

Tunis 7-9-78

Hey Jim! Why are you getting married? I mean what's the scoop? No seriously, even tho your Freudian rationalizations (shall we try projection analysis?) held no sway over my muddled brain, I'm pleased to see that you're taking a strong stand against rings at your wedding - this shows a determination to transcend ceremony. But as I wrote Steve and Mary, the explanation for your conjugal engagement (rearrangement, estrangement?) seems clear enough to me - whether you like it ~~enough~~ or not (you like it!) you're tramping <sup>merrily</sup> down the hallowed boulevard of, dare I whisper, legitimacy. Forget Weber and think about legitimacy, I mean the real thing, that house in the country, a beautiful wife, the Med. School sheep-skin hanging <sup>neatly</sup> neatly, fine food, all in all the kind of place I'd like to visit - yes, I'll be dropping in. One footnote however, beware of conjugal bliss..... As for med school, I gather from your letter that you'll be taking a year off, to give

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you time to play piano, analyse your  
dreams, and make love to your new  
wife (when you start med. school,  
you know, you won't have time for  
any of this. The work load is  
so tough.)

As for [Emily and] the ~~same~~ sacred  
cause of monogamy, I have little to  
report, save that Tunis has been, shall  
we say, something of a heartship  
post. And then I am horrified by  
the prospect of having myself  
quoted in an article, written by your  
brother, on post-Harvard relationships  
[appearing in the Harvard Alum. Mag.]  
So I'll keep my peace, until we meet  
again, and you have a chance  
to interrogate me, ~~under~~ once again  
<sup>doused</sup> ~~in~~ the incubated clarity which  
large hoses of liquor and cannabis  
<sup>bring</sup> bring to my mind. I'm talking  
about your wedding, which I certainly  
intend to attend with my own  
"little lady" (by God, not my wife  
W'allah!)

I am just now recovering from  
an exhilarating month-long trek across  
North Africa. It's difficult to converse

my impressions and experiences into a .3  
letter, the first 4 days of my trip  
covered 50 pages of my journal - but  
then I was apprehended by the Algerian  
police for journal-writing in public. Of  
course I charmed the pants off the  
local police chief, but afterwards  
stopped writing. Alone for all but two  
days of the voyage, I spent a  
week in the beautiful Algerian  
Constantinople (the stormy ground covered  
in my thesis), a couple days in  
the Sahara, hosted in an oasis town  
by a swave 50-year-old Mzabi  
industrialist, before I wound my way  
across the High Plateaus of western  
Algeria to the Moroccan border.  
A few more days in Fez (the town of  
of North Africa save perhaps Algiers)  
before I made it to Casablanca where  
I was robbed of my last \$90.  
Suddenly immobilized, I ended up  
spending three days in a local  
café, smoking hash with the boys,  
napping with them in Arabic, and  
watching the finals of the World Cup  
soccer tournament. I also had the

of wandering the streets of Casablanca 4  
the invaluable experience, stoned and  
broke, realising that in this country  
every pleasure could be bought cheap:  
a kilo of hash, a handover me,  
a pretty prostitute: in my delirium  
I swore I come back with 1000  
bucks. Pip beams aside, I revelled  
in the luck of the road: I was  
pickpocketed in Constantine, I had  
my shoelaces lifted in an Algerian  
public bath (the shoes were left  
they were in such shambles), Moroccan  
10 year-old kids tried to put henna  
in my hashish, and even the Algerian  
police shortchanged me at the Tunisian  
border. But then again I was well  
received everywhere I went, & the sight  
of a gawing (xenophobic term  
fr. European much used in Algeria)  
who could speak Arabic was enough  
to blow the socks of my hosts.  
The numerous truckdrivers who insisted  
on buying me <sup>dinner</sup> dinner or putting  
me up for the night, the insurance  
salesman who took me to a  
wedding, not before, however, pumping  
me with 8 beers, the Saharan  
villagers who took pleasure in showing me

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their town, the Algerian school teachers who bought me coffee as I expounded for hours in Arabic on American politics and the Arabs (all in Arabic of course) If nothing else, the trip showed me that my colloquial Maghrebian Arabic was useful and I took pleasure in using nothing but it if possible (as for the written variety, after a year of breaking my balls, I'm still at "Square 1".) In the end, after parhantling \$20 from a good <sup>Tunis</sup> ~~Tunis~~ Tunis hitchhiking, not before stopping at Fez again, and making a <sup>detour</sup> ~~detour~~ to the Rif, that crazy mountain region where most of the country's pot is grown (I spent a night at a cannabis farm, etc.) I made it back to Constantine [1200 kilometers from Case] before selling a pair of blue jeans and jumping a midnight train. But all this can wait for the wedding. One question, the time is 2:00, Aug 26th but where? Bellport?

As it stands now, I plan to return

shortly after the end of the summer session here in Tunis, which finishes the 14th. Emily had planned to meet me in Europe, but for lack of bucks and exact plans, she's equivocating. <sup>Also</sup> ~~Meanwhile~~, I've been called back for negotiations by my step-mother (who controls the purse strings.)

~~Meanwhile~~ time is flying by here in Tunis, I'm continuing to enjoy the family scene here at <sup>Halfaouine</sup> Halfaouine, and the beach, the summer weather, the Tabarka Music festival are all easy distractions for an estivating Arabist. I count 5 weeks before my studies end here and my allmost yearlong stay in Tunis is terminated.

May Allah grant you peace,

Stueff

P.S. Respond immediately with a letter specifying the place of your wedding and how to get there. What's the dress code? Hah!

P.P.S. You never bothered to pick up those books from the Lopez Palace last fall, did you? Or did you?