

3a Av. Sur #10, Antigua, Guatemala
Sat. December 8, 1971

Darling Auntie Nanny:- I now have two letters from you to answer, which is very pleasant. Trouble is I can't find the one you wrote before that of Dec 31. All I can remember about it is that you sounded disappointed XM about our not stopping to see Sra. Blum and the Gov. of Chiapas on our way down here. We had every intention of doing so but got inefficient about the insurance on our car & possessions, so that, if we'd stopped, our Mexican insurance would have run out. I don't know if you two have ever driven down here. If so you would know that insurance must be bought for each separate country: Mexico, then Guatemala, and while engaged in this transaction, you must declare dates of frontier crossings long before you are ready to see that far ahead. But the Chiapas visit is very much on our schedule for sometime in April, which is when we head north again. That last should answer yr. question in ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ the letter we found in the mail yesterday. We had just come back from the nice hot steaming jungle of the foothills and here we return to a most unfriendly grey norte which has even the locals shivering and complaining about "el frio". Please do not worry about me and the brasero and the poisonous fumes. I keep the window or door slightly open and, even if I didn't bother with ~~XXXXXX~~ precautions, these hpuses are anyway so leaky & let in so much outside air that there should be no danger.

I'm so glad the dress arrived. I had it sent by air mail because any other form of transportation seems to insure that the object will either get lost or take 3 years to reach destination. I had rather hoped you would accept the shirt as a present, maybe to make up for the ~~XXXX~~ meals we wanted to give you last summer and never got around to (mostly because Creighton was always on the premises). If you insist on paying, then here's the score: Shirt \$10, P.O. \$2. If you're afraid of cheques in the mail, then let's forget it. This fear you have in common with my mother, who wrote that she'd love to give me something for Christmas but ---- Uncle Tommy and Auntie Do both sent me chques with no problems; also Phil pays all our bills from here and (knock on wood) not one has yet gone astray. ~~XXXXXX~~ Who spread this idea around about the danger of mailing cheques? I'm about to write to my brother David in time for his birthday and may include a mild query re this matter.

Mama specializes in cliff-hangers in her letters. A few weeks ago she told me she had just been to "Bill"'s funeral -- no last name. Yesterday's letter announced that Shirley & Betty have sold "the Cape property". What does this mean? They've sold Grandpa's farm? if so, to whom? and why? & Don't bother answering these questions. I'll present them to Mama herself -- along with my usual plea that she not write on both sides of air-mail paper.

As is my wont after a visit to a finca, I am covered with bites -- garrapatas, I am told, or ticks. Things like OFF and 6-12 act on me more like an insect attractor than a repellent. I've heard of one effective repellent made by the Cutter Lab's in California and wrote to our druggist in Croton asking for a supply. Nothing has happened and now I hear that Abercrombie & Fitch carries it. This very moment PB is on his way to the Correo with a request to A&F. In the end I may wind up with 12 bottles of the stuff. But that won't hurt anyone's feelings as the whole female white population here (how come the guys escape?) is scratching away at nicely infected bites of various sizes and degrees of discomfort. The same people who put us on to Abercrombie told us that an excellent repellent is the swallowing, once a day, of a capsule of cod-liver oil. Have you ever heard of this? No I'll try anything and PB is carrying a message, carefully written out in Spanish, for the Farmacia.

Between the cold and the itching I find it hard to think and I'd better stop. Also PB has just got back a huge bunch of colour transparencies from the processor and I am supposed to examine them (after I've asked the cook or someone to give my back and sides a spraying of whatever-you-call it, a "Tropical Anesthetic" prescribed by the local doctor). Much love