6037 Ramshorn Pl.
McLean, VA 22101

12 Mar 79

My dear, my dear -

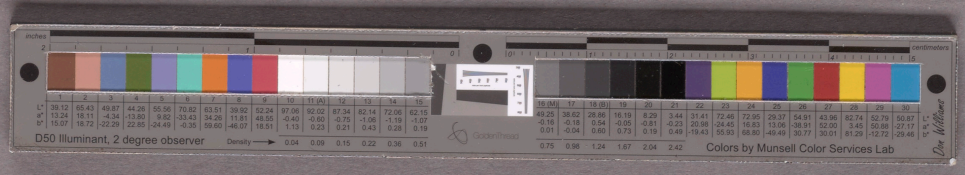
Your letter of 22 Nov 78 just reached me. I know things may have since changed mightily for you, but the pain in it, the word-for-word identity with the outcries in my own notebooks, the physical crap, the sense of loss, loss, loss---and the demonstration of loss, the dull repetitions, wings gone, the whole goddam bag...

Anyway, I tried at once to call you and found of course that your number was reserved. OK, so she's still alive and still in Seattle. Just have to write. (Two days of digging the typewriter out from under a heap of unsigned tax forms, moss-grown urgent pleas from agent, crud unending. Even ribbon no good. Anyway, if this kind of thing helps you, know that your distress impelled a fellow-human to shovel out 48-hours of chores that were my excuse for not writing...If the "48 hours" puzzles you, it's because Tiptree really did die, you know, last year, and I just shut up the study and only opened it to throw mail in...My husband Ting, who is being driven to unwelcome insights into the nutty souls of writers, understood at last and let me lock myself into the place and sleep in my clothes in two-hour snatches, and live on drugs and milk and coffee and peanut-butter until the job got done.)

Well, I hadn't meant to start with so much personal stuff, but to get at once to what may have been bugging you since last winter; in fact, you may not even be speaking to me---I hope, until you get the explanation. The fact which must be most important to you is this: Re this business of my shipping all Tiptree's life and papers to Bowling Green---NOBODY HAS READ YOUR LETTERS. Nobody is reading your letters, nobody will read your letters---in fact, at present, nobody can read your letters. Your letters to Tip (and me) are in closed binders, like everyone else's, and all that can be read is your name on the spine of the binder(s). Which are, by the way, purple. I color-code, because of my poor vision; Quinn is green-and-yellow, Ursula is pearl-grey, Harrison is a plain blue, Vonda is---I forget now; you are purple. The whole works, all my mss, notes, correspondence, even my stacks of fanzines, repose in some kind of order in sealed cartons in the basement of an honorable man in another city, identified only by number cued to a private list. The honorable man is Jeff Smith, who actually is; I've tested him over ten years and found him so. Odd but true.

You see, being dead, I decided to accede to Bowling Green's request and do as I'd promised, ship everything to them, under seal, and then have each correspondent queried to assign a date on which their letters could be read. 10, 50, 100 years, whatever. The one thing I will not fo is burn them. I've had enough burning; did I mention I'd flung drafts of 5 or 6 stories and 2/3rds of a novel into the stive this summer? Ting came in and caught me and knocked me down and put his arm into the fire, but they were gone. Too bad; one was decent.

However, being not only dead but mad, I neglected to tell anyone about this, and simply left everything to Jeff. He, being sensible, viewed matters with some misgiving, and tried to "sound out" people's feelings. Unfortunately, one of his "sounding-boards" was badly chosen---I was surprised myself when I found how idiotic he had been---the "soundee", I mean, not Jeff. Anyway, he proved a master of cheery garble, and got everyone in a state by leaving out the essential point, the fact of everything being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unread and sealed up and going to remain that way indefinetely pending the author's explicit consent. I understand he raised quite a dust, and that many people---or perhaps only one, you know how runours grow---loathe me. Anyway, I shall put a note in LOCUS giving the facts, and later on we can devise some form to send 'round.

The thing is, among all the mundane chitchat and personal trivia, my correspondents periodically emitted flashes or pages and paragraphs of brilliance and truth, and I will not destroy the kernels with the chaff. Moreover, the lot as a whole give a funny, perfectly complete complete picture of the whole ten years from birth to destruction, of a tiny little episode in sf history....Ideal grist for some post-fusion PKD's green little paws.

Now back to you, girl.---Oh. Forgot one thing. Jeff was prevented from doing a more complete job by the mortal illness of his (young) mother. He had to skimp on coming over here from Baltimore and spending the days racking, etc. I think he did very well to bring Bowling Green to a crashing halt and get the stuff sealed and stored.

(God it was strange to come home to an empty, voiceless room...where Tip had once lived and worked. Maybe refreshing, we'll see.)

Now really back to you. But what can I say to you, not knowing "who" you are now? I suspect I know, of course. We are much alike in many ways; you are having prematurely, because of your back, what hit me ten years later in slow-motion....There is no answer, no meaning. Life is death. Brief diagnostic: As long as you still <u>desire</u> <u>anything</u>---beyond death at once, I mean---no matter how crazy; inparticular, if you still want to <u>do</u> anything, like writing, or washing drip-dry, for that matter, <u>you</u> are still there and things will improve, though it may take some technology. The sitting and staring dull-eyed at horrors, and finally, at nothing, that is bad. That you do not do. The sleeping 10-12 hours is partly physical need---things have exhausted you; partly an attempt to die, partly laziness and procrastination, and mostly the expression of a dilemma. You want A but you can't have A unless you do B, and you can't do B because you hate it or it bores you; so you sleep. (Which will do you no harm, so long as you are also physically active enough to halt atrophy.)

The ~~irremiable~~ irremediable longing for lost youth and magic and meaning is of course the human condition----for those of us with minds; "Life is a process of disinheritance," my old-lady music teacher said to me when I was 14 and bowed down with sourceless woe. She was, I now realise, perhaps 38 or 42.

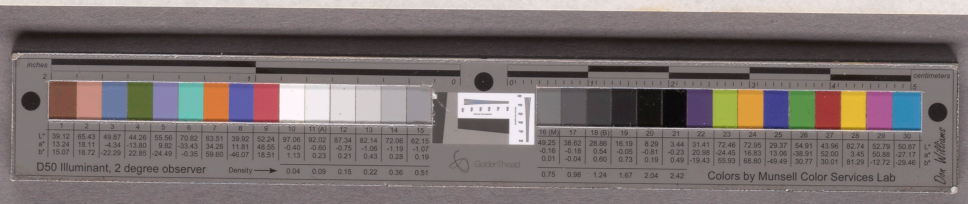
The physiological aspects of depression---which can sometimes be helped---are just coming into science. I was lucky in finding a shrink who finally found a "human" psychiatrist with a pharmocopeia. (Most psychiatrists, as you know, are fossilised sophomores with stainless-steel heads.) When I find out if we're still speaking, we'll go into all that if you want. But nothing is clear-cut; among other things there is always our old friend the placebo effect....Something genuine is there, however. I've spent my life popping pills to try to live, or recapture life, and these pills seem better. (Luckily I had the sense to stay away from the hard stuff.)

Enough? Enough to show I know and care?

In a way, I'm glad I couldn't get your phone and had to write this. Scribble me a word. I know it will reflect only the current 10 seconds of your changeable soul, but do.

Love.

Nameless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