

Jn King

April 21, 1964

mary, maybe if I write down this depression, it will go away. I wonder if you mind being one of the few people I can talk to and if this is a drag or a pain to you...you have to tell me, in a gentle way. last week I was able to produce, both for cofo and for myself...now it is very bad. like theres nobody here, like why am i, like no...i cannot write about mrs. hamer for you as much as i'd like to, for you...and like where is the person that went away once and has not written at all and has not come back and lives in some far place and does things other than my things and how long does it take to die? see i am depressed. now, i will be cynical about my own depression. soon i will also change the subject and be bored with the letter and bored because we cannot sit down and talk and generally bored at which point one has to stop whatever one is doing because boredom is the most evil of many things. lynch street is not an exciting new world, or live place or melting pot or stimulating in the least it is very very boring and soon it will be very hot and when it gets that hot in this state, it is all boring. i am bored like negroes must be bored with the whole goddamn street. dumb and boring - just about boring enough to produce a great amount of violence: that is my impression today, see i am being cynical again just because you wrote to me and asked me to write my impression and i know you really want to have them and care and it means a lot, which i have already told you but now i am very irritated with you for asking me to do something because that makes me vulnerable ... i was vulnerable once...well, maybe you think i am feeling sorry for myself. i am and that bores me most of all and it even bores me to think that you think that. no i do not need a rest i need one person one night who is not here and wont be. so, what else is new??? why in the hell did you make yourself vulnerable to me by being nice to me because i will hurt you...mary it matters, all of it matters. maybe you will understand what makes me so mean and maybe you wont and maybe you dont care. and maybe you do. i dont understand you anyway and why in the whole big sncc movement, it matters one goddamn whether a poet exists...and why with all you have to do, you should write and tell me to write. you have no right to believe in me.

its later - i am sending this all to you so you can see what i am really like. now i will tell you what i have done: written poems about a lot of people here and they are good, but they have to be spoken...maybe i will bring them and show them to you...it all depends on how many times this week i get smashed.

here is my impression of this day: it stinks. we live in a boring part of a boring town where you cant even buy a copy of BREAD AND WINE if you want to know the truth and those people who think it is glorious to put on levis and identify with the people, whateverthehell they think that means, are full of shit. the people dont want to be identified with, especially not by people who miss the whole entire point of pain constantly regardless of good intentions... plus the fact that who wants to identify with dirt and poverty and absolute boredom. and we work on lynch street about which there is nothing good. it is dirty and hot and full of vacant lots and greasy spon joints with loud noise and boring people which america and mississippi and life has produced and there is nothing great and glorious about dead people...and nothing particularly important about dirty levis and sncc buttons.

it is unbelievably absurd to think that 2,000 bright and eager youth are coming down here to help - and what in the name of god can they help with - or it is so boring and depressing and it is no good to hear mrs. hamer singing one some days when you know that no matter what she sings or how...

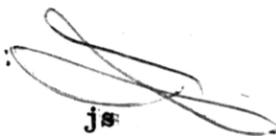
america will keep on constructing the world's best freeways so we can get places in a big enough hurry not to have to meet anyone on the way...not even ourselves. o ho i am singing the song of the end of idealism, the song of the end of spring. the only non boring thing in this place is the tank which is exciting baby blue and something we have to get out there and face up to like crazy fools we are crazy all of us...the song of the coming of summer, the song of the baby blue tank. ok.

the problem is i want to be a great poet, and not like ferlinghetti or even dylan who are limited to reflecting their stupid rotten culture but i do believe in three of four universals and they must be written about and this iz not easy...we are too much existential to create very much great poetry perhaps...and perhaps we will be known for our folk songs and hymns...but we have to remember that there is something greater than a folk song and that is a poem.

now i am closing and you will be glad...i should think. the impression of this day is that it holds absolutely no promise, which is sometimes referred to as nothingness and, from what i am able to ascertain, this small band of practically people, agrees

bad day living on lynch street where, in fact, there are no trees and no grasses, and no birds sing. so this is my first letter to mary king from mississippi re. impressions and i hope the next one will have some reason to affirm

mary, please forgive me for this. i am too afraid. please do not despair of me soon...



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