say: Please, please don't carry on with Bush policy; keep your bombers at home, and impose your sanctions against Israel. And lift them from Cuba. Now, that would be something!

Last night there was a memorial meeting for Helen J, 'SA Service of Thanksgiving' at St Martins in the Fields. It was well attended, but lots and lots of 'churchy' people, not so many of ours. Trevor conducted it, we sang a hymn, had a bible reading, then the following spoke: Hannah Stanton, Mandla (for the ANG) Maggie Resha (for the Women's League? Ann Hughes, and Hilda Bernstein, with Theo Kotze (he's a lovely man) reading a most touching letter that arrived after news of her death. Maggie spoke for hours, reading badly from page after page. After the meeting I saw Ros Ainslie, looking very ill. In a weak voice she tells me she is busy fighting lung cancer. I did not have a chance to talk to her properly - there was too much background noise & I could hardly hear her. I feel very upset. Rusty and I drove down for the meeting, and also to see Toni who was in hospital, but she should be out today. She became ill while filming in Mozambique, passed a kidney stone, it was diagnosed as being caused by her para-thyroid, which is not the thyroid, but next to it. She had to have it removed, I think there was a tumour on it (she doesn't tell me details, not to disturb the old folks, but Ivan is more forthcoming). She came home after a few days, then developed a pain in her head so bad that she thought she had a cerebral haemorrhage (however you spell that). She was rushed to casualty at the Royal Free, but after all the consultant said it was a virus. I reckon she must have picked it up at the Hammersmith where she had the neck operation. Anyway, by yesterday she was more or less recovered. I think that deals with all the health-disaster news. I hope your arm gives you no trouble.

I had such a nice, friendly letter from Brian about the print, and saying he would love to meet me and Rusty if/when we are next in SA. I didn't reply, but if you see him, say thank you for me. I've been doing no painting, no writing, no nothing. Our house is in a state of mess and confusion, while Rusty undertakes to do too much of the work himself. Everything is all over the place, and I can't settle down to anything. I am also frustrated by my publishers, who keep postponing publication of the book - while saying how marvellous it is, and flattering me, I am hoping that I might get to SA for the Weekly Mail Book Week; nothing has been settled, but Cape do want to make a splash with the SA publication.

Hope you Christmas trip and New Year were good. We went to Toni's country estate for Christmas, which was lovely. Rest of the family are all surviving, which is a triumph when you take a look at the economic situation here.

My sister Olga died, very suddenly. I was quite ready for Vera's death, because she is now a semi-invalid, walks with difficulty, her eyesight is giving trouble, and so on, and I did feel that she may not live much longer. But Olga was younger than Vera, in addition - although she had just turned 80 - she was incredibly active, still running her business, going out or having something on every night of the week (bridge club, writing circle, opera group, theatre club, etc) and going on marvellous expensive holidays to all the wonderful places of the world. I miss her and isn't it terrible? You think, I should have asked her, I wanted to know about, and all the things un-said. But she had a marvellous death. It was an aortic aneurism, one moment she was talking normally, the next she was dead. What a way to go, no slow decline, no loss of essential faculties. But, as with Freda, I keep thinking she is still here, just that I haven't seen them for some time. I know we must accustom ourselves, but the older our loved ones get the more we seem to want them. I felt so much regret about Freda - such a big funeral, so many tributes, but did she know how much she was loved and respected by us all? I think not, and I want to tell my dear friends now - like you - that I love them,

Rica Hodgson
611 Preston Place
30 Alexandra St
Berea. Johannesburg
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H Bernstein
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that I value them, and that your life has been a valuable one, that you should feel pride in it for what you have done and for what you are still doing.

And how is your boss? I send him and his wife my love. And Lil? I hope she is keeping well. Do you see Amina at all? Love to her, too. She and Yusuf gave us a memorable dinner, even if the end was not what we expected.

I haven't told you about our house. It is in the most incredible mess and chaos, as Rusty gets on with his favourite occupation - tearing a place to pieces and putting it together again differently. We made enough profit on the sale of the country cottage to afford alterations, but it's all a do-it-yourself job, and when the doer concerned is an elderly man working on his own without a 'mate', it all takes time. I'm not complaining, it will be much better when it's done, only it rather handicaps me, as I can't seem to get anything done.

24 May 93

Dearest Rica,

You're in my thoughts all the time, and I've been wanting to write, to be in touch; but so much happens, particularly where you are; and maybe I don't cope with life as competently as in the past. I heard you had another (two?) operations, and hope that it is all over and you are OK again. Luli has been here to talk to us about Oliver. What can I say about his death, and that of Chris? You know how we feel.

I've been having a lot of trouble with my book. The publishers (Cape) kept on putting off publication, always with one excuse or another. It was in their Autumn book list last year to be published in January of this year. Then it was in their Spring list to be published in June of this year. I was fed up, but agreed. (The book had been ready, completed, for months. Then the director of Cape, David Godwin, said he wanted to launch the book in South Africa at the Weekly Mail Book Week - September. I was angry at the delay, but eventually it was arranged, I was to go to SA for the launch, and then it would be launched here in London. Suddenly Godwin comes to Oxford to see me - the whole trip is off; he wants to cut the book in half and publish it as a paper back in February next year. This is totally in breach of the contract I have with them, the reasons are that Cape is part of a big conglomerate owned by a company in the US, and that company in turn is now owned by a commercial outfit (they make Reebok shoes!) whose only interest is making money, & because Cape has had a bad year or two, and are not showing the profits they should . . . etc etc. What books they decide to cut or try to drop has nothing at all to do with the merits or contents, but only with the projections as to how much money they will make (or lose.) I went to get advice from the Society of Authors, and although by contract Cape must publish, in hardback, by October, it was quite clear that one really has no means of forcing them because litigation costs thousands of pounds, & they can always keep it going for so long that you don't get publication in any case. However, I at last got my agent to say they must publish, in hardback, without any further cuts, or must relinquish all rights to the book, and after more days and weeks of pain and anxiety, they have agreed, but now it won't be published until March. I am sick, sick, sick at all this - the book was ready for publication in October of last year, time goes by, some of the relevancy is lost. So much work, so many people involved!

Meanwhile I've been busy preparing pictures and framing for Oxford Art Week, which is really a fortnight, in which artists display their work in their own homes. I'm showing together with another artist in her house, & so of course have to spend time there.

Don't seem to have any news for you. I'm so disappointed I won't be in SA in September. Our house is still half-done - and will be for ages, but it is very pleasant here, and much more comfortable and more in touch than in Hereford. Wish you could come.

This isn't much of a letter, but at least it's like stretching out a hand to touch you.

17 June 1993

My dearest Hilda,

I was truly sorry to hear of all the trials and tribulations regarding the publication of your book. The main thing is, however, that it is to be published early next year. Sad though that you missed the trip here - it would have been just the time to come and stay over for the first REAL elections on 27 April.

I am also very sad that I could not help Keith to arrange his filming sessions with Nelson - but Barbara was absolutely adamant on the point and I didnt think it was worth pursuing with anyone else. Perhaps he himself has had some luck with Pallo or Gill?

Have you had an opportunity to see Walter who is in London for Trevor's birthday and the AAM International Conference? I suspect that he is being worked to death over there and all my investment in him over the past year will go down the drain. But then he is his own worst enemy and simply will not recognise his age! I only hope that he and Nelson will live till 'freedom day'.

I have had a series of visitors staying with me including my stepson and his wife from Canada. He is a lovely guy but she never stops talking for a moment - it nearly drove me mad.

Went to Durban for the last long week-end. Beryl Baker who has a very fast car drove me there and back - 5 hours each way! It was great being with Spencer and Claudia and seeing all the other relatives over there as well.

Claudia's mom and sister are coming on holiday from Germany in October and we all intend to visit the Kruger Park and stay together for a short while in JHB. I am very excited about going into the Game Reserve. Went to so many in Zimbabwe but never here!

How is Toni's health? According to Pamela who was here very recently she has recovered well. Whatever did happen to Ivan's proposed trip or is it still pending?

Luli told me about your charming home in Oxford. I am so pleased that you are happily settled and can even have your own exhibition in it. Hope it went well and that you sold many pictures.

Thats all for now. This was really to let you know that I think of you very often and love you. Pass love to Rusty and all your brood.

Rica

28 July 1993

Dearest Rica,

Just a note to keep in touch, and because we never stop listening, reading, talking about things there at home, with you in the thick of it. I did see Walter at Trevor's birthday meeting, although it was an ordeal - 26 speakers, and me at the end, so I didn't make a speech, just explained it was too late, and said a few words. Don't know what you heard about the book, but it has been a really traumatic experience, ending with the director of Cape, who flattered and appeased me all along and kept putting off publication, leaving the firm, so I'm dealing with new editorial and managerial staff who are more sympathetic. I do think that the delay has meant the most propitious time has passed, for next year people will be all looking forward, not reading about the past. I have had a real loss of confidence in myself over the whole thing, and keep wanting to start painting again, but can't get going. The creaked colleges and elegant streets of Oxford are really not my scene - made for pretty little pastel and water-colour sketches. I wish I was drawing in the shanty-towns (with an adequate armed guard, of course), for it is those people, that life, I want to reflect.

Toni has had a year of ill-health, recovering from the kidney stone and neck op, only to have her gall-bladder removed. These days, however, they do it without slicing you up, just inserting things, and she seems to have recovered. She is off to Russia soon, to try and make something, or research something. I'm a bit vague about it - so is she. Ivan has, fortunately, been working on a TV series in Manchester, finishing soon. They've had lots of financial troubles because the film industry in Britain is non-existent. Toni has a cartoon pinned up over her desk; a woman opening her mail says to her husband: Darling, we're overdrawn beyond our wildest dreams! They say recovery is on its way, but what a bunch of crooks, liars and paper-men they are! At least, watching the news each night, we have something to hate, as well as so much to keep over.

I'm sending these photos because I haven't the right addresses: perhaps you post the one of Betty on to her, although she can't see it she might like to have it, particularly now Oliver is dead. The others, Elias and Wilson, perhaps you would just give to them, also Bizos and Indriwe- but if this is a nuisance and involves any work, don't bother about them. I'm also enclosing some RSA stamps I found among my papers. Knowing what life/work is like for you in Shell House and Berea, I do hesitate to ask you to do anything.

Keith doesn't seem to have got anywhere with his scheme, but will probably try to come to SA in any case to do portraits of people likely to be in the government. He has been to many places, including three trips to Yugoslavia (that was), and the most horrific of all, in Southern Sudan, cut off from the world by those mad mullahs. The pictures, which were published in the Observer magazine, were both terrible and

also marvellous. He is the only member of our family who doesn't moan about lack of work or money - although Frances, who has a very responsible job, doesn't moan. She is in a women's choir, which occupies her leisure time, and she loves it - sings working-class and folk songs, and plays her guitar.

We had summer last month, and since then its been grey, cold and rainy day after day. It depresses me dreadfully; yet our garden is looking lovely, and Rusty is kept busy truing to remake this house to suit our needs and our tastes better.

Love to you, and to anyone you know who knows me, or would care to be remembered. Enjoy your October holiday. Has Beryl settled down well? I felt so sorry for Heidi, who regarded Toine as her father.

30 August 1994

Hilda my love,

I am very sad to learn of Sadie's death, and even more so, the suffering she had to endure before she died. I can well imagine that it must have been a very painful experience for you also to have to witness this tragedy and now to be deprived of her as a friend and companion. I feel for you.

We also had a grievous loss recently when Feroza Adams, a young glamorous, new member of Parliament and a great fighter for women's rights while she worked here in the ANC and previously in the democratic movement, was killed in a motor accident in Capetown.

The day of her funeral was horrendous. We all went to her parent's home where almost all the women wore head coverings and the men mostly were in long tunics and "yamelkas". We had to take our shoes off to go into the house to greet her mother - now replaced by a second wife - surrounded by weeping and wailing women. The grief was so palpable. Then the men carried out the coffin and went to the cemetery, leaving all the women behind! She would have hated this hypocrisy.

Anyway, a week later we got our own back, when a memorial meeting was held at the school where she once taught. I have never heard so many beautiful passionate speeches on one occasion. Many women, I had never met or heard of, stood up to attest to her friendship, comradeship, commitment to uplifting the lot of women. Black, Indian, Coloured and White women talked and sobbed unashamedly. Jenifer Ferguson sang some heartrending songs and Baleka composed and read a beautiful poem. Cheryl was too overcome and emotional to speak.

A couple of men too, Charles of the SACP and someone called Feroz Cachalia made moving addresses, Thabo making the last speech, but managing to say nothing. Still, that is understandable as his wife was there, and it was fairly well known that he and Feroza had had an affair. Then we were allowed to go to the cemetery and place flowers on her grave. She will be missed.

I think I wrote a fairly fulsome report to Toni about the Veteran's function. It was also a very emotional affair, as people like Mervyn Susser, Arthur Goldreich, Ann Nicholson, Chris de Brogglio Harry Naidoo and nearly 30 others from abroad, as well as comrades from the length and breadth of SA met each other for the first time in decades. I had last seen Mpho in Botswana in 1963 - he looks great and is about to become a member of Parliament there!. And so on....

Happily, I was able yesterday to send cheques to Minnie and to Mannie for their outlay for the luncheon there. Amina and I had hell's own time trying to get these bloody businessmen to pay the accounts. It made me very angry, as I was the one who had got people to do things and give us tick for the airfares, buses, hotel accommodation, satellite, etc. This is really my swan song!

I am still in the dark about my future here. Everyone else seems to know what is happening to them, what their future salaries will be and so on, except me. Perhaps it is because I am just taken for granted. Walter will not stand for office at the end of the year, but intends to continue to work and frankly, at the rate he is going now, he ~~is~~ will still be around for some long time. He simply asked me to stay on with him.

He manages to find reasons to get himself to Capetown while Albertina is at Parliament. Of course he can use her free air trips and stay in her house there, but he is campaigning all over the Cape and last night spoke at three meetings getting to bed at midnight. I suspect, that while Parliament is on, he will spend more and more time in the Cape.

Beryl was working with Joe in his Department of Housing, but the President asked her to come back and look after his office here at Shell House. By the way, Walter has just re-assured me on the phone that Joe is OK. The press ^{has} stated that he was back in hospital again, but apparently, this is for routine tests only.

Thomas Nkobi is in a hospital in Durban having had a couple of strokes. Barbara visited him recently and said she doubted if he would work again.

A friend of mine who has a flat on the campus of Waterford School in Swaziland, has offered it to me for a holiday. Spencer, Claudia, Lily and me will probably go for ten days over Xmas and New Year. I only ever saw Swaziland briefly during our emergency when I went to visit Jack there, so I am looking forward to going again and spending a quiet and restful time renewing my acquaintance with that beautiful country.

Well, that brings you up-to-date on events around here

Much love to you and Rusty - stay well.

Dina

13 July 1995.

My dear Hilda,

I have not yet seen, but have spoken with Toni since she came back from Mocambique and heard about yours and Rusty's wonderful trip to Ethiopia. From this I deduce that you are both hale and hearty, fit and well. Good!

At the beginning of this month I had my 75th birthday and my kids and Amina organised a party with a few friends. Spencer and Claudia also gave me a wonderful present of a freezer. As you know I have moaned for ages about wanting one but couldn't see where it would fit into my kitchen. However, Spencer made a plan, cut out some wood and added some elsewhere and hey presto it fits like a glove. Now I am inspired to LABEL everything that goes in and also to try out new and exotic recipes. You wouldn't believe how organised it all is.

I wondered if over there, you caught any of the rugby fever that was raging here a few weeks back. The last time I had been to a game of rugby was sometime in either 1966 or 1969 when we went as an anti-apartheid group to break up a match at Twickenham between England and SA. We had one hell of a reception from the British fans who physically attacked Alan Brooks and some of the other men. Fortunately, they only swore at the women, but I did feel very threatened.

Anyway, on the occasion of the final of the World Cup - SA vs. New Zealand, I was offered a VIP ticket with Walter and we were treated to front row seats, behind glass, at the back of the goal post in a restaurant called Touch Down. A marvellous buffet - all free - was laid out with lobster, prawns, masses of smoked salmon, wine, champagne, etc. etc. This is where rich businessmen pay a bomb for the privilege of watching rugby and where they can treat their guests. I saw these hard-bitten guys weep when Nelson walked on to the field in a rugby shirt! What emotion, what nail-biting went on that day. I would never have believed that I would ever actually enjoy a game of rugby. Mandela has already changed many attitudes to many things here.

Going home, it was like a fiesta all the way. Blacks and whites, dancing and singing in the streets; waving SA flags, chanting Viva ama bokke bokke! It was one great big celebration everywhere.

The next couple of weeks were much more sober and sad. The deaths of Harry Gwala and Barney Simon made one feel that the whole country was in mourning. I went to Barney's funeral where John Kani and Athol Fugard made such moving speeches - his loss will be felt for a long time to come, but at least he leaves a monument to himself - the Market Theatre - behind.

P10

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Talking of theatre, I went to see Anthony Sher recently in Titus Andronicus. Not my favourite Shakespearean play, but anyway, I really didn't like the production nor his acting of the part. As someone here said, "I dont have to pay to go to the theatre to see Terreblanche when I can see him for free." I did feel sorry for him though, as the play simply did not attract any kind of audience, let alone an African one, which he had hoped for. I am not surprised to hear that he has abandoned any idea he nursed to return to SA. Clearly, theatre still has a long way to go here, before attracting actors of his ilk.

A few weeks back Joel Joffe had organised the first Bram Fischer Memorial Meeting at which Nelson and Chaskelson paid wonderful tributes. The Market Theatre venue was much too small and was totally packed out. Afterwards, special friends were invited back to Ilsa's home for something to drink and hot soup. It was altogether a marvellous evening and comrades like you and Rusty were missed.

Walter's eldest son, Lungi had a serious motor accident and is in danger of losing his right hand/arm. Walter has been badly affected by this - seeing his son attached to tubes and oxygen seems to have quite unnerved him. I think to-day will decide whether or not he loses his limb. Those of us who dont pray are all holding thumbs that it wont be necessary to amputate.

Mark Bernstein sold his two bachelor flats in the West End and bought a brand newly built larger flat in Islington. He and May are considering going to stay there permanently. Quite a decision to make at 82! She has been staying with me for the past 6 weeks while he was doing all this in London, and frankly I dont think that she is mentally up to such a huge change, but I suppose that if you have enough money you can do anything.

Lily had a small cancer removed by plastic operation from her lower leg but is recovering well, helped by watching Wimbledon, as tennis is a great passion of hers. It was a treat for me too, especially the women's final.

Tanya is still working with SANCO - SA National Civics Organisation - and although working much overtime seems happy with her job. She changes boy friends frequently - I find it difficult to remember if it is Wayne or Darryl or whoever.

Claudia's great friend is coming from Germany next month and we are planning another short trip to the Kruger Park which I adore.

I nearly forgot the crucial reason for writing - May wants to buy a copy of your "Benches" if you still have one left. She wants to give it as a present to Mark. If you do have one please send it to her at: 72 Nonoti Gardens
~~rdens~~, Nonoti Avenue, Berea, Durban, together with a bill and she will pay you by cheque from England.

Thats all for now

Much love to you & Rusty
Dica.

X

3

October 5 1995

Dearest Rica,

Can't recall if I ever answered your last letter. I have a file marked ATTENTION and once I have put anything in it I forget about them. Good system. But Tony Hall was here last night and I thought he will be back in Yeoville soon, so I'M sure you will see him. He can tell you we are both fit, soldiering on, Rusty sitting over his memoirs every morning so I can't get near the word processor; he has already written tens of thousands of words. And me, I'm trying to paint and draw again; going to Ethiopia gave me the kick-start I needed to get going. Oxford has not inspired me, I was suffering from artists' block, but now it seems to have lifted.

Joel tells us that he has two videos about Bram, one from the memorial meeting you wrote about. We have been visited several times by a man called Martin Meredith who is doing an official bio of Nelson, not to be published until the end of his presidential term; and now also a bio of Bram. We were really pleased to hear this, because of the long cock-up with the other chap - Friedmann, or whatever his name is; and because except for a small circle Bram seems to have sunk into oblivion. Don't know anything about Meredith, but we were both impressed by him - he seemed to ask the right sort of questions. We have a steady stream of academics (mainly American & South African) seeking information about the Party and the Fifties. I don't remember a thing, but R is better. Eventually you do get the feeling that we all participated - and had something to do with - a very significant part of SA history. But I still think the best thing I did was in the Women's Fed, and that Rae and I were really pioneers.

Mendi held a reception for Mike Terry, who is going on to other work after 20 years with AAM. It was held at the Ambassador's residence in Kensington/Hollands Park. Gosh! We had never imagined it to be like that! Obviously sometime the home of one of Britain's glorious Lords, a beautiful mansion with gorgeous gardens, a tennis court, huge mature trees, a lawn like a billiard table, and the most awful Pierneef's all round the walls - never realised what a tripey artist he was. I am quite surprised and delighted with the way in which Mendi has slipped into his role - such a small, unobtrusive man - with dignity and a pleasing informality. He makes charming little speeches, you feel he has composed them himself, very human. And when you think he is surrounded by all the 'old guard' types, some trying their best to adapt and others not - it must be very difficult. Tony says something the same of Jele, who he saw in New York. Rosheen Dadoo is working at the London Embassy, and seems to be doing well in her job.

We are still glowing in the memory of a really hot summer, and now I am dreading the coming months. If only we had money to travel to SA every winter - lots of friends with houses here and there, but it's the fare. I've got really envious in my old age, I envy everyone with some money; we are really stretched. I so much would like to write stuff on the women in the House of A - Frene, watch her in action, and other young women. When you consider that SA is top of the league for women in parliament (only the Seychelles, I learn, has a higher percentage) - well, feminism seems so jaded and pushed back in this country. I'd like to write about our women, something of their backgrounds, and so on.

Please give my love to Lily. Skin cancer is the SA/Australian disease. Penalty for that glorious sun. All my family seem to be OK. Frances is greatly absorbed with her women's choir, still teaching them SA songs. Patrick seems to be in danger of making a real go of his business at last, after years of struggle. Keit is not very settled in Brighton, he is a London lad, and kisses his city, but he has a very nice house - large Victorian place on several floors - and Julie had sent back from Thailand dozens of crates full of the most beautiful furniture, ceramics, all sorts of things, most of which she bought from market stalls and had fixed up. Gorgeous stuff. Did I tell you they eventually got married? Well, I hope it lasts as long as the un-married liaison. Toni is editing her film, and seems reasonably pleased with it.

subjects after that. But I just went on with working there. If it's because of that I didn't pass through my social work And she singled us out - those of us who had spoken. I don't know work - to start demanding better housing, better concrete changes. that. It's not so much case work that is required, as community economically depressed; they had no part to play in
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UNISA held just two open classes per year. The social work teacher who had just returned from the United States, was trying to impose system theory onto the actual situation in South Africa. Some of us objected to it. We said: There ARE communities who are really
 I entered college, and after doing Fine Arts it was difficult to get a job in the field. I then started through UNISA* to do social work subjects, and I worked as a student social worker at the Durban Indian Child Welfare Society. And of course that took me out to various poverty-stricken - really, ja - completely disadvantaged communities.
 and do the housework.
 into town, and father would prepare the meal, set out the table, as all of us. And there were days, like Saturdays we would go off employed at home, we all took turns at cooking - my brother as well any housework. We all did housework. We did not have anybody of contradictions. Father used to cook very well, and he would do to school. Though I come from such an orthodox family, it was full orthodox and conservative, who never even allowed daughters to go school. There were families that we mixed with who were absolutely were in India in a sense, but we could read a lot, we could go to My home life was very strict. My father brought us up as though we

Julius is going to SA soon. He is like a little gnome, but despite his age and the loss of Tam, he is filling his life remarkably well. At the Mendi reception I felt what a lot of us missed, people together, we are those who gave stage words: Dreen, Ronnie - what someone close to me would describe as a lot of boring old farts. I suppose that's me and R as well. Except I'm really quite young - inside; it's just the outside casing that is eecaying.

I haven't really told you about Ethiopia, I would like to write to you about it? Tony can tell you some of it. I thought it was brilliant; a fabulous country in every way - history, geography, beautiful people, fantastic mountains. I saw at last something if what I wanted to see, the rock churches in Lalibela and the wonderful range of the Semien mountains. We so much enjoyed staying with Tony and Eve, Love to Tanya, to Claudia, to you all. The sun is shining today - I will go out and post this letter

2 May 1996

Dearest Rica

Last week we were at the SA Embassy twice, which somehow made me think of you - perhaps picturing outside with a placard. The first time was for a preview of Toni's film, which I hope you have seen by now (if not, rustle Amina up) and quite a nice event - the film looked good on a bigger screen, we all thought it was very moving, and that Nick's music was spot on. And at least in that place the wine is always good, not the usual plonk.

The second time was the 2nd anniversary - SA Day. Phew! First a memorial service in St Marks - Toni & I dragged Rusty there and he was quite resentful - kept saying his tolerance of religious services is very low. The place was packed out. Some of it was quite good, and some awful, particularly a black reverend who went on for fifteen minutes or more about our sins and how we can be cleansed of them. I like my sins, I don't want to lose them. Then the usual crush at the Embassy, packed with whites you don't know (hardly a black face) - FO, civil servants, etc, somehow some things never change. And the only ones you know are ancient old bores - Percy, ponderous as always, Doreen, who never looked young even when she was, Julius, who has shrunk to a little gnome. I should talk - how do I look to them? But really . . . detritus, the bits of driftwood left beyond the high tide mark. And Ray Harmel - now both deaf & almost blind, but still alive (sort of). Sometimes I feel it was nicer when we stood outside. All these places are still fully inhabited by the old crowd - it's been easy for them to adjust; nothing much as changed for them.

Rusty & I had a marvellous holiday in SA. I only hope (and believe) that most of the morning's shooting we did at Mac's mansion will land on the cutting room floor, because it truly wasn't really good, & the old man summed up in the end with a statement that had nothing to do with the film and what went before, but plugging his obsession with reconciliation, etc. Well, that's B's headache. As far as we are concerned flying us out was an expensive waste for her film, but gave us a most wonderful cheap holiday, seeing friends, staying in the super-comfortable luxury of the Broido's in Jhb'g and Pauline & Terry's beautiful Constantia home. It was all just lovely, and I can't tell you how reluctant we were to leave, with everyone urging us to stay. I was very impressed with the Mayibuye Centre - if you haven't been there since it started, go and have a look when you're in CT. It has really developed into an important archive/museum, with very interesting things. Gordon Metz suggested that they might organise a retrospective of my work - I'm hoping this will come about, another excuse to visit SA! Also I have tons of drawings of people done at meetings and things that could be displayed.

Rusty is getting towards the end of his memoir-writing. He's at it every single day, non-stop. I've also got some writing to do, but I'm waiting until he has finished on the word processor - although we borrowed a small second machine from Patrick, I had already started on ours, and don't want to interfere with R's work. Penguin Books in SA are interested in possibly publishing.

Family news: Channel 4 haven't yet given Toni a date for the showing of her film - TV hardly shows any social documentaries these days, it's deteriorated a great deal. Ivan's been working away from home for weeks. After the Embassy bash of T's film we all went to dinner together - Patrick & Yvonne were there with Clyde, Keith came to join us, & we all felt Ivan had disappeared. At last, after unremitting hard work for about 6 years, Patrick's firm is taking off, he is making a living, employing a staff of about 10, buying some premises, & I'm so happy for him. Keith, as always, is doing well (won the Sony press photographer of the year for the second year running) and still hates Brighton, but has a beautiful home. My Frances sometimes drives down & back in one day just

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curricular activities, very busy with her choir, going to lessons in music theory, getting bored with her job, making the best of things. I really miss her, living 'up north', but she has made that her home. The links still remain - she teaches her choir SA songs.

Me? Apart from the writing I started but haven't finished, I have to do quite a bit of research on it - I fiddle around with drawing and painting, but nothing very much. It's a question of less energy - bed earlier, evenings spent reading or watching TV when I used to work. The thing is I'm still young - well, perhaps middle-aged - in myself, the self has not grown old, but the framework has; it simply doesn't stand up to the same usage as in the past. You begin to crumble, bits fall off (hair, teeth); and everyone can see you are an old woman, when you yourself know you are not!

Katib should be coming out later this month.

Dearest Rica,

I was so overjoyed to hear of Cyril Hamaphosa's election, that I decided to write him a letter - rather a nerve, I think, someone like me telling him what he should be doing. Then I thought I would send it to you, so that you could see he gets it, my experience of the ANC being that most correspondence never reaches its intended destination. And that seemed an opportunity to take a little time off and write to you as well.

I am working 100%, all day, every day of the week, on the book, as it has to be done by the end of this year, and there is a massive amount of work. Rusty is also working with me, doing a great deal of the editing and sub-editing, invaluable. We work in separate rooms and meet at mealtimes. To get the book finished is my only immediate aim. I have wonderful material - I've interviewed more than 300 people in about 13 different countries. The material is great, but whether it will finally make a great book or not I cannot say, and I'm not reassured by devoted friends who keep telling me how good it will be.

Other than that, we have no plans. I got indemnity, Rusty is still waiting. He did not apply here because Raymond was going to fix it up over there, but we never heard from him again. Rusty, as you know, was supposed to be coming out to see what he could do. Well, nothing happened, and he is getting old and techy, and is not prepared to make any move. Can't do anything about that, it's part of his character. People keep asking us when we are going, at least on a visit. Quite frankly, we haven't the cash. We have no reserves whatsoever, we are living on our old age pensions plus some of the money I had as an advance from the publishers for the book. People think because we have white skins we also have money. Well, we haven't. We gave away what little we had, and that's another story I'll tell you some other day.

I would love to hear from you, and how you are. Did you attend the conference? Was it as good as it sounds from brief press reports? Please write to me sometime! And Spencer and the family? We're all more or less OK. I'm 35 to 40 in my mind, and my bones keep telling me I'm actually 76. Have some trouble because of osteoporosis, but still energetic and getting around. Much love to you, and to any friends who want our love.

22 May 02

Old House Farm
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Dearest Rica,

As the grey matter in my head is full of holes these days and leaks like a sieve, I've forgotten when you are going on your USRA trip, so I don't know whether you will be away when this arrives. However, no matter. Nothing I have to say is of any urgency, it can await your return.

It was wonderful to have been able to stay with you - nothing could have been better; and to have you arranging so many things for us. It's all a very bright memory, but whether it will lead to any 'return' or not I can't say at this stage. I suppose you saw the letter Rusty wrote to your boss. He felt that Raymond made it sound as though he is demanding certain things, which is not what he meant - he is inquiring, so he can weight things up. Very cautious in his old age. Meanwhile he is working upstairs on the word processor on his thoughts about a policy for housing and I personally think that his ideas are good, and that he has an original, politically sound approach. So that even if it doesn't lead to anything more, at least he should take part in any seminars when they are held on this question. That, and political education, is his forte, as you know.

I came home to 'climate-shock', but at the most tender, beautiful time of the year when everything is beginning, so brilliant and fresh. And this week we've been having hot summer weather, we are surrounded by a great kaleidoscope of greens, of blossoming trees and bushes, of the best that this English countryside can give. I love it so much, it makes me forget for a while what it's like when November comes.

I was plunged into finishing the book, finally a week or so ago deposited the rest of the manuscript with all its alterations, deletions, cuts, additions, dates, footnotes, forewords, etc, etc, and I felt liberated for the first time in nearly three years. What have I done since then? Nothing much. Thought about all the people I should have written to months ago (and you're the first) read the newspaper every day, did a little gardening, cleared up some of the mess in my studio, thought about painting . . . this and that. SA news comes in small fits and spurts; when there is scandal (Winnie) of course, or problems at CODESA, but mostly very little.

Family all more or less OK, Patrick still struggling on, but head still just above water. Keith is in Thailand with his Julie - went 10 days ago, and we haven't heard from him, so just hope he keeps off the streets at crisis times. We've put our house on the market, intending to move nearer London no matter what other plans transpire. I really need to get closer to everything - 'culture', exhibitions, galleries, cinemas, agencies; but at this time of the year, looking at our garden and all we have put into it, so many beautiful things, fruit trees now grown to a good size, raspberry and other canes, strawberries, so many plants, trees, bushes . . . oh well, not so many years left, must spend them as comfortably as we can.

Toni busy editing her Namibia film - she found Namibia rather dull. What else? Nothing. Sickening things happening in this country and in the world. Thought about your birthday party, and hope it all went very well (Walter's, I mean) and give my love to Lil, I hope she is well, and to any friends. And much love to you.

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