

1965

Tuesday, June 15th WAD

I will remember as Black Tuesday. The complete oblivion of sleep I would have loved until noon, but I awoke fairly early. Lyndon's dark countenance, dour and grim, I tried to comfort -- not too much effect. His feelings were made up of many things, not only the disasters of the Arts Festival, but the constant black background of Vietnam and Santo Domingo. But, most especially today, the death of young Bobby Russell, forty, handsome, father of five beautiful youngsters, and the beloved of Dick Russell. When Lyndon is wracked by grief, he shows it, in his face, in his voice, or, more likely, in his silence. It was a bad day.

I called in Liz and Bess to have a post-mortem on the Festival of the Arts, and we discussed the one-by-one hammer-blows of the front-page story -- New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, even the Washington Post, accenting only Robert Lowell's not coming, John Hersey's coming and lecturing, Dwight McDonald's passing around a petition to get his fellow guests to sign, disapproving of the President's foreign policy. There is some uncertainty whether he got four or seven signatures out of the 300 or so guests. I'll take a 293 to 7 majority any time!

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But do you think that was the news? No, the fly on top of the feast, and indeed, feast it had been. Helen Hayes and Marian Anderson and glorious Robert Peters, and the whole cast of the Glass Menagerie, and Katharine Drinker Bowen and delightful Phyllis McGinley.

Oddly enough, the women reporters saw it in perspective. As their stories came in, one by one -- Isabelle Shelton, Marie Smith, Gerry Van der Heuvel. And, believe me, for once I read all the clippings, the second time in my life I remember doing it. The other time was when the boyhood home was dedicated. Much to Liz's grief, I never read them. Today I couldn't wait for the issue of The Evening Star to get out.

All the women saw it in perspective, gave the great good parts their due and the small dissensions their due. All save one -- Mary McGrory, the best writer of all, and hers was as cruel and cutting a story as ever I remember. Liz says she was just born in the Boston ghetto and can't get out.

I think Phyllis McGinley's own line about "Those who wear tolerance as a label but find some other views intolerable," fitted the whole occasion.

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Poor Dr. Goldman. He has worked so hard -- he did so much -- he achieved such a lot. And yet the total result must have been a towering headache, if not heartbreak.

Oddly enough, there descended upon me total weariness, total relaxation, and I went to bed and took a long, delicious nap.

Then I got up and worked on the mail. Lyndon had asked me to substitute for him in receiving the Inaugural Committee workers at 5:30. They were going to present us a gold medallion for him, a silver one for the Vice President, the first copy of a book that will go on sale for \$10.00 to help finish out the expenses of the past Inauguration and build up a nest-egg for future ones. And then just a chance for us to say a last thank you -- sort of a reunion, and that was something I was mighty glad to do.

So down to the East Room at 5:30 to see many familiar faces. I stood in line with Dale to greet the guests as they drifted in. Lindy Boggs, the Oscar Chapmans, advance men from the Lady Bird Special, the Howard Burris, the Warren Woodwards, all the committee chairmen and all the hard workers. Some 300 folks, most of whom I knew. The Jack Hights. There was happy greeting and hugging and reminiscing all around. And then a very dignified

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delightful little speech by Dale, a word of earnest thanks by me, and the acceptance of the most wonderful book of colored photographs of the Inaugural that I have seen. I do not think there is its equal for any inauguration.

And then Lyndon suddenly strode in and said, "I think you've already had all the speeches, but I just want to tell you, Dale, it was the best inauguration any President ever had." He shook half a dozen hands and was gone back to his office in less than a count of five minutes.

Not so Hubert Humphrey! He was with us the whole time, got up and made a speech in which he said, "I enjoyed every living minute -- and, lest I be misunderstood, I wouldn't mind doing it all over again!" to the great laughter of the room.

Luci Baines came in and covered the State Dining Room very quickly, seeing lots of old friends here and there. And then in came Matiana. She and Tony were going to spend the night with us, but Tony had taken the children to swim -- that is, Lisa, Alexander, and their little friends, and Diana.

Later I went upstairs to the West Hall and Tony and Diana joined us, while the three children had an early supper upstairs on the stools at Luci's bar in her Solarium. I said, "Hello, Lisa,

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hello, Sascha," and he said, "I charge a quarter for that." We all laughed and he said, "My name is Alexander. I don't want anybody to call me Sascha any more." How charming Lisa looked -- like Alice in Wonderland, with long, fair hair and a ribbon around it, and wide eyes and very thrilled to be here. And Tony's delight at seeing them so happy was a delight to me.

The four of us had a good long happy talk about the Virgin Islands, Santa Fe and my possible trip there this summer, their visit to the World's Fair just completed, and Tony's new job -- a sort of tryout one for AID to six countries of Latin America.

And then I said, "Let's go in to dinner, the four of us." The children were already downstairs at the movies, and there's never any telling when Lyndon will come. Frequently it's 11. And so we did. And right in the middle of it, Lyndon joined us, looking tired and quiet but very sweet. We kissed each other all around, and then we had that unusual thing, a family dinner -- interrupted, of course, by a few phone calls.

And a little later, to my pleasure, Lyndon said, "I think I'll go to bed. I don't believe I have my night reading tonight." However, a little later I went in and found Tony in the rocking

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chair at Lyndon's request. He, Lyndon, was stretched out on the massage table, having a rub, absorbing his night reading, with the TV turned on, to which he was utterly oblivious. If something comes on that he wants to hear, some extra nerve alerts him, he stops reading, turns it up, and watches it. Otherwise, the noise doesn't seem to bother him in the least. Me, it drives mad! It was, however, one of the earliest nights in a long time for him. By midnight we were both in bed.

Lynda had called me from Grasshopper, as she has every day. I think possibly she's lonesome. She told me that she had found a skeleton that was probably seven hundred years old, the archeologist told her. That would place it pre-Columbian, certainly, probably in the Thirteenth Century. She was engaged in very carefully scraping the bones to get off the encrustations of seven hundred years of dirt and pebbles. I gathered that she found that not the most exciting work in the world, and it seems that in every conversation she tells me, "Mama, we get up at 6 o'clock in the morning."