

Tuesday, December 1

Dear Bob,

Last night the phone rang, about 5:45 - and I heard Mom say "Jane, why aren't you in the hospital?" - as she has been saying the past couple of weeks. The baby was due, the doctor said, November 30, but first babies are often late. But Jane was in the hospital - in fact, she was calling from the recovery room. The baby - a girl, 7 lb. 4 oz. - was born at 4:33 yesterday afternoon! They aren't sure of a name yet - trying to find one they both like that will sound right with Ash. They were both hoping for a girl. Craig was with her until the very end when there was a little difficulty - and then they led him back in again. Jane sounded wonderful. I wish I could have seen her father when he heard.

Dorothy Jane was describing Josh and Reven's Halloween costumes to us - Josh was a Pleasant Fungus Beetle (that's really its name) and Reven was a Horse Fly. The bodies were of flexible cardboard laced in front so they could get in and out and the wings were also of cardboard. They wore black skullcaps with wire antennae and black tights on their legs - and Josh insisted on walking hunched over the whole time because beetles can't walk upright. Last year he was some other insect and cried because his legs wouldn't bend in the right directions.

I took out an anthology of British-American sonnets - Renaissance - modern - from the school library today. I love the sonnet - both because of the form and the patterns of rhyme and thought it contains and because of the many good and great ones in the English language. Anyway - I was showing it to John on the way home - so from the time we left school until we arrived home, he had me reading sonnets to him - some he knew or I knew already; some he asked for by author -

Edna St. Vincent Millay and Christina Rossetti, for example - and asked me to read some of their unfamiliar ones. Many turned out to be love poems, especially those by Millay and Rossetti, and I almost teased him about it but decided it would be wiser at this time not to. The other day, since we had been talking about literary critics, especially interpreters of Red Badge of Courage, I loaned him Poor Perplex (is that all right with you?) and read snatches of some of the titles, sketches of authors, and beginnings of a couple of essays. Both times were fun - and I think I should try to have something to read and laugh at or otherwise enjoy and talk about while we drive - then we can't remember and gripe about things in school and make ourselves feel worse. I know! I'll read Alice in Wonderland to him. Do you know he has never read it?

Looking through the ~~poor~~ book, I just found one for you, when you go writing. The author is John Daniel of Hereford (c. 1563 - 1618)

The author Telling These Homely Meats
Specially, Viz. Cream, Pancakes, Battered
Pippin - Pies (Laugh, Good People), and
Tobacco; Thrit to That Morthy And
Virtuous Gentlewoman, Whom He called
Mistress, As Followeth

If there were, oh! an Hellespord of cream
Between us, milk-white misters, I would swim
To you, to show to both my love's extreme,
Sunder-like, - yea! dive from brim to brim.
But need I with a battered pippin-pie
Floating upon't, that would I make my boat
To waft me to you without jeopardy,
Though seasick I might be while it did float.
Yea if a storm should rise, by night or day,
Of sugar-snows and hail of caravays,
Then, if I found a pancake in my way,

I like a plank should bring me to your knees,
Which having found, if they tobacco kept,
The smoke should dry me well
before I slept.

I keep returning to and reading several by
Gerard Manley Hopkins. It's difficult - and
many I never understand, but a few strike so
closely that I think of Lewis's quatrain about
our praise for those who move us
in story, poem, or art - "means, when all's
said, you break my heart."

I really must finish this, do a bit
more work, and go to bed - there is loads I'd
like to write, but sleep is a necessity,
and so, unfortunately, is work.

Stay well. Be happy.

Love,
Luis