

01 CLOUD **

7/22/17 10:09 AM (was 06)

ck against letter in ptg

8/23/17 11:25 AM

176 words

189 words

9/3/17 4:38 PM

Dearest,

Just a quick note before I leave town to say that I got yr letter + will definitely try to write down for you soon all I remember about your dad's work after the war for the air force (CIA?)

I know it's hard to fully understand today, but the context in US in the fifties was one of tremendous optimism with what we thought intellectuals could do for justice and freedom worldwide. Yr dad had his political science and I had you and your sister! It was like he and I were building a new world somehow. All the contradiction and the darkness of the coming cloud were somehow not yet visible. Maybe we should have known but we were so happy to be working and alive.

You know I still have that little coffee table he made for our engagement after the gov't sent him his first check. (I don't know why he didn't take it after the divorce.) It's so strange how some things last + some things don't. But I'm still here! And you too, it's making me so happy to think of you now...

More soon.

All my love, mom

02 STAIN

was 01

7/22/17 10:32 AM - 3rdnd draft - too long

8/23/17 10:51 AM rewrite

375 words

1649 signes

9/3/17 2:04 PM

Dearest,

I promised to write more about your dad's work with the gov't but strangely my memory of his work is a bit obscured now, stained up. I think it's just hard to pull up the things we did without getting all caught up in regret and sadness.

I guess I get sidetracked with feelings + sadness. He was a beautiful man, and his personality in the early years of our relationship was so kind. Around the time he had that work with the gov't it was our engagement time Dec 54 - Apr 55 + he was making furniture for when we would be married: nice, pretty stuff: a couch made from an old door, a bed head with shelves - I was so impressed, so smitten. His hands were so beautiful. And he worked so hard...

What we had together besides passion for each other was our politics. Your dad was part of the idealism of those times: a belief that if clear study and research were applied to our foreign policy, the horrors of war could be avoided. I was reacting to the fascism I knew since a child with your granddad, and wanted to help anything that might change the US for the better. In hindsight it seems a lost cause, but what else besides hope could we have with McCarthy going the senate and school children escorted by army soldiers? In America! It was like a growing stain that might cover the world. I don't know, we somehow thought that intelligent people could change things. And the CIA that recruited him found him when he was so young, and placed him and all his student friends into good programs. By the end of graduate school he was paid to help a general who designed the spy planes they secretly flew over Russia. Maybe they wanted a political scientist in on that stuff to be able remind them of what they might be spying for?

But honey, it's so hard to think back now to why these things happened. Ambitious men surrounded me with their idealism and explanations. I was in it and just wish I could go back and talk to them, love them different, change them.

More soon, love, love. Mom

03 CRATER

8/23/17 11:07 AM rewrite

378 words

1598 signes

9/3/17 2:48 PM

341 words

my darling,

With all this talk in your letters about the gov't intelligence work that allowed your dad to do his research, I decided I also need you to know that dad was different. Even though we divorced, you know I have fond memories of our time together. The men I knew before I met him were not as human + not as open to what I needed as a person.

Before your dad there was a dashing cadet named Fred. We fell in love quickly and this became a long distance "engagement," with weekends here + there. I spent most of that summer with him at his parent's home in South Georgia and planned to marry after I graduated the following year. I have strong memories of the strange house, in an oblong shape, overlooking an unusual crater. I think they would call it a sinkhole.

Anyway, he gave me a book when I was there - the Air Force Wives' Manual - which so insulted my intelligence and sense of freedom that I made quite a row - e.g. "Air Force wives must learn to drink + play bridge" and "How to behave oneself in the commissary" etc.

Then one day another girl came to visit and she seemed uncomfortable with me there. After she left he told me he'd been sleeping with her all year and not to worry because wouldn't sleep with me since I was for marrying... This was my first real encounter with the macho double standard. It made me sick. I felt very sorry for that girl and for me too.

Bit still, I wept when I gave him back his pin. I always wept when things ended. Maybe because I always made them end. I felt guilty + wrong but now I know that it was some sense of self-preservation + need for independence that led me to break it off. And when I met your dad I knew it would be different - and it was, and I wanted to help him

Love, mom

04 CALCEIFORM **

was 6 or 5

Saturday, August 12, 2017 most emotional or replace with short excerpt from 2

8/23/17 11:31 AM rewrite

367 words

1,486 signes

9/3/17 4:08 PM

349 words

My dearest,

So today I wanted to write to you with some bad news but also to remind you what it was like for people like your dad in the fifties. He had huge optimism for what the US could do in the world. National politics was part of this, the scale of admiration we had for Kennedy was not just from life - but from the work we wanted to do for freedom + justice. You were too small to remember, but we were all so sad and terrified when they killed him - you were crying a lot but I'm not sure you knew why.

But there is something else sad in my mind right now. Amongst all these memories is a diagnosis of cancer I just got from the Drs. Only possible - I am to spend most of tomorrow at the hospital having a scan and a metabolic survey. I understand there are cells that can hold things in them, like slippers - called calceiform + these will be the Drs some kind of story.

I want to tell you and your brothers and sister, the thoughts I've been having for these last days - it has actually been fine. Facing this kind of death now, in my 60th year, is somehow okay. I look back and really like my life. I've been very, very lucky. You children have been such a gift. Maybe I haven't given you anywhere near as much as you have given me but I hope I haven't been too destructive. I have certainly loved + enjoyed all of you from day one.

One destructive piece I'm wondering about is not staying in my marriage to your dad. I could have, and perhaps should have. But would not now be looking back at my life with such a feelings of contentment. So in that divorce I was selfish in way to make things more positive.

I'm calling tonight to tell you this sad news so I guess this letter will be like a kind of repeat performance when it gets to you.

I will always love you! mom

05 TREE **

7/22/17 10:51 AM - 3rd^d draft - was 02

repeating? Also Typed up post Pensc - after the one about death
change one to be wrong recruitment date

8/23/17 10:56 AM

484 words

2104 signes

9/3/17 4:17 PM

352 words

Dearest,

Just a fast note before I go in to another lab treatment at the hospital. I'm remembering more and more in my last letter I got side tracked with these feelings of sadness, (too many!) but I wanted to add these details, now coming back:

Yes it is true that your dad worked for an air force general soon after he presented his Phd thesis at Princeton. When I met him he was already working for this guy. But I think he must have been recruited a few years before this assignment because when he left Brown he was already funded by the gvt. They were supporting him at Oxford to do his work and he contracted then to come back to CIA work afterwards. The man who recruited him in was also a Princeton guy and a Rhodes scholar. It was just all that boys club stuff that was always between these guys with the same alma mater. Your dad said then that all the Rhodes scholars were approached to work for international "planning" when they got out. After Oxford he went - or was sent - to Officers Candidate School in Texas, and given Air Force 'rank'. The idea was that they had to have rank in the military to be able to have a place in unofficial jobs with CIA. His only admitted job was as aide de camp to Philip Strong, a general that was planning the reconnaissance over Russia that eventually led to the U2 spy plane incident. This was in Boston and yr dad lived with three other Air Force researchers and they were all great cooks. Everyone loved + respected your dad. He always had lots of friends.

And you know I think it was this sense that we were in it together, that there could be some kind of change we would make. Its strange to think this now after so many horrible thing. I think you can see now all the damage set up in that time, all those good-thinking men coming in over and over again, a dark tree that was always there.

06 SPIRAL*

was 4
Saturday, August 12, 2017

8/30/17 11:27 AM
361 words
1,558 signes

My son, May, 5, 1987

I'm in London again and want to recount the last 2 days because I need to understand what's happening to me. Off the plane Sat. night at Heathrow and into a taxi when I bumped my head - hard on the top of the door. Saw stars - raised a bump, but mostly cried. Everything so full confused, spiraling.

I slept well but the next day at breakfast Alison told me all the things she had planned for us: theatre, luncheons, drinks, parties + I burst into tears, again. Hard to describe how I felt -no it isn't - I was miserable. My tears worked though, and I said I wanted to go off alone. I felt pretty stupid - but alone at the V+A and all around Kensington Gardens made the day wonderful.

I want you to know these things about me too (my sadness) as you research your dad and figure out what it might have meant to be the "good American". I know I keep mixing my feelings into the facts you want to know about your dad's CIA work. It's just that the life we had when you all were born was so much about the love I had, and then tried to keep having. I thought that what he might do - in making policy, or in research, or helping the military - would make changing the world something I would do too. And we did talk that way. I felt part of something with him.

My problem may still be the vortex that all women had to live in. We were trained to be caretakers for others, mostly our men. The crazy part is that I am at the same time - so afraid of people.

But I'm going to be okay. I want you know that. Here in London we walk at dawn + at sunset. I don't feel the tumor anymore. I may miss the energy and the confidence of your dad, but not the dizziness of the end. Amen. My practice is getting better; you children + grandchildren seem well. What goddesses do I pray to keep it all that way?

xmom