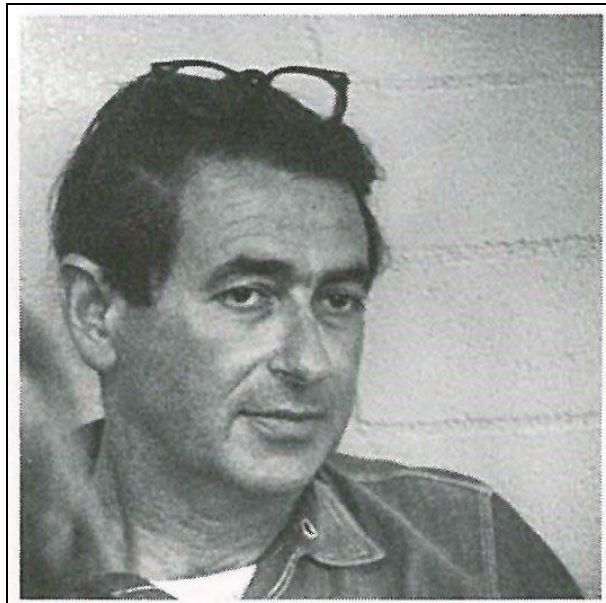


LUCKY LUCIANO

That's how he sometimes signed his letters. I called him Dr. Marquis at first, then later, Lucian. We met at the Honors College of the University of Oregon (the first honors college in the United States) sometime in the early sixties—it must have been after he became director in 1962, because he was in England when I entered as a freshman in the fall of 1960.



Lucian Marquis

Lucian Marquis was born in 1921, which made him twenty years older than me. He was a dark-haired, handsome man of medium height, with courtly manners and a cultured, European point of view. I remember him as speaking with a soft lisp, though I don't think he really lisped, and as wearing soft wide-wale corduroy trousers that called to mind the velveteen pants worn by Oliver Mellors, the gamekeeper in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Which is a roundabout way of saying that I found the man attractive.

Lucian had the nose, mouth, eyes, and quizzical eyebrows of his first cousin, the fashion photographer Helmut Newton. Both Lucian and his cousin Helmut were born in Germany. Lucian told me that when as an adult he visited Stuttgart,

his birthplace, he could still make out the faded letters on the building that had housed the family business—Markowitz, I believe, was their name, and the business possibly a furniture store.

Lucian left Germany as a schoolboy, sent to Italy, alone, by his father to escape the Nazis. He said in an interview many years later: “I suddenly discovered when Hitler came to power that I was a Jew.” He lived in Rome and spoke Latin at first (something I didn’t know until I watched an interview with his son recorded on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Honors College) because he did not know Italian when he arrived. The Italians must have called him Luciano.

Lucky Luciano to be out of Hitler’s grasp. Not comparable to the mafioso Charles “Lucky” Luciano, however. Lucian’s nature was nothing like a gangster’s (though his middle name, coincidentally, was Charles), so his penchant for calling himself after a mobster was a kind of joke. It might also have been a subtle way of competing with the shocking fashion photographs his cousin Helmut produced—lascivious, elegant, and menacing at the same time. In one of his letters to me, Lucian compared his cousin with the photographer Lartigue, both claiming to love women but having “an edge . . . that speaks of the darker recesses of the soul.”

In the late thirties, Lucian’s father moved his whole family to Beverly Hills. “I’d never worn a pair of long trousers, I’d never gone out with a girl, I didn’t speak English,” Lucian told a reporter in 1991, when he retired after fifty years of teaching. Lucian learned English, graduated from high school, and embarked on an academic career. After a year at UCLA, which he called a factory (I thought it was more like a glorified high school), he entered Black Mountain College, a small, experimental school in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina.

Black Mountain was a haven for intellectuals and artists. I envied Lucian for having gone there. A study of Black Mountain, published in 2003, quotes Lucian as saying that he “played poker, wrote poetry, and started painting.” Lucian’s painting teacher was Josef Albers, who had taught at the Bauhaus and who escaped with his wife Anni from Germany to Black Mountain. Lucian said, “Josef Albers fulminating against ‘self-expression’ taught us the discipline of the minimal tools to be used, the discipline of color.” Others from the Bauhaus visited Black Mountain while Lucian was there, including Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer. Later, notables such as Buckminster Fuller joined the faculty, also Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, Willem de Kooning, Roger Sessions, and Lou Harrison. Lucian met his wife, Jane Slater, a stained-glass artist, at Black Mountain.

Lucian graduated from Black Mountain in 1942, after the United States entered World War II. He joined the war effort by monitoring German radio broadcasts, then signed up with the army. After the war, he earned master’s and doctor’s degrees in political science from UCLA. He said that he became a

political scientist because war had been “such a terrible experience.” Lucian organized teach-ins against the Vietnam War in the sixties and against the war in Iraq in the nineties. He joined the faculty at the University of Oregon in 1954, as professor of political science. He became a professor at Pitzer College in Claremont, California, in 1966.

Lucian was well-versed in European culture and worked to pass that knowledge on to his students. One of the courses he planned, for example, was “a freshman seminar on ‘The Mediterranean’—cross cultural and across time beginning with the *Odyssey* as the prototypical Mediterranean travel tale . . . and ending with *Death in Venice* and the questions why the Mediterranean is so attractive to Northerners.” Lucian liked to send me (and others) reading lists, which he called grab-bags. Once I mentioned that I didn’t know the words to the song Marlene Dietrich’s character Lola Lola sings in the film *Der Blaue Engel* (the English name for the song is “Falling in Love Again”). Lucian wrote some of the lyrics for me on a yellow legal pad that I keep folded in an old wallet:

<i>Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss</i>	I am, from head to toe
<i>Auf Liebe eingestellt</i>	Ready for love
<i>Ich kann halt lieben nur</i>	I can only love
<i>Und sonst gar nicht.</i>	And nothing else besides.
<i>Männer umschwirren mich</i>	Men surround me
<i>Wie Motten um das Licht.</i>	Like moths to the flame.
<i>Und wen sie verbrennen,</i>	And when they burn,
<i>Ja dafür kann ich nicht.</i>	Yes, I can’t help it.

Lucian and I both went to Italy on Fulbright scholarships in 1965–1966. He had lectured on comparative political institutions and political sociology at the University of Exeter in England on a Fulbright five years earlier. Jane Marquis told me about discovering to her horror that their English charwoman, rather than clean up the “spills” the men left around the toilet, had merely waxed over them—layer upon layer of preserved piss.

In Italy, Lucian and Jane lived in Torino, where he lectured at the university and researched the Italian socialist workers’ movement after World War I. (Or I think that’s what it was.) I once took the train from Bergamo, where I was living, and had coffee with Lucian in a shop along one of Torino’s elegant arcaded streets. In 1970, when my husband and I traveled to Italy, we visited Jane and Lucian at the flower-bedecked cottage they had rented for years during their frequent stays in Florence. Lucian drew up a list of nearby hilltowns we should see, and Jane advised me that I could find hand-printed decorative papers based on traditional Italian woodblock designs in a shop near the Piazza della Signorina.

Later, when I lived in Venice, California, I used to visit Lucian and Jane in Claremont. They lived in a two-story Spanish-style house at the side of a country road. The house had a comfortable living room, shaded by a yard full of old trees, a kitchen where pots hung from a rack and where Jane cooked delicious dinners, and an upstairs bathroom whose curtainless window looked out on the trees and the fields beyond their property. Jane had a studio in the backyard, and Lucian had a water-lily pond he was proud of. Their two children were named Josh and Annie. Josh was a precocious child who didn't hesitate to butt into adult conversations. He ended up as an attorney. Annie was a shy lover of animals who turned out to be an artist.

After Lucian had a heart attack sometime in the 1970s, his doctor prescribed olive oil and exercise, so he used to bicycle the forty-eight miles from his home in Claremont to visit his mother in Westwood. He cycled to my house on the Venice canals at least once during that period. When in 1989 I quit my job, left Los Angeles, and moved to my family's cabin at Crescent Lake in Oregon, Lucian sent this note of encouragement: "I think you are very brave to start 'a new life' and I promise to send you words & encouragement from the world 'out there.'" Among the seventeen authors on the "grab-bag of mountain-isolation readings" that accompanied his note were Arnold Zweig, André Gide, Paul Bowles, Tatyana Tolstaya, Mikhail Bulgakov, and J. M. Coetzee.

I spent the winter of 1989–1990 in Eugene, first with my mother, then in an apartment near her place. The next summer I went back to the cabin, and Lucian sent more encouragement. Our letters mostly discussed books we were reading. I wrote about one of the pieces I was writing and told him that I would be in Santa Monica that fall to do a job at the Rand Corporation and that I hoped to visit him in Claremont.

[June 28, 1990]

Dear Charlotte, I seem to have lost your mountain address and still hope this will reach you. Encouraging words: you are a brave woman to pull up your roots and start a new life. Also, if I can be of help to you—reading your writing, suggesting publishing plans (I have some experience in this—helped a friend of mine Linda Morton place some stories in the *Northwest Review*—I also know the editor of the *North American Review*, Robley Wilson, who published one of my stories last year)—so show me some of your stuff.

We were in Eugene briefly in October (you were in your mountain fastness). Jane was there to install some 40 plus panels in the science library at the U of O. I hope you have a chance to see them—each one contains a significant and/or amusing quotation.

I found Eugene cosmopolitan, civilized, a good place to be except for the continuous gray skies. Most of my contemporaries are retired which I

find somewhat depressing—maybe after the next academic year 90-91 I too am facing mandatory retirement (at 70 and after 44 years of teaching) though in fact I have all kinds of schemes to keep me going.

Annie is the author of the pears above [the stationery is decorated with a drawing]. Jane is working on some big projects (churches). Josh is now a defense lawyer in Eugene (Horton & Koenig)—he and I are going to the Soviet Union at the beginning of August—on a people to people tour—will be staying with a Ukrainian family in Kiev for part of the time.

The summer is unfolding nicely—I am doing a lot of reading.

Tatyana Tolstoya, *On the Golden Porch* (she is a very young Soviet writer & surrealistic & funny).

Ward Just, *The Congressman Who Loved Flaubert*—a series of political stories. He has another book, *Honor, Power, Riches, Fame, and the Love of Women* which I also like very much.

John Banville, *The Book of Evidence*, a very disturbing book by an Irish writer—I could supply you with a long list if you want to—but first you must write & tell me what you want (or whether reading interferes with writing).

Jane joins me in sending affectionate greetings—Lucian

General Delivery
Crescent Lake, OR 97425
July 25, 1990

Dear Lucian,

How wonderful to find an envelope with your handwriting on it at the post office today! Your letter doesn't have a date on it, but the envelope is postmarked June 28—what a long time the post office took to forward it!

I've been back at the cabin since April 30, although it doesn't seem like nearly three months already. I too have been doing a lot of reading, mostly authors I hadn't managed to get to before, such as Balzac, Henry Adams, Galsworthy. I fell in love with Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*, which I am now reading for the second time. Last winter I "discovered" Elias Canetti's memoirs, partly as a result of a Canetti contest the Daedalus book catalog held (I was a runner up, won a gift certificate). Canetti's writing makes me feel he was the literary mentor I never had. Lately, I've very much enjoyed *Life: A User's Manual*, which you wouldn't expect to be a page-turner, consisting as it does of minute descriptions of the interiors and inhabitants of an apartment building in Paris (have you read it?). I've also recently reread Joyce's *Ulysses*, which I remember struggling through with a dictionary in my early twenties, but found quite amusing this time around, though cerebral. I haven't read the book by Tatyana Tolstaya you mentioned, but she had an article in the *New York Review of Books* (May 31) which I enjoyed, on

why Soviet women aren't feminists (you probably saw it, too). Last year I read a good deal of Dostoyevsky and all the Heinrich Böll I could find, and did a structural analysis of Bruce Chatwin's *Utz*, for my own edification and amusement. I imagine you've read it and know how wonderful it is—and how topical, with the political events of last year. Two by Vaclav Havel, his letters to his wife from prison and *Disturbing the Peace*, are on my list.

Thank you for the offer of help with publishing my work. I hope you're doing more writing yourself—I really liked the piece you sent me last summer. If it sounds like I've been doing more reading than writing, that's probably right, but I continue with John Gardner's and Dorothea Brande's fiction writing exercises. I just came up with a children's story that I think is marketable, and am now working on a long memory piece about October 1962. It starts out with the Columbus Day storm (I wasn't here but am relying on imagination and other people's memories; if you would like to contribute a memory or two, I'd be glad); this connects with the cabin (it was in the path of the storm) and then with the chateau in the south of France, Languedoc, where I was staying at the time; it ends with the Cuban missile crisis at the end of the month. I'm interested to discover memory lapses—for example, I remember both the front and back of the chateau as facing south!—which I'm using, without trying to find out the true facts. I'll let you see this piece when it's finished.

Unfortunately, my imaginative writing time is going to be cut short this year. I have a contract to write a chapter for someone at Rand, which will take me to Santa Monica for four days in August and then for the whole month of September. This will provide my finances with a timely infusion of cash, as well as giving me a chance to see friends and socialize. I'll give you a call and hope to find you free for a visit before I head back north. Actually, I'm hoping the project will spill over into October and November, as long as I'm down there.

Greetings to Jane. I visited the science library in Eugene last winter and loved her stained glass pieces. Her name wasn't on them anywhere, however—I hope that's been fixed. I've had some luck with arugula and basil in my pots on the porch, but still no blossoms on my fancy French tomato plants. They tell me everyone who comes to central Oregon thinks tomatoes, because of the intense sun, but then they give up, because of the short growing season, late frosts, etc.

Herbs and tomatoes and sun remind me to tell you I'm once again working on a plan to go live in Rome for a while. A friend has a small editing business there, and we're trying to arrange for me to do some work for her from here, which I hope will turn into work there. Rome would be quite a change from the peace and quiet of the mountains, but I think I could easily move between the two settings, and the solitary life needs breaking up once in awhile.

I envy you the trip to the Soviet Union. Have you taken a crash course in Russian? Are you stopping off in Berlin (how could you resist?)? Will the program supply geiger counters in Kiev? I'll look forward to a complete report when I see you this fall.

Love, Charlotte

P.S. Penny Allen has written a wonderful book based on her life in Sisters over a period of five years. It's called *Secret Lives* [published as *Geography of Saints* in 2001] and has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. She's still looking for a publisher, so don't look for it yet, but I'll keep you posted.

I called Lucian from Santa Monica but did not have time to drive to Claremont for a visit. After my work at Rand ended, I drove north to stay with a friend in Oakland. In the spring of 1991, I moved back to the cabin, and Lucian's and my correspondence resumed. As summer approached, Lucian traveled to Bend to see his son Josh, who was district attorney there, and then drove down to Crescent Lake to visit me. I had hoped to show off the lake and the cabin, maybe go swimming, at least enjoy the trees and the view. But the day of his visit, it rained cats and dogs and we could hardly see the lake from the cabin. I made cauliflower soup with fennel seeds and was dismayed to see how Lucian's hands shook. He was already exhibiting signs of Parkinson's disease.

Claremont, Ca 91711
May 9, 1991

Dear Charlotte—how good it was to hear your voice and to talk with you, old friend. I meant to send you an invitation to my “blast” but did not do so because I didn't have your Eugene address and had misplaced the Oakland one.

In any event, enclosed a belated invitation, and a copy of the *North American Review* with my journal starting on p. 72.

The last year of full-time teaching has been wonderfully intense. First of all because Jane was working on the windows for the Church of the Nativity in Rancho Santa Fe—now installed and luminous. Then my courses particularly a seminar for seniors on “Politics & Religion” which met once a week at my house—actually my coming full circle because I had written my dissertation on this topic—and the students were particularly interested and involved, writing on everything from “The Influence of Voodoo & Catholicism on the Politics of Haiti” to “Welfare in Islam” and “American Fundamentalism and Right-wing Politics” etc.

Then I also organized a seminar on Soviet culture which included such people as Michael Heim (the translator of Milan Kundera) and others—also involving a fair amount of entertaining.

To celebrate my “retirement” (though in fact I continue to teach next year) the college organized a series of dinners in which former students of mine came back and gave public lectures—one on the Chevalier D’Eon, a French diplomat and spy of the XVIIIth century who decided in mid-life that he was a woman—but just that—no homosexual inclination—perhaps a model for Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*? Another student—part-Japanese now teaching at the University of Chicago gave a talk about Japan in the months of the dying Emperor—her book is about to be published by Pantheon.

Another spoke on Gifford Pinchot and still another on “surrogate motherhood” genetic engineering.

And then there was the war in the Gulf which, in spite of all the yellow ribbons, flags and self-congratulations was, I believe, a criminal mistake. I organized a teach-in on December 7—before the horrible killing began and some of the people who had spoken in Eugene in March 1965 at that teach-in against the war in Vietnam were there as well.—Am working on a paper drawing parallels between totalitarianism & total war—one thousand Iraqi dead for every American killed—and now the Kurds being transformed into latter-day Palestinians.

Well, the only way to encompass all this is to sit around a table & talk and perhaps we shall be able to do that.

I am enclosing a Russian literature reading list prepared by Michael Heim.

In full expectation of a long letter from you I send you affectionate greetings to which Jane & Annie add their salutations.

Tante belle cose — Lucian

P.O. Box 57
Crescent Lake, OR 97425
May 20, 1991

Dear Lucian,

I went out in a snowstorm last Thursday and found your package in my new post office box (see above). Thanks for sending the whole magazine, which gives me extra reading material, and for the Russian reading list. Did you hear that Joseph Brodsky is to be our new poet laureate come September?

I started a letter to you as soon as I got back from the post office, but I managed to destroy it this morning because, to put it simply, I’d given the new letter the same file name as the one I wrote you last summer, and when I loaded the old one onto the system, it erased the new one. Sigh. So I’m starting over.

Your article is fascinating, and I like the way you give equal weight to Josh’s observations. My only complaint is that the article isn’t long enough! I want to read more. One question: could the mystifying “Americans” in the group of Soviet soldiers (bottom left, pg. 74) have

originally been “Georgians” whose nationality got changed in editing? If so, fie on the U. of Northern Iowa editorial staff! I’m a pretty good editor, but there are lots who aren’t. For example, there was the fellow I once hired to work on a rush project who insisted on deleting the last “per second” in a figure expressing the rate of acceleration of an object, which was so many “feet per second per second.” This was in an article by the former head of the NRC, so it could have been pretty embarrassing.

My piece on the Columbus Day storm and related events (e.g., my sojourn in Languedoc, which caused me to miss the storm) is about ready to go, except for checking some details. I’ll send it to you shortly. In the meantime, I’m enclosing a piece I wrote for fun (remember how scholars used to write dialogues based on classical models?). It’s whatever the literary equivalent of a chef’s amuse gueule would be, so I hope you enjoy it.¹ It goes with a drawing of a salt shaker and a pepper mill inclining toward each other, which I think I showed you last summer. If the copy machine at the store is working, I’ll enclose a copy of the drawing.

Today is a glorious central Oregon day. I promised myself I wouldn’t complain if the weather was rainy all summer, since the lake is as low as it was at the end of last season and the snowpack was very poor this year. But it’s nice to see the sun and the brilliant blue sky, after several days of cold weather. Thursday it snowed all day and didn’t get above 34 degrees outside. That made it hard to heat the cabin, which was only 43 when I got up. Friday morning everything was covered in a blanket of snow—very beautiful—though it didn’t last after the sun came out around 2 o’clock. Today it’s warmed up so I can afford to let the fire go out until this evening. I dislike feeling obliged to chop firewood every day, but you have to if you keep a fire going all day long.

I know you find it strange that I’m up here alone, but I’m sure if you saw the cabin and the beautiful setting it would be more understandable. Besides, as I think I’ve told you, I find it impossible to get any work done when anyone else is around. So I’m free to be productive up here. Also, writing letters, which is my main means of personal contact, is excellent practice for writing other things. I came upon a wonderful quote by Martin Buber in a hefty tome (*Existential Psychotherapy*, by Irvin Yalom) I read this past winter, from which I’m stealing the phrase “monologists with mirrors” for my next project. I’ve also brought up a nice pile of books (the Eugene Public Library lets you check out six books for a month), including my first Peter Handke (*Repetition*). His writing is so wonderful I thought at first I shouldn’t read the book while I’m trying to write my own things, but I couldn’t stop myself. He’ll surely be nominated for a Nobel Prize one day, if he hasn’t been already.

I’m sorry to have missed your big celebration, but I just couldn’t stay in California any longer—I was spending too much money It sounds as if you all had a terrific time, and I make a solemn vow to be at your next one, no matter what! One thing I want you to know, Lucian, is that

¹ “Dialogue of Salt and Pepper.”

I've always measured my friends—silently, in my heart of hearts—by how well they would fit in with you and Jane. Your life, together and separately, the things you eat, the places you travel, the houses you live in, the people you know, the books you read, all make up my image of an ideal (though of course not perfect) way of living. I think I've felt, since getting to know you, what is it now, twenty-six years counting from 1965 when we were all in Italy together, that if I could find friends who were compatible with your life, I would be on the way to achieving such a life for myself. It's been very hard to find men who pass that test, though I've been more fortunate with my women friends. (I realize I haven't mentioned your courtly airs and I don't mean to slight them, but that would really be asking too much of someone else!)

I liked the suggestion in your letter of sitting around a table and discussing things, and I share your hope that we can do so before too long. Please think seriously about visiting Josh in Bend this summer, which is close enough that I might be able to entice you here for a rest in the trees, a swim in the clear (cold) lake, and something good to eat and drink. Please give my affectionate greetings to Jane and Annie, and let me hear from you again.

Love, Charlotte

6/2/91

Dear Charlotte, just the briefest of notes—but first many thanks for the most touching of letters [referring to mine of May 20]. (And thanks for *Sale e Pepe*.) The *viva voce* part seems in the realm of the possible. I am leaving here June 10 to drive with a friend to Seattle & plan to make my way down through Portland, Eugene and Bend & hope to visit with you. The details haven't been worked out whether by car, bus or horseback. I will probably be in your neck of the woods the week of June 17. How do I reach you? Find you?

I very much look forward to seeing you — Lucian

P.O. Box 57
Crescent Lake, OR 97425
June 21, 1991

Dear Lucian,

What a shame you couldn't have visited me today! As befits the first day of summer, the sun is bright, the sky is clear, the water is blue, and the mountain sharp and beautiful, still capped with snow. The temperature went down to 32 last night, and when I got up everything was still with not a cloud in the sky, though the wind has since come up and blown a few puffy clouds overhead. Though I'm disappointed you didn't get to see all this—or even see across the lake, for heaven's sake!—I was delighted to see you and so much enjoyed the series of half-finished conversations we had, as people do who've not seen each other for awhile. I will treasure the Canetti with your inscription listing

all the places we've known each other, and I'll save the Zinfandel for a special dinner, perhaps with Penny and her friend Paul before they leave for France in October.

As soon as you'd gone, of course, I found those references I couldn't locate earlier. First on the subject of the Chevalier d'Eon, it appears that Casanova was completely taken in by the man's disguise. Here's what he says (Jacques Casanova, *Memoirs*, Chapter XXII, "England," p. 198 [Modern Library Edition, 1929] — this might be an interesting tidbit to pass along to your former student):

"I had another letter from Chauvelin for the Comte de Guerchy, the French ambassador. ... It was at his table that I met the Chevalier d'Eon, secretary to the embassy, and of whom, a little later, all Europe was talking. The Chevalier d'Eon was a beautiful woman, who, before adopting the career of diplomacy, had been a barrister, and then a captain of dragoons. She served Louis Quinze as a valiant soldier, and a consummately skilful diplomatist. In spite of her manly intellect and airs, I had not been a quarter of an hour in her company before I knew her for a woman. Her shape was too rounded for that of a man, and her voice was too clear."

According to my 1944 Columbia Encyclopedia, although an English jury in 1777 officially judged him to be a woman, an examination of the Chevalier's body after his death proved he was a man.

As for the Czech writer from whom Pablo Neruda took his name, I found this in *The Writing on the Wall: An Anthology of Contemporary Czech Literature*, Antonin Liehm and Peter Kussi, eds. From the foreword, by Antonin Liehm, p. xii:

"The founder of the Czech feuilleton and master of the genre was Jan Neruda (1834-1891), destined to become one of the leading Czech writers and journalists of the nineteenth century (and, incidentally, destined to bequeath his name to a twentieth-century Chilean poet born as Ricardo Reyes)."

Well, so much for research. With such a beautiful day, I've decided to sit outside and read Gerald and Lee Durrell's *Practical Guide for the Amateur Naturalist*, even though I need to go to town and replenish my supply of pens, and also of quarters for the greedy payphones. I haven't gotten a response from Bend Research yet, which is discouraging. But I hope you'll decide to come back for another visit to Central Oregon (there's an airport in Redmond, you know) while I'm still here, and that we'll have better weather.

I trust you've had a safe journey and will have written something wonderful during your stay in the Bay Area. Please give my warmest greetings to Jane and Annie. And here's a recipe for you to try. I sent it to the L.A. Times but they didn't print it, so I've taken out an ad in the *Ruralite* (the magazine of the Northwest electric cooperatives) offering copies for \$2 — you can have it for free, though!

Love, Charlotte

P.S. Don't forget to send me your story about the cow.

SAN FRANCISCO – June 21, 1991

Carissima Carlotta – Dear Charlotte, thank you for the lovely hours together in your special place. You have been, and were there, and are, and continue to be enormously attractive and desirable to me and I wanted to stay and yet could not. So I think of the hours we spent together as wonderfully bitter-sweet.

Drove back to Eugene through cascading rain (the car had to be returned that evening—I arranged things badly—would you have welcomed this old alligator?) That night watched a wonderful performance of “Magic Flute” and thought much of you.

Started to make enquiries about Creative Writing Programs. There is one at U of O—headed by a poet who is, I am told, good but seldom on campus—I did meet some of the people involved in that program but was not particularly impressed—will make further enquiries particularly from my friend Jim Hall.

Yesterday left Eugene & drove all day to S.F. where I am staying with my brother. Keep writing—write & draw (I liked the free sketches you showed me –I send you wagonfulls of good wishes and love—

Lucian

July 1, 1991

Dear Lucian,

Thank you for your beautiful letter. I feel much pleasure at being appreciated and desired and thought about. To tell the truth, though, I thought you had, out of delicacy, deliberately arranged to have to be in Eugene that night. In some sense, it doesn't matter if you had made other arrangements, because that's not what happened. I have thought about it all week, though.

What you said about bitter-sweet hours reminds me of something (by May Sarton) I recently read describing an *amitié amoureuse*: “a strong echo of feeling on each side, whether uttered or not—perfume on the air of sadness, renunciation even, or the light bitter taste of a persimmon.” I don't really know whether I would have said yes to your staying, but I feel a ripening, like the persimmon, which I understand (never having tasted one) is scarcely edible unless fully ripe, if not overripe, and is the latest-ripening of all fruit.

...I should probably stop there, but I wanted to say a word or two about creative writing programs—I'm grateful to you for starting inquiries. I know what I want—someone to give me advice and encouragement, tell me what works and what doesn't and why. What I definitely don't want is to sit in a seminar with my “peers” and let them “critique” my work—i.e., rake it over the coals. I think people (the critiquers) are inclined to show off more than be helpful in that setting,

and to give the poor victim the impression that nothing about what he or she has written is any good.

I have started some new work, even though both you and Penny (she in spades) have identified what I think is a serious problem, that of holding back. (I should tell you this makes me think what I really need is a shrink, not a creative writing teacher.) And last week I fell rather into despair at the prospect of getting a job—the end of freedom and autonomy, having to devote my life to things I wouldn't otherwise even think about. ... I could go on for pages, but I'll spare you. I'm running Eugene's annual "Butte-to-Butte" 10K on the Fourth, and I imagine I'll survive that, too.

The weather has broken, and today the sky is absolutely clear, the lake like glass, the sun strong and hot. Yesterday afternoon (Sunday) came that blissful moment when the neighbors pack up and leave and silence descends on the forest. The trees and grasses are in full flower, and it smells of warm pine needles and pitch. I look forward to your next letter, and send you many tender thoughts.

Love, Charlotte

July 9, 1991

Dear Charlotte, dear friend, that was a very sweet letter—and your letters evoke so many responses that our correspondence as our conversation will be half-finished and tangential. What is the source of *amitié amoureuse*? I like that very much. May Sarton came to Black Mountain College when I was there and seemed to us very mysterious (I know more about her father who was a very distinguished historian of science). At about the same time Henry Miller appeared in the company of the painter Abraham Rattner, a handsome and wild-looking man with a great mass of hair and we all thought that Rattner was Miller—while the latter looked more like the manager of a Western Union office—and bald. Sarton, as I remember, was petite, dark and elegant.

Also I never thanked you for you (for my) birthday card—do you know the photographer Lartigue? Because if you don't I want to try to get one of his books for you. He started taking pictures practically as a toddler and retained a marvelous *élan vitale* into a very old age.

[referring to my letter of June 4] I like the title *Ouragon en Oregon* but the writing needs lots of work before sending it out. I don't want to discourage you and as you know, writing is the chiseling of hard stone, but better to be direct about all this. Right now you have two memories, their connection is not clear, and they are told in different voices. There are parts of the "chateau" sequence that I like very much—particularly the part about lying in the room watching the wall paper and the hidden door and waiting. (Perhaps removing yourself from the first person singular—and talking about her) but also expanding on the communal aspect and as I perceive it a mixture of Louis Malle's "May Fools" (did you see it?) and Alain-Fournier's *The Wanderer (Le Grand Meaulnes)*—one of the magical books—bring out the magical, incantational element. If the

chateau sequence came first and this American girl cast afloat in Europe, this girl from Oregon could be connected to the storm— Again, the pre-storm description is fine—the ominousness of it—(incidentally Jane says it was an apple tree though I remember it as a cherry tree).

I hope you will forgive me in poking around in your story. Do not despair. Write! The breadth of your reading and your response to it is indication that something very important has happened to you on your mountain retreat. I wish I could be physically there but believe me I'm there in spirit.

How did you do in the 10K? What are prospects for Bend “think tank”? Let me know if I can be of help. I'm returning the NY Review thinking that you might not have seen all of it or want it for your reference shelf.

Je t'embrasse, Luciano

P.O. Box 57
Crescent Lake, OR 97425
July 19, 1991

Dear Lucian,

I owe you answers to two letters—I think I'll start with the latest. You asked about the *amitié amoureuse* quote—it's from May Sarton's *Journal of a Solitude*, which another friend kindly sent me for Christmas and which I saved to read until I got to the cabin. She mentions her father in it, enough so I had the impression he was someone important but not to tell exactly why. Also some nice things about her mother. I find her poetry (other books) very sympathetic, but her novels don't attract me. Interesting that she came to Black Mountain. Maybe her mysteriousness had something to do with her emotional fragility (she's prone to depressions and has had several breakdowns, I believe) and her homosexuality. Loved the description of Miller's visit to Black Mountain. I remember Rattner's name from Miller's writing (I always liked him for his energy and his ability to carry an idea to the furthest extreme, also for his wonderful book about Crete). And no, I don't know anything about the photographer Lartigue (was that an r or an s?). I did, however, see a book of Helmut Newton's photographs on sale at a bookshop in Eugene, featuring Elizabeth Taylor on the cover. How much do you think he charges, in case I ever write a book and need a photograph? (Just kidding—by then I'll be too old to want one!)

Thank you for your thoughtful and careful comments on my “Ouragan” ms. Of course I'm disappointed that you find it seriously flawed, but I'm glad you liked some of it. Overall, I'm pleased with it as a product of last summer's work—I set myself several problems to solve in it, for instance, to try to imagine and evoke the Columbus Day storm without having experienced it myself (I suppose the difference in tone in the first part of the memoir stems from its being other people's memories)—and even if the piece doesn't work, I still have the satisfaction of having done it, and the pleasure of the writing experience.

I've pondered your judgment that the connection between the two parts of the memoir is not clear, and I wonder if what you're really objecting to is the lack of an overall theme (how many times did I tell clients of Phase One that was what was wrong with their work?). I realize that it's impossible to define the subject of the piece in a phrase or two, but there are actually quite a few links between the parts. (You may want to skip these next two paragraphs—I'm writing them not to try and prove you wrong but more for my own sake, since I will surely forget the thoughts your letter stimulated if I don't write them down.) The main link, which is made explicit, is that the events happen at the same time, October 1962 (that was the working title). The headline at the end helps reinforce the simultaneity of the events, as well as the geographic link between events in Oregon and in France. These were all intentional. When I finished the piece and looked it over, I was pleased to discover several implicit connections, which I had not planned, and which had just happened in the writing. For instance, windows play a major role throughout (I called the piece "Windows" at one time). In the storm sequence, they're the most dramatic announcement of the ominous event. At the chateau, they help define the character of the house, they provide a vista onto the evergreen trees (another link back to the Oregon sequence), and they help darken the stage for the ominous events in the wallpapered bedroom (this may not be obvious). The windows in Paris at the very end echo the earlier ones, and also reinforce another idea, that windows are an indicator, a "barometer," of the state of nature—they open mysteriously to presage the wind storm, the rains beat against them, they freeze over.

Storms (including the political storm of the missile crisis) also link the two parts—I see the unnaturally cold weather in Paris, and in all of Europe that winter, as part of this idea (it might have been nice to stick in a nasty Mistral to make the link at the chateau stronger, but I don't remember there being one, or even if that part of France suffers from them, and I'm sure it's impossible to check—I couldn't even confirm whether the Baltic really did freeze over that winter, for example, though I had reference librarians working on it; I decided it didn't matter, that what I remembered was the important thing). The sturdy construction—I think of it as structural integrity—of the two houses (the cabin and the chateau) is another, implicit link; both withstood, or could withstand, a severe storm. (The structure of buildings is important to me—remember, I'm thinking of a story about a man who falls in love with a house.²)

And what about the connection between the ouragan and the scene in the bedroom? To me, they're both manifestations of terror, one wild and violent, nature running amok, imposing destruction from outside; the other quiet, insidious, internal, and evil—though the men involved weren't evil people, their act of victimizing the girl was. Both events also involve silence, both involve a mysterious opening, one outward (the windows in the storm) the other inward (the wallpapered doors in the bedroom). Perhaps the similarities and contrasts between these events of terror need to be highlighted.

² See my *Stories*, "Hobby House."

I think you can see that I would not want to impose a spirit of magical communality on the story, because that's just not the way it was (want it to be truthful, though I don't care so much about factual details). I've already romanticized the story in the sense that I've not pushed the victimization theme forward (I dislike women portraying themselves as victims). I did love the setting—the old house, the beautiful countryside—and it was my first time in France, the first time I'd ever been anywhere south, so there's a good deal of magical feeling there. But I was by no means friends with the other people there, and didn't even like them very much, not to mention the men's treatment of me. So you see, you have a somewhat different story in mind than I did. I do appreciate your comments, which you can see were thought-provoking. I also appreciate your encouragement, but I don't think I'll do anything more with the manuscript except attach my “analysis” (i.e., this letter) to it and set it aside. I had hoped it might be publishable in this form, but perhaps another story will emerge from the material, later. I don't think further revisions are a good idea—at this point I can't even bear the thought of reading it again, and I could tell the last time I revised it (I think it was draft 12 or 13) that I was in danger of making it worse—like a painting you keep adding color to until the whole thing turns brown. It's important to finish things and go on. Besides, that story is old stuff to me by now, last year's project. I still have confidence in my children's book, which I've just sent out for the fifth time. I've promised myself not to give up until it's been rejected at least twelve times, and maybe not until after the twentieth rejection!

Thank you for sending me your lovely “Cow” story. I can see why it has been judged one of the best. I would never have thought of finding someone else to milk the cow—but of course that's what makes it so moving, the old woman's tears at her realization of what the soldier means. The milk spilling on the floor is by itself a powerful image, but the character's reaction makes it go deep.

Thanks also for your suggestions on places to send my salt and pepper dialogue. I must say you surprised me. I didn't think anyone liked the piece, except by brother, though I meant what I said about intending it only as an amusement for my friends. The worst verdict was “mannered and tedious” (that friend obviously didn't find it very amusing!) and someone else thought it was smutty, but my brother says she always thinks things are smutty. I might try the mime troupe, just for fun. But the drawing needs quite a bit of work, and I want them to go together.

Bend Research seems to be a bit of a bust. I wrote to the head of publications, asking whether there was a possibility of full-time work in the fall and even including an SASE for his reply, and he still didn't answer. So I called the person under him to whom he'd given my stuff (never a good sign) and she said they have an opening but don't know whether they're going to fill it. I think that's a no—it's certainly not a yes. However, I'm not too disappointed. This is because I find the idea of selling myself into servitude again—i.e., taking a permanent job, working all day at something I hate (due to my temperament, which

makes it impossible for me to enjoy doing work that's imposed on me and that has to conform to a "boss's" tastes, not mine), giving up evenings, weekends, and holidays; with luck, maybe getting one or two weeks off a year, if there are no pressing deadlines (and there nearly always are)—I find this idea so poisonous, I've decided I'd better not submit to it unless absolutely necessary. So I have devised a "go for broke" plan that will allow me to continue this way of life for at least two more years, and to continue to spend my summers here at the cabin, which I truly love.

I'm sure the change you noted in me stems from my living a life that pleases me, and not wasting my days performing tasks that are odious to me. I've been reading Borges, who tells of the library job he had for many years that involved fifty people doing the work of fifteen. So he got his work done in an hour and spent the rest of the day in the stacks, writing. Perhaps I should send you my résumé, in case you hear of a similar sinecure (the next best thing to a trust fund!), and also since you didn't even know I had a graduate degree. (Not good enough for Rand, though; they now require their writers to have an "advanced degree"—i.e., Ph.D.—which is why I couldn't get a job there even if I wanted to go back to LA, which I don't.)

Now, anything else? I don't think so. The weather has turned clear and warm and beautiful, after two days of hard rain. One of my tomato plants has at least eight blossoms—success at last, or almost—and the arugula was doing fine until Musca [my cat] sat in the pot where it was growing. Having dispelled the poisonous prospect of having to go back to work from my mind, I feel free to smile and enjoy these days.

The 10K went very well, my training on the cabin road, at this altitude and with 15 hills, proved to be a great idea. I could have gone quite a bit faster, had a lot left at the end, and wished I had pushed more, though I'd followed my race plan exactly. I was planning to run in another one on August 3, but my knee is bothering me, so I may wait. Having gone to all the trouble of getting in shape, I'd like to try at least once more—this could be the year I finally break 60 minutes! One thing about starting slow is that you can always get faster.

Now I must sign off, drive to the post office, and get back to work. I have several projects going and none of them near finished, which means I've nothing as yet to show for this summer's work—except some interesting paragraphs and an Ace bandage on my knee!

Love, Charlotte

July 30, 1991

Dear Charlotte, Your thoughtful letter deserves a prompter response—my excuse is that I wanted to find Lartigue's photos for you—though the present book doesn't do him justice both because of the quality of the reproductions and the selection. Still his enormous *joi de vivre* does come through. He loved women in a "pure" way and here the comparison with my cousin Helmut is telling (he too claims that he loves

women) but there is an edge there with him that speaks of the darker recesses of the soul. I am thinking particularly of two photos of Lartigue which are not in this collection—one taken very early of his cousin jumping or rather flying through the air—the other of one of his wives sitting on the toilet. (Helmut told me on his last visit that he is writing his autobiography and that he has been offered a 300 thousand dollar advance—so much for having your picture taken—though June, his wife of 45 years whose professional name is Alice Springs, may do you the honor.)

Your analysis of your own work and that of others is most impressive—I think you have a fine critical bent and should mine that to the fullest. Which brings me back to writing programs and such. The other reason that I have been slow in writing is that we've had a whole series of "house guests" beginning with Jim Hall and ending this week with the German women friends (I may have told you about them—one a distinguished feminist editor and journalist—who could not stand the idea of German hegemony and have come to the U.S. and settled in Berkeley).

You may remember Jim—he taught creative writing at Oregon—is the author of several novels & a poet—a discoverer and mentor of Ken Kesey (he was one of the early students in the Iowa program) who went on to start the writing program at UC Irvine and then became Provost of College Five (now Porter College) at Santa Cruz. He's moved back to Eugene—a tragic story—his wife was diagnosed some ten years ago with Alzheimer's disease—and he is now her care-taker, together with a whole retinue of hired help.

Well, we went on some long walks together and I picked his brains about writing programs and such. He told me that over the last 25 years these programs have mushroomed from a handful to several hundreds. He doesn't think much of the Oregon program—the person who was hired to take over from Ralph Salisbury has been notable for his absences from Eugene. The big name programs such as Iowa, Stanford, Arizona & Irvine practically demand submission of a novel before considering an applicant. Also the kind of mutual nit-picking that you described in an earlier letter seems to characterize many of these programs. In sum he was not very sanguine about these particular enterprises. His suggestion, since I spoke specifically of you—without mentioning names—was to seek an editorial position since the changes of breaking through from that position seem to be somewhat more favorable.

Without wanting to be prepossessing or interfering one thought that occurred to me—since Bend Research doesn't seem to be panning out—and if you would like to continue to live in this area is Bend Community College. I gathered from my friend Howard Dean (who is taking courses in literature there) that the standards are a mix with some substantial numbers of older people and that the instructors he has had were sophisticated and plugged into a wider world.

I walked around the College and was impressed by architecture and setting. None of that may satisfy your desire to be your own person on

your own time, doing all that wonderful reading. But then the culture in which Borges was able to write was very far from our own. To some extent colleges and universities still offer the most attractive “sinecures”—though my experience has been that outside sabbaticals & summers (and I’ve taught during most of those) the work is pretty overwhelming. But do send me your résumé.

I very much like having you as my correspondent, albeit letters travel at a slower pace from Central Oregon, and I hope you feel somewhat the same.

Je t’embrasse and send you wagonfulls of good wishes—“buon lavoro” as my Italian colleagues used to say.

Luciano (ever lucky)

P.O. Box 57
Crescent Lake OR 97425
August 5, 1991

Dear Lucian,

I hear thunder so I’ll make this fast, before the power goes off or worse, before my hard disk gets zapped into oblivion.

Your letter was waiting for me when I got back from Eugene on Saturday. (Only four days from LA—I think we have GREAT mail service here; have you tried to have a correspondence with anyone in Italy lately? Two weeks there and two weeks back. Same with Argentina. What do they do with the mail, anyway? *Sempre sciopero?*)

Thank you so much for sending the Lartigue photo book. I enjoyed looking at it yesterday—Sunday is my day for art projects—and I appreciated having a biographical sketch of Lartigue. I must say I agree with you about the photos—I think the greeting card manufacturer did a better job of reproducing the plate of “*Luigi le chanteur des rues*” than Pantheon Books did, for example; also, I wish they had printed the photo titles in French, as Lartigue wrote them. But I’m very pleased to have the book, and to learn about someone I didn’t know about before.

Thanks also for passing on your friend Jim Hall’s (no, I don’t remember him from Oregon) thoughts about creative writing programs. What kind of editing did he recommend getting into? I recall only one editor at Rand who ever got published, and that wasn’t because of any connections he garnered there. Did he mean book publishers? I had thought about trying my luck at UC Press in Berkeley, but as you can see from my résumé, I have no book publishing experience, which makes it doubtful. Do you have any contacts there? No rush—I’ve got at least two more years of the cabin before I have to look for a (horrible thought) job. Two years to think up a way to get enough money so I can live on the interest and be free. How depressing, to think your cousin Helmut can get three hundred thou as an advance on his autobiography (half that would do me fine—and he’s not even a writer!) Oh well.

I'm glad you reminded me of your cousin's wife, who I knew was a fine photographer in her own right but whose name I didn't remember. I read a profile of them somewhere, the only part of which I remember was something about their balcony and about her as an artist (I think it said some people regard her as better than Helmut). I share your doubts about your cousin's "love" of women—I still have the photos he published in *Vogue* in the late 60s or early 70s, they shocked me so much, suggesting women's masochism and men's violence toward them. But then women don't really like men having an attitude toward them either way, as if we were cats or dogs—"Are you a cat person?"—to like or dislike, love or not, we really long to be treated just as persons, peers, rather than a separate species.

About your German women friends: please explain (a minilecture perhaps?) what it means that they can't stand the idea of German hegemony. Hegemony over whom? West Germany over East? Is Germany really taking over Europe economically? The only things I know about politics are what I read in the *New York Review* or hear on the radio, I have to confess. So any enlightening from your expertise would be welcome.

I have thought about the community college in Bend—in fact, I'm sure I waxed enthusiastic about its, to me, Greece-like setting when I saw you in LA last. I finally heard from the editor at Bend Research, and was extremely insulted at his suggestion that I stop by to take their tests in order to determine whether I would be a "strong candidate" for any editorial openings (they don't have any at the moment). Penny tells me I shouldn't be offended, it's just that the company is very persnickety about their written product (but I bet they don't ask the scientists to take a spelling test or whatever it is before they get hired!), and my brother says companies in Oregon have a lot of trouble with people from California coming to look for jobs with phony résumés. So I'll probably swallow my pride and do it, just to leave as many options open as possible. Still, I don't like it.

Clouds are coming closer, and it's looking more and more stormy, so I'd better quit for now. Thank you again for the Lartigue book. Next time I'll tell you about the wonderful radio show I heard recently. And here's the promised résumé if I can get it printed out in time.

Love, Charlotte

Pitzer College
1050 North Mills Avenue
Claremont, California 91711-6111
August 12, 1991

Dearest Charlotte—Perhaps it is the messages from Crater [Crescent] lake that travel more slowly—I seem to remember a week to ten days for one of yours to reach here and I have visions of a very laid back Postmaster/Mistress (like the Italian Postino in one of my stories). Your impressive résumé will be passed on to my friend Linda Norton who runs

the University of California Press office in New York. She is a fine writer and has published in the *Northwest Review* & the *North American Review & Exquisite Corpse*. She is in a league with Mary Gordon and J. F. Powers—very Catholic, somber and at the same time with her own voice describing a NorthEastern working class world. I think what Jim Hall meant was that once you are in the publishing world the odds of seeing something of your own in print are enhanced. I too am convinced that for better or worse these personal contacts are important. In fact I am always fascinated by connections—*vide* E. M. Forster.

Enclosed Updike on writing and two articles on German hegemony which may help explain my German friends' emigration (not that I necessarily agree with them). However, both have been active Socialists and feminists all their lives and in part what they fear is the smugness that comes with power (we as Americans should know about that), and the abandonment of all socialist ideas and ideals—and also the forgetting of Auschwitz that Gunter Grass is talking about. I must confess that simply on the symbolic level I resent the Soviets wishing to revert to St. Petersburg—eliminating Leningrad (not that I hold any brief for Honecker³ and Ulbricht⁴—but I do for Rosa Luxemburg & Karl Liebknecht⁵).

I am settling back into a work routine—maybe somewhat more relaxed—am doing two courses—one a freshman seminar on “The Mediterranean”—cross cultural and across time beginning with the *Odyssey* as the prototypical Mediterranean travel tale (developing persistent themes: Hospitality, *Omertà*, Vengeance, Patron-Client Relationships, urban-villages, etc. etc.) and ending with *Death in Venice* and the questions why the Mediterranean is so attractive to Northerners. *Vide* W. H. Auden's poem “Goodbye to the Mezzogiorno.”

The other course is a senior seminar on “Politics & Literature” starting out with Stendhal's *The Red & the Black*, Dostoevski's *The Possessed* and Conrad's *Nostromo* and then encouraging students to develop a paper around a political theme using literature (novels, plays, poetry) as documentation—for example justice or education or power etc. and submitting a chapter from a putative novel they are writing on that theme.

In addition I will be a special assistant to the Dean of faculty for ideas—launch student-faculty events including a “Salon” chez nous once a month—it may turn out to be a total flop. In any event I will tell you about it.

When do you come down from your Magic Mountain? And might you ever come as far south as L.A.?

³ Lucian's reference is to Eric Honecker, ruler of East Germany, 1971 to 1989.

⁴ Lucian's reference is to Walter Ulbricht, German Communist politician, 1950 to 1971: helped establish German Democratic Republic.

⁵ Lucian's reference is to the revolutionaries Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who in 1914 founded the Spartacist League, which became the Communist Party of Germany. Both were tortured and killed by the right wing in 1919 and are commemorated on January 15. [Wikipedia]

Josh has been in the news. On national television in connection with some of his past cases and prosecutor in a capital case in which he involved the new Supreme Court ruling on victim impact. Did you hear about any of this?

I hope you can read this scribble—

Milles amitiés — Lucian

P.O. Box 57
Crescent Lake OR 97425
August 28, 1991

Dear Lucian,

I'm sorry to be so long in answering your letter. In the meantime have come the dramatic events in the Soviet Union, the rise of Boris Yeltsin, and the death throes of the Communist party. If you regret the vote to restore Leningrad to its prerevolutionary name (one hopes they will at least settle on Petrograd rather than the German, St. Petersburg), I wonder how these recent events have affected you. I must say it was strange listening to an interview from Alma Ata, in Kazakhstan, here in the mountains half a world away. I heard Gorbachev's press conference after he returned from the Crimea, but the simultaneous translation was pretty hard to follow, I thought. It would have been good to have been around a television to see the crowd protecting the Russian parliament, but at least I had the radio turned on and didn't miss the whole thing!

As to events here, I find my routine doesn't seem as interesting as it once did—am I going stale? At any rate, I have undertaken to remedy the situation by (a) reading Gerald Durrell's "Rosy Is My Relative" and laughing myself silly (are you familiar with his books?), (b) working on my drawing and painting, and (c) doing a tiny bit of entertaining and even some fancy cooking—I made a tiramisu and fell in love with it, despite its trendiness (it turns out that Oasis, Eugene's trendiest grocery store, imports mascarpone from Vermont, of all places!).

I appreciated the reading matter you sent, especially Istvan Deak's article on the East Central European countries and their connections to and perceptions of Germany. As it happens, I'm just reading Patrick Leigh Fermor's "Between the Woods and the Water," about his hike across Hungary and Romania in the early '30s, before the war destroyed the way of life there forever. I assume you've read his work, but if not, you'd certainly enjoy it. I must confess that I didn't know so many of the words he used that by the time I got to page 137, I went back and started a glossary. Some of the very arcane ones required an assiduous search of the OED (for example, "to stump up," meaning to pay).

I enjoyed the John Updike article but was sorry he hedged his bets on Peter Handke. It sounded to me as if he really liked and appreciated "The Afternoon of a Writer" but didn't want to be accused of praising too highly a book that would never appeal to popular American taste. I did read a book by Handke I didn't like too much, "The Left-handed

Woman,” but most of his things I read and reread and reread again—it’s so wonderful the way he puts the reader inside the head of the protagonist. I especially liked “Repetition” (excuse me for putting book titles in quotes, but it’s easier than underscoring and besides, Henry James did it too! I’ve been reading a lot of James—I think his prolixity is good for my reticence).

Your new courses sound wonderful. I envy you doing work that corresponds to your own interests. Have you seen the advertisement for a new book on travel to Greece, called “Travelers to an Antique Land” by Robert Eisner (University of Michigan Press)? The blurb in the New York Review (quoting a reviewer from Texas) says it’s “an idiosyncratic social history of Aegean travel, from Benjamin of Tudela to Lear, Durrell, and Leigh Fermor.”

I’m sure the salon at your place will be a *succes fou*. Every so often I think about the colloquia we had at the Honors College while you were at Oregon. I also think of the lively discussion at your place when Sergio was there, about the difference between painting and photography. By the way, I had a letter from him—well, letter is an exaggeration, more a brief note—saying he plans to be in LA in ‘92, during February and March. Somehow (he didn’t elaborate) he’s apparently managed to break his hand. I accused him of engaging in fisticuffs and pointed out that Borges says Argentinians consider fighting with the fists barbaric, they always use knives.

You mentioned connections—Borges was very fond of coincidences and such, as you doubtless know. Though of course you were speaking of publishing, and I want to thank you in that connection for forwarding my résumé to the University of California Press. Just yesterday I drove to Bend to take an editing test (!) at Bend Research. They don’t really have a position open, and even if they did, I’m not looking for one just yet, but since I’d approached them I went ahead and did the test. It’s just as well I did, because it reminded me how much I dislike that work, the fixing up of authorial messes. I assume putting together real books by real authors is better, but I’m also reminded that I really want to do something completely different—which was why I left LA in the first place: to change my life.

It’s raining today, and the weather has taken a decidedly autumnal turn. The night-time temperature has been going steadily down, with a low around 40 lately, and the geese are already on the move. My tomato plants have fruit, but I’m losing hope they will ripen—I’m sure there haven’t been nearly as many hot days this summer as last. If we have an early winter, it will be good, though, considering the sparse snowfall of last year and the problems that caused with the water supply, the lakes and rivers. Crescent Lake is the lowest anyone’s ever seen it. Luckily, our pump is still submerged, but not by very much.

I did hear Josh’s name on the news the other day—it must make his father very proud. By the way, you never answered my question about the mysterious “dark Americans” (soldiers) in your Soviet journal (it’s a good thing you went there when you did, no? And what would happen

now if you sang the “Internationale” in the streets of Leningrad?). I may be in LA to celebrate my birthday, but probably not until the spring, perhaps while SS [Sergio] is there, perhaps later. I’ll certainly keep you posted.

Love, Charlotte

10/1/91

Dearest friend, my silence is a function of classes having begun as of a month ago and while I am nominally “Emeritus”—which seems to have something to do with “merit” at least etymologically as does “Retired” with tired—neither condition seems to be valid. I have never been more engaged.

(I am writing this at 7 a.m. after riding my bike down the hill—to meet a student who has applied for a Wilson—though in an hour or so the thermometer will climb to 100°—it has been a cool summer but September has been a scorcher.)

Am doing a freshman seminar on “The Mediterranean” a senior seminar on “Politics and Literature”—have organized something I call “The Marching & Chowder Society” where faculty periodically get together and one of us gives a talk either on work in progress or a particular curricular approach—about 25 people attend this monthly event which has brought us together in a new way—I help slightly by bringing booze and flowers into the seminar room and that somehow transforms the atmosphere.

In addition we have started a “Salon” at our house—primarily for students—perhaps I’ve mentioned this before—the first one last week attended by about 20 people—Friday 3-6 serious conversation and it worked. For the next one I am suggesting a topic—E. M. Forster wrote somewhere: “When it comes to betraying my country or my friends I hope I have the courage to betray my country.” Forster was a sort of hero to the famous British spies—Philby, Mclean, Blount etc. All Cambridge graduates.

In this connection do you know George Skinner’s essay: “The Clerk of Treason” about Anthony Blount—transformed into a play by Alan Bennett which I saw in London—“Separate Spies”—the first is called “An Englishman Abroad”—the second “A Matter of Attribution.” You would thoroughly enjoy these.

And finally, am working closely with a Russian—Valentin Berzhekov—he is the man in the Volvo in my report from Russia (incidentally the grievous typo in that piece that you caught “Americans” should have read “Armenians”)—

In fact Valentin who was born a year before the Revolution was interpreter for Molotov & Hitler in 1940—for Stalin and Ribbentrop—for Stalin & Churchill & Eden & Roosevelt—he was at Yalta &

Teheran⁶—he is a walking piece of history—In addition to all of that he is charming and captivating—I snagged him & he is teaching two courses here—but he needs a lot of help (preparing syllabi & reading lists) so that takes up a lot of time as well.

Jane says: he must have seduced many woman and I say to her—well he has seduced me. (I am currently reading his autobiography in German—entitled *I Was Stalin's Interpreter*—to be translated into English). One story: I say to him that there must have been an angel watching over him to have survived all that and he answers: “Yes, when I was a small boy I always looked behind me to see if I could see the angel and sometimes I would back up against a wall to see if I could squeeze the angel.”

So there is so much to tell—you better come here so we can talk viva voce—it must be getting frosty in your magic mountain—Enclosed various clippings—write, write—*je t'embrasse* and send you wagonfulls of good thoughts.

As ever your lucky Luciano

P.O. Box 57
Crescent Lake OR 97425
October 9, 1991

Dear Lucian,

I was glad to get your letter (I knew you would be busy with school) because I have some actual news to tell you. You know my 50th birthday is coming up. Well, I hadn't planned on doing much to celebrate, considering my lack of income and all, but then I heard the airlines were having a price war on flights across the North Atlantic, and that seemed like an idea, so I called my friend Maureen in Rome to see if her offer of a place to stay was still good (it was) and bought myself a ticket! I leave November 11 for Paris (that's where the cheap flights go), stay a few days (Penny and her friend Paul are moving there next week, so I'll see them) in the cheapest place I could find in the guidebooks (the Henri IV on the Île de la Cité—bathrooms accessible by a winding outside staircase, etc.—i.e., unchanged for the last 50 years at least), then by train to Rome. I'd like to take a side trip to Syracuse, Sicily, if I can, since I've never been and Archimedes is a great hero of mine. Maureen tells me Rome is almost as expensive as New York now, so we'll see if I can be frugal enough to afford Sicily. Going on this trip at all is of course totally foolish financially, but psychologically, it will be a good change—from peace and solitude to chaos and crowds. Then it's back to spend the winter at Mother's in Eugene (address: c/o Potter, 2115 Trillium St., Eugene OR 97405).

⁶ Lucian's reference is to the World War II conferences attended by Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill.

The weather here remains amazingly clear and warm (I'm still going swimming, believe it or not)—and frighteningly dry. The barometer keeps edging upward rather than down, so there must be a big high pressure ridge off the coast, keeping the rain away. Several of the forests have been closed because of the extreme fire danger. One good thing, there aren't many mushrooms, so the mushroom hunters haven't descended in droves as they usually do. And believe me, they're as sorry looking a bunch as you'd want to find anywhere—they look like the sort of guys who rob country grocery stores and kill the proprietors so there won't be any witnesses. Definitely marginal types. I haven't seen any snooping around here, but I keep my doors locked, since hardly anyone else is here now.

Your salon sounds like it's flourishing (I knew it would). Yes, I know about "An Englishman Abroad" because the BBC did a marvelous TV adaptation of it, starring Alan Bates as Guy Burgess and Coral Browne (Vincent Price's wife) as the woman who goes to visit him and ends up ordering clothes and shoes for him in London. It was one of the best TV shows ever, so you're right about my enjoying it. I'm continuing to read Henry James and finally came across a novel I really liked, *The Tragic Muse*, probably because it intersects more with my interests than many of his books do (who cares about Society anymore?). But I have the impression James put a lot of himself into the two artist characters, a young woman actress and a young man of society who chucks it all to live the life of a painter. I'm also planning to read all of Balzac and all of Virginia Woolf. And while I'm in Eugene I think I'll investigate taking some acting lessons! Not because I have any latent yearning to be on the stage—nor any talent, for that matter—but because I've always wanted to work on my voice, and a friend who came to visit me, who's had quite a bit of acting training, thinks it would also help me with a problem I'm having in my writing, which is to imagine more than one character at a time.

Your friend Berzhekov sounds fascinating, and as you said, a bit of walking history. Has anybody done an interview with him while he's there, or a profile? Sounds like a golden opportunity for some writer. I'm not thinking of myself because I haven't a clue when it comes to interviews, but you could certainly do it, or the profile at least. It would be lovely to come down and speak with you about all these things, though I don't know whether it will be possible after my upcoming extravagance. So you'll just have to keep writing me letters. I'm getting used to your handwriting—there was only one word in your last letter that I couldn't make out the first time around, but I got it the second day as I reread the letter while sitting in front of the stove, drinking my morning café au lait (while it's warm during the day, nights are down to 39 or so).

The first flock of geese flew over yesterday, about 75 strong, flying high and fast. I expect more in the next few days. The first year I was here, '89, five flocks flew over on October 9. So let's hope the rains follow soon (that must sound odd to you, since rain is all we had the day you were here). Tell Jane my basil never grew above one inch high, and

I've only had one ripe tomato, small and not too sweet, despite my Walls o' Water and much TLC. Next year will be my last try—I've collected a sack of horse manure from the horse camp at the other end of the lake, and if that doesn't do the trick, nothing will, short of a heated greenhouse. My drawing is going much better than my horticulture, I'm happy to say.

Greetings to all,

P.S. Public radio is broadcasting the complete Winnie the Pooh stories (as you doubtless know, radio drama is making a comeback). A marvelous British actor reads all the voices, even sings in Pooh's voice, and they have just the right amount of subtle sound effects. As they said, it's not just for children—see if you can catch it. It's playing Sunday evenings at 7 up here, and was produced by KCRW in Santa Monica.

Love, Charlotte

October 26, 1991
1038 Alamosa Dr.
Claremont, Ca. 91711

Dear Friend,

I hasten to write before you take off for Paris and Rome and hope this will still reach you (it wasn't clear whether you are moving to Eugene now or when you come back from your trip). In any event I want to wish you my very best and under separate cover send you a small token of my affection. My wishes: Salut, Pesetas, y Amor (the order is very important) and the time to enjoy it. And wagonfulls of good thoughts in your direction.

When in Rome I should like you to do me a favor if you have the time. I think I told you that I am taking Jane, Josh & Annie on a two-week tour of Italy—principally Venice—leaving here on Christmas day and spending most of the time in Venice (ANTICA LOCANDA MONTIN)—then we shall go on to Florence for a few days (staying in the house in which you visited us to many years ago—and finally to Rome for a few days before returning by ALITALIA on January 8th.

Friends have mentioned two hotels in Rome and I wonder whether you would check them out for me as to ambiente and price. Also if you know of some nifty place do tell me about it. One is the HOTEL PORTOGHESI in via [dei] Portughesi, the other is the HOTEL GREGORIANA near Piazza di Spagna—I've also heard of the HOTEL SENATO next to the Pantheon. My motto is—"Since you can't take it with you—take them with you."

Thanks for putting up with my handwriting—I am going to get a thinner nib for my pen and that should improve legibility.

We never talked (or wrote) about the Clarence Thomas hearings which were all-consuming. Also can you send me your mother's phone

number so that we may talk in the future. And thanks for the fine drawing of Musca.

Saluti —Auguri—Amore
Lucian

P.S. To what degree is Sergio the “POLO DI ATTRAZIONE” pulling you to Rome?—None of your business she says.

Go and see a new film” Frankie and Johnny”—I loved it.

When I returned from my trip to Europe, I stayed with my mother in Eugene for a few months, then moved back to the cabin for the third summer and started to look seriously for work. Lucian’s and my correspondence ended, except for annual Christmas cards, when I moved to Portland in the fall of 1992.

[missing letter from me]

[Postcard]

1/7/92

Cara amica—saluti di Roma and many thanks for your letter though not much news about your voyage so we must do some catching up. I did call your friend Maureen to pick her brain about restaurants and she was very helpful—but too little time to meet her. The trip has been magical—Venice cold & clear and Josh and Annie are seeing Italy in a new way. We stayed with our friend on via S. Margarita in Montici in Florence and now are at the Portoghese in Rome—Auguri e a presto.

Luciano C.

January 15, 1992
1032 Alamosa
Claremont 91711

Dear friend, enclosed the article on Lampedusa, Palermo, etc. Which ought to whet your appetite for Sicily. Do you know the writings of Leonardo Sciascia, Elio Vittorini and of course Pirandello—they do provide sharp glimpses of that “other America.”

As I told you on the phone and in the postcard from Rome, which I hope you received, our trip was quite marvelous. Josh and Annie took scads of photos—so one of these days you will be subjected to those—and now coming back I am confounded with tons of work—letters of recommendation to write, syllabi to prepare etc.

I promise a decent and detailed letter in the near future. But do tell me what you think of the article. (I have mixed feelings about it.)—

Auguri e amore,
Lucian

2115 Trillium St.
Eugene OR 97405
February 1, 1992

Dear Lucian,

Many thanks for the New Yorker article on Palermo and the Lampedusas. I thought it was wonderful—why did you have misgivings? Because of the subject matter, or something about the writing itself? The article fits perfectly with my other reading on Sicily. I'm about halfway through Mary Taylor Simeti's *On Persephone's Island* and just finished *The Leopard* yesterday. What a marvelous job Lampedusa did of treating things so personal to himself—his family, his country, his intellectual interests—and yet thoroughly fictionalizing (i.e., universalizing) them. And I love that last image, of the 45-year-old carcass of the Prince's dog being discarded, flying through the air and taking on the image (an animal with whiskers and a raised forepaw) of the symbol (the leopard) of the Prince. Of course I only saw one part of Sicily, and from what I've read Syracuse and the east are very different from Palermo and the west. But I am completely fascinated—or I should say, "fascinato."

I found the people in Sicily warm and generous. For example: I called the hotel upon arriving (it was after dark) and asked how to get there. A bus, perhaps. No, the man said, they only come once a month. I'll come get you. How are you dressed? Overcoat, raincoat? A black raincoat, I said. And you're a blonde, right? Yes. And I have on red shoes (I couldn't remember the name for boots). Go stand on the sidewalk and I'll be there in a few minutes, he said. So I stood on the sidewalk and pretty soon a car drove up and a man leaned out and gestured to me to get in. I did, then as I sat next to him I wondered what I'd do if he turned out not to be from the hotel—this was Sicily, after all. But he was. Then the next day I had a smashing luncheon at a restaurant just 20 meters from the sea. The season's first storm was sending the waves pounding on the rocks and blowing rain under the windows. It was a place recommended in a June 1991 Gourmet article about Syracuse I carried with me, but I was the only customer. Fortunately my Italian marched well that day, and I managed to stretch the meal out for almost three hours. When it was over the waiter (who was part-owner I think) offered to drive me wherever I wanted to go. So he closed up the restaurant and drove me up to one of the archeological sites. The meal had been delicious (fish with mint and vinegar sauce, for example), but the best thing was the dessert—a creamy ice cream served with almond sauce and crushed nuts. Heavenly!

I walked everywhere in Syracuse, and made a circuit around the old island of Ortygia the afternoon before I left. On the "lungomare" I loved looking at beautiful old buildings, some with rounded corners and several with round windows (does this have something to do with the evil eye?). Dusk had fallen when I happened into one of the places mentioned in the Gourmet article, a small pastry shop run by the Cavaliere Luigi Marciante. I asked for three (all I had room for in my luggage) of those fruits made of marzipan called "pasta reale." Then I

spotted the cavaliere himself working in the back room and asked if I could watch him. He invited me in and showed me how he shaped lemons, apricots, figs, and so forth, using simple, handmade tools, such as a cardboard mold to shape the “lemons” and a cork with needles stuck in one end to prick indentations in their skin. All the while he talked about the value of handmade items versus those made by machine—me agreeing with every word. He also showed me a letter from someone in Miami ordering a marzipan Statue of Liberty for the Columbus celebrations this year (no comment), and said I could call him any time if I wanted something special. What a treat that visit was. And the lemon, fig, and apricot I brought back with me in a makeshift box survived without a scratch or a squashed spot (actually, they’re pretty hard—they get baked before being put out for sale).

The only bad part of the Sicilian trip was that I got stuck in a smoking car—and a smoking compartment—on the trip from Syracuse back to Rome.⁷ The woman at American Express had assured me that people wouldn’t smoke in the compartment—very funny!!! Not only did they smoke, they smoked until one o’clock in the morning when, thank God, a fussbudget of an Italian man came aboard and said he had to get the beds organized and get to sleep. Even though I nearly perished from the smoke, however, we became a fairly convivial group, as strangers tend to do when thrust together on a voyage, and it left me with some of my nicest memories. Unfortunately my Italian pooped out about 8 o’clock in the evening (after two days of speaking nothing but) and I wasn’t able to participate in a rousing discussion about women’s capacity to work. The charming young engineer with the beautiful nose and hands had leaned out the window while we were on an scheduled stop outside Augusta. He called me over: “See in the office there? That woman, she’s the chief of this station. That’s why we’re stopped so long.” The older businessman in our compartment said to him, “Lei è maschilista.” And so now I know how to say “male chauvinist” in Italian.

The first day I was in Rome, Maureen had taken me shopping with her at the Testaccio market, which I’d found quite intimidating—vendors so aggressive, making you feel (correctly) that you’re being forced to buy more than you want. I thought I’d never be able to negotiate those treacherous waters by myself. But before I left I wanted to cook dinner for Maureen and her friend Franco, so I prepared a few key phrases (e.g., “I can buy only two onions because I’m leaving the country tomorrow” and “I need a very excellent chicken because I’m making dinner for the signori che mi ospitano”), grabbed a couple of shopping bags, and set off. After examining all the butchers’ displays along one side of the market, I settled on a bird the butcher assured me had been killed that very morning. He chopped off the legs, but there were still a lot of feathers to be removed when I got the chicken back to the apartment. However, it roasted up beautifully—it was so good, in fact, that I went back the next day to get another one. So I left Maureen and Franco a refrigerator full of leftover chicken.

⁷ See my *Stories*, “Smoking of Nonsmoking?”

After all that running around, it was a great shock to get back to Eugene where there's nothing to do and noplacE to go. But I'm enjoying my acting class and learning how to work the Macintosh computer in my other class. A job with the University of Oregon Foundation has turned up, and one side of me (the cautious side) says I should try to get it. However, it would start the end of March, which would mean I couldn't get back to the cabin for the summer. Also it's very much like the other jobs I've always done. So the other side of me says wait, look for something that would be fun, don't fall back into the old patterns. I may propose myself as a consultant. If I decide to apply for the position, I'd like to give you as a reference, if that's all right. I assume you still have your office at Pitzer.

Well, I must go out and buy a birthday card for one of my friends at Rand. Thank you again for getting that article to me—I enjoyed it very much.

Love, Charlotte

P.O. Box 57
Crescent Lake OR 97425
June 17, 1992

Dear Lucian,

I thought I'd better alert you that I'm sending out my résumé now, and someone may call you to give me a reference. It's not for an editing job! I'm writing to all the theaters I can find in Portland and Seattle (to start with), hoping for some modest employment in arts administration—trying to turn my experience with the Santa Monica Chamber Orchestra and the Southern California Early Music Society into paid work. We'll see if anyone bites. (I'm enclosing a revised résumé, so you can see how I'm presenting my volunteer experience. I ran out of the laser-printed ones, so I just ran this off on my own little printer. Sorry!)

I also want to tell you how much I enjoyed Mike Davis's book. I had gotten a slight start before the LA riots, but after that happened, I just gobbled it up. It's very clear from reading his book why the riots happened. I wish he'd explained his title, though . . . Anyway, I thank you so much for sending the book. After I finished it, my brother took it off with him to Washington state, where he's helping build a log lodge on one of the islands in Puget Sound. He especially appreciated Davis's discussion of the LA real estate maneuverings. I think the book should be required reading of everyone who lives down there, though I don't suppose the right wingers would agree. The telling of the sad tale of Fontana is really worth the price of the book.

You've probably heard from Josh how hot and dry it's been up here. Finally last weekend the weather broke and we had cool temperatures (even some new snow on the high peaks—didn't last, though), lots of drizzle, and even some honest-to-goodness rain. Not really enough, but better than nothing. People are very stupid about fires—I go down to the beach every night to make sure no one has left a campfire burning. They

just leave them and go off to bed. Plus there's at least one arsonist about, responsible for the big fire outside Oakridge that burned those gorgeous high ridges above the pass—it breaks my heart to look at them—as well as for two fires last week near La Pine. Napoleon was right to order such people shot in Moscow.

Speaking of Russia, I'm reading Gorky now, his short stories and autobiography. Wonderful! I think I read they'd renamed Gorky Prospekt in Moscow, which makes me unhappy, since he was such a fine writer. I also just finished Peter Gay's huge biography of Freud, which kept me enthralled, though I thought he could have done better on the breaks between Freud and Jung and Freud and Adler. It still isn't clear to me, after 750 pages, what exactly caused the breaks, or how their theories differ.

Let me know how you're doing. I assume being an emeritus professor leaves you very little spare time, but did you catch Garry Wills's interview with Ross Perot in the June 15 New York Review (he doesn't like him—neither do I)?

Love, Charlotte

[holiday card, 1995]

Best Wishes for the New Year
Jane & Lucian Marquis

Dear Charlotte: I feel rather embarrassed for being out of touch with you, and there is really no excuse, especially since Josh has been a next-door neighbor—so to speak—as the father of a D.A. who is also a D. J. (on an Astoria station once a week) and all sorts of other exploits—such as being an all-day commentator in Los Angeles for “Court TV” on the O. J. Simpson case, etc. In any event, I promise that the next time I go through Portland I will call you and I hope that you will have lunch with me at Jake's (?) and try to catch up with all the news.

The years have so telescoped that they merge one into the other. I do know that this May & June we went to Provence—rented an apartment in Aix and explored the countryside—including Vence & the Matisse chapel. And the summer before that we rented a wonderful adobe in Santa Fe—but the years before are rather murky. I have continued to teach and organize all sorts of stuff (and am enclosing an article on an educational experiment—“The Pebble and the Ripple” which I've started). But just now decided that I want to spend what time is left to writing.

Sorry I don't have “e male”—got stuck at the fountain pen stage—

But I would love to hear from you.

Good health in 1996

Lucian's visit to the cabin in 1991 was the last time I saw him. He died in January 2005, aged 84, of the effects of Parkinson's disease. The appreciations from students and colleagues at Pitzer College refer to him as Mr. Marquis, like surgeons in Great Britain, who, once qualified, are called by the honorific *mister*, not *doctor*.

LUCIAN C. MARQUIS

January 5, 1921 – January 21, 2005

There will be a celebration
of the life of Lucian
Saturday, March 5
at 2 P.M.

in the Margaret Fowler Garden
Scripps College
Claremont, California