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Dear Steve:

It was good to get your last letter, with its long perspectives. To communicate is such a mysterious process, at any level. And to truly communicate is rare. I am glad that you made the effort, and that you succeeded. That you succeeded in beginning to make a breakthrough. One of these days, if time permits, let's try together, to push through further.

It is not easy to explain what I mean. But let me give you an example. A parable. But a true example. When you visit here in Manila again I'll show you the birds, and the glass, and the watchers (we), and we can try together to unlock the secrets of the three. Or is it four?

Safely hidden away from harm, in the overhead roof rafters of my penthouse in the Excelsior, are a tribe of small birds. Perhaps they are sparrows, house sparrows. They build their nests there, slip between the curves of the galvanized roofing into their separate havens, mate there, and raise their young.

Each season a generation of brave new little birds squeeze out through the curves of the roofing, and survey their cosmos. They practice hopping about, and pecking at each other, and winging along the balcony. They even discover a tiny swing which I have put up for them (birds love to play, you know) and they jump from the window frames to the metal swing, push back and forward, and hop back delightedly to their take-off place.

And then, somewhere along the line, and usually pretty soon, they make a discovery. A discovery based on advanced technology. A discovery which is totally incomprehensible, but which fills them with joy, and hope, and high excitement.

In Manila, as you may remember, my penthouse apartment faces out toward the west, onto Manila Bay. All through the afternoon, and until the sun sets behind the mountains of Bataan and the island of Corregidor, the sun's

rays beat relentlessly on the glass west wall of my apartment. Air-conditioners find it hard to compete with this heavenly barrage.

Therefore, in self-defense, we put up synthetic plastic coating -- a mirror film -- on all the western windows, to reflect the sun's rays and help to cool the rooms. It works quite well, and cuts down on heat and glare. Through the glass, we look out on the bay and the mountains and the sunset with slightly bluishly tinted glasses. And they look fine; they look all the better for this bit of blueness.

But to anyone on the outside (and we come back now to our brave young sparrows) the plastic-coated glass is a mirror. It is meant to be a mirror so as to turn away light and heat. It was not designed to deceive little birds. But they are deceived, and aroused, and delighted.

What do they see in the tinted mirror? They see beautiful young birds, amazingly like themselves, hopping about like they do, and full of life, and curiosity. Above all else, our little sparrows yearn to join these companions, and to sport with them, fly with them, even mate ^{with them and continue} their flight through eternities of love and time.

But there is a barrier to all these hopes. They do not know and cannot believe that the barrier, the wall of glass, can never be surmounted. There must be a way, they say, to break through somehow, into this paradise of beautiful young birds who await them, who tempt them, and who respond dancer-like to their every movement. How to enter this paradise which is right here, right at hand? How, they ask? Surely there must be a way, if they only persist. Surely they will somehow prevail, they say. Paradise will be theirs. Paradise awaits the brave, the strong, the pure ~~is~~ heart, they say.

And so, for hours on end, our little birds dash against the silent glass. Foray after foray, swooping from a vantage point (the Chinese lanterns near the roof) the little birds strike against the glass. The braver and more patient ones may go on all day, in their assault. The tinted glass is flecked with a thousand marks where little beaks have crashed against it, hour after hour after hour.

And then there is the third partner in this mystery. Ourselves. The tireless birds, the silent glass, and we. We stand wonderingly behind the glass, and contemplate the battle. We are like the gods, watching all and knowing all, knowing that the battle is fore-ordained. But how can we communicate our knowledge to the brave battalions of the birds? How can we warn them, console them? Send them off on other more hopeful missions?

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Sadly, as we contemplate the glass and the determined little birds, we must settle with the truth. And the truth is that we cannot warn them, cannot tell them, and can only feel for them, and love them for their courage.

But are there only three of us? The birds, the glass, and we? Or is there a fourth? Who is standing behind our glass, invisible to us, incommunicable to us, gravely watching our brave attacks against the walls we cannot see? Is there a fifth presence, watching all the others? And a sixth, and others, hidden in mysteries beyond our dreams?

When you visit in Manila, I'll show the countless marks on the glass to you and to Dorero and Marsha and Michael Sean. If you come at the right season, you'll see the brave little birds themselves, and their efforts to break-through.

There are other ways, too, in which life's secrets are shadowed forth. Have you ever watched the insect who flies back and forth in the jetliner, seeking a tiny crumb, or wanting out? How can I inform him that he is flying from Amsterdam to Tokyo, and that his life is joined with the lives of us who see beyond the crumb. But not too far beyond. We know as little about our real voyage as the insect knows about the trans-polar flight.

It is good to know that you love me, for this is not easy to achieve, for you, for many reasons. Some of the reasons you have stated, and it is fine that you are able to begin to understand and overcome them. Some of the other reasons, for our love, may be harder to understand, for they may be shrouded in mysteries, like those of the birds and the glass.

I too love you, and this is easier, because you are the very by-product and testimonial of my love. There is an old Irish saying that "Ah, I knew you, me boy, when you were only a gleam in your father's eye".

It is also easy (indeed, it is mandatory) for me to love you because I remember things that you do not. I remember the happy, well-controlled, serious, beautiful little boy whom we loved so much. And now love equally, but differently. Only a little difference.

I am enclosing a check for Dorero, for the six-month period from July through December. Wish it could be more. Try to find ways to give to her -- a bit of money, a bit of time, and love, much love. Remember -- it was she who responded to the gleam. If she had not ...

Dorero asked me to send her another enlargement (I brought one to her before in 1974) of her wonderful photo by Man Ray. I have had this copied, and will send

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it soon. If you want a print, I'll make one for you too. And for Mike and Kelv, if they do not have them and want them.

Congratulations on your work in the case of Charles Wagenheim and Stephanie Boone. There must be an enigma inside a mystery there, too.

Hope to be out your way one of these days soon. I am interested to know what you plan to do after three years. Your life may just be beginning then.

Give my love to all!

Always,

DAD

Enclosure: as stated