

Maputo, K

24/12/77

Cecília, cara amiga,

Eu esqueço-me como eu estava quando nós encontramos, eu lembro só de ti; nós comunicamos com dança, se pudesse chamar-se as danças aqueles movimentos pequeninos. Eram tão seguras, tão íntimas, tão suaves.

Aqui a vida é aberta. For me there is no subtle secret life that justifies and gives meaning to public life. I am as happy as I've ever been. Life is full of joy, work is filled with reward, friendships are rich with pleasure.

Why should I answer all your questions, when, as you say, you are lazy, and when you write nothing about yourself, your feelings? Because you gave me some glorious moments, and because I enjoy telling people about life here, and because I like you? Então,...

I'm forgetting English and not learning Portuguese. Sometime, I use a dictionary, sometimes I just make up words. I can read fairly well, if slowly, can follow the radio more or less, can get the gist of public speeches, but have trouble following casual conversation and can't say very much. In March I have to start lecture in Portuguese. It will be a struggle at first for the student, ~~and have little success to the culture - progressive steps of many other people~~ and for me. But I will end up knowing another language. So, when you get round to answering, in Portuguese, faz favor, with perhaps a little English, because I like your English, which is good and clear like your thoughts, but just 'out' enough in tiny details to

p.t.o. →



...a sensation of leisure.  
...is definitely not coming out here. For weeks  
before I left England she said nothing, and for weeks  
after I arrived here, she said nothing. I was put out,  
inconceivable, angry. I wrote an angry letter, but didn't post  
it, and then wrote a lovely letter, full of feeling and love,  
and posted it. The next day a friend arrived, with beautiful  
photographs of the children, and a harsh, curt letter from  
Stephanie. I was glad I had sent the good letter when I had  
continued writing long, warm letters, full of my life here  
conveying much of the joy I felt. I received another hard  
letter, in which she said she had no affection for me at  
all, and indicated that we would never live together  
again. In some ways, life is much easier. I enjoy being on  
my own, free to make decisions, able to respond to all  
the good opportunities that arise. I enjoy the sheer  
physical freedom of being able to wander around when I  
please, and above all, the peace, the interior relaxation  
it comes from not constantly having to relate to another  
person. At times, I have terrible pangs about the children.  
Stephanie says she won't try to break the close relationship  
between the children and me, and I am pleased, and respect  
her for that. Then last week a nice warm letter arrived from  
Stephanie in which she thanked me for the letter filled  
with love which I had sent her ages ago, and to which  
my earlier letter had apparently not been a response, and  
which she softened her hard line without being very  
apologetic, and which it seemed so complicated. I can't go  
back to that life of being dominated by the will and  
fluctuating emotions of another. What I feel now is a  
yearning for Stephanie and me to reach a stage of real



respect for each other. I still have a lot of love  
for her, but

it can't find real expression. I want her to  
feel proud of me, especially when speaking to  
children of me like I am very proud of her. I want  
her to feel pleasure in my achievements and friendships,  
not to be in a state of war against everything I do  
or feel. I want her to think about what we meant  
to each other when we met, about how we entered  
each other's lives; about how so many of our hopes  
and longings were embodied in each other. At the  
moment it looks as though we won't live together again.  
Neither of us feels a need to be definite about this -  
we were living apart in fact, we have nearly two years more  
of this, our lives can work themselves out in the  
meantime.

Como o ar aquecido inflando uma batido  
como a brisa suave enchendo uma vela  
a esperança flutua o meu coração.

I love it here. Part of it is very personal. This is not just  
another country that has followed the path of revolution and  
progress, this is part of my world that has liberated itself.  
I walk to the University past the army barracks, past the  
central prison, past the grand houses and schools of the  
colonial bourgeoisie, and they all have been liberated. I  
witness the transformations, which people here already take  
for granted. I see children playing on a street corner, and it  
is like a miracle. 'Desculpem-me, crianças brincadas na  
esquina, desculpem-me por interromper, mas eu queria  
só apertar tuas mãos. Desculpem-me crianças poltas,  
raustanha e brancas, <sup>mas eu queria só abraçar esta pequena família</sup> e ~~amar o mundo~~. Desculpem-me, mas  
eu sou um sul-africano, e a normalidade desequilibra-me  
desequilibra-me um pouco. Desculpem-me.  
I enjoy meeting people all the time. Everyone is →



... people doing ordinary work have found  
involved in huge transformations. The  
are interesting because nobody just happens to be here  
each person made a decision, each person represents a  
different concatenation of political, cultural and personal  
events. That man having lunch over there - he's a colonel  
from the Portuguese Army, who led a soldiers' revolt in  
1961 and was nearly killed in the attempt. The woman in  
whose mural I worked is a landscape architect from Chile,  
her husband with whom I had dinner one night was a  
Minister of Agriculture in Chile, his brother was hanged by the  
fascists. There are dental technicians from Guinea-Bissau,  
teachers from Holland, agronomists from Bulgaria, language  
students from China and Korea, engineers from Brazil,  
doctors from England, philosophers and economists from the  
R.O.A., many Portuguese, Italian and Soviet cooperants in  
almost every field. The whole world is here. This is  
where American and Cuban technicians will ride in the  
same bus, and where South African businessmen and  
South African revolutionaries will stay in the same hotel.  
And I haven't even mentioned all the U.N. people, and the  
representatives of every conceivable aid-giving agency, FAO,  
WHO, UNDP and more, more. Politics here are strong.  
The leadership is decisive. Things are always happening,  
new structures being created, new groups of cadres being  
formed. This is a land of meetings. There are more meetings  
than ~~are~~ coconut trees. People are being informed, oriented,  
people's views are being considered, new perspectives are  
being created. Meetings are carefully prepared, to achieve  
an object. There are few rallies. The atmosphere is usually  
business-like, quiet. Songs are sung quietly, the vivas are  
not very loud. There is little fervor, rather a calm, orderly  
atmosphere. Cooperants are always made very welcome. One Sunday



... where I joined a group of cooperants helping  
clear the damage of a terrible hailstorm that struck  
city. Afterwards the Mozambican dockworkers gathered with  
us in a group to discuss the meaning of the occasion.  
One of the dockers told us how much they appreciated people  
from allied lands and progressive people from all over the world  
coming to assist in the construction of socialism in Mozambique,  
and he added that he hoped we would learn much from  
experience here as well. Then he asked us to identify the  
countries from which we came. 'Oh-oh', I thought 'here I go  
again.... It's such a strain, always having to explain. The  
first group to declare themselves were the Italians - great  
applause, and smiling face, all round - then the Chileans, strong  
applause, grave faces - then the Cubans, applause and cheering -  
then Portuguese, strong, firm applause - then Brazilians, more  
strong applause. By now the smaller groups were announcing  
themselves, and I was wondering whether to pretend to be one  
of the Italians, next to whom I stood. Canada - applause.  
Damn, I thought, if I can't declare myself here, where can I?  
~~After~~ 'Sub-Africano'. Instantly the dockleader raised his fist  
and shouted 'Long live the struggle of the people of South  
Africa!' 'Abaixo racismo!' 'Viva o internacionalismo!' and  
more. And the dockworkers and cooperants joined in. I was  
swollen with emotion, <sup>and</sup> ashamed of my caution and hesitancy,  
exhilarated by the immediacy of the response. Later there was  
a concert in a large shed in which cultural groups of cooperants,  
and transport workers performed. There was great excitement - if  
meetings are quiet, concerts are noisy with excitement. A Soviet  
balalaika player, Italian singer and a Cuban group performed  
particularly well - the audience went wild for the Cubans -  
but most thrilling of all was a group of railway workers  
doing a Mozambican dance, humming in harmony, and  
stamping their feet in intricate and dramatic patterns, a



ment  
Southern African, to be able to associate  
myself with the rich cultural creativity which our  
part of the world has to offer. Later as the train which  
transported us back to the city centre slowly chugged  
away from the shed, motorists stopped to wave to us, and  
signalmen up in his box gave us the clenched fist  
 salute. My mind might be attracted by complexity, but  
my heart responds to simple things. It was a wonderful  
 session, and there have been many more like that.

Why don't I write about the problems and the difficulties?  
We are enough of them, immense practical problems, survival  
the past, problems of organisation, new problems replacing  
old ones. I see some, experience others, hear about yet  
these, meet people bowled over, knocked out by them.  
It would have to make a real effort to write about  
them, because they are not part of what Mozambique  
means to me. When the basic perspectives and structures  
are so good, the rough details are easy to tolerate: it  
is when you are alienated from the world around you that  
such details become wounding and destructive.

João Delgado Simões, my colleague from Lisboa, who arrived  
a week after I did, having left his legal practice to come here,  
what was his story? I couldn't help wondering. About my age,  
with a handsome, elegant appearance, neat, more suave than  
the other Portuguese I meet, intellectual, friendly, a rapid  
impetuous talker, slightly nervous in manner, good at  
disposition, funny. He teaches commercial law, is immediately  
involved in a heavy programme of lectures. We go to a  
meeting. The Internationale is played. The Mozambicans stand  
raptly, hands smartly at their sides. João raises his arm  
in the clenched fist salute - he can't sing the Internationale  
by other way - his is the only arm in the air. (We  
South Africans hardly know the words - the song has been



the other futebol de salão, the popular  
students, and João, all excited, comes in  
beautiful togs, taking the game seriously. He runs around  
and misses the ball more often than even I do.  
Like many intellectual and slightly delicate men, he is  
prone to emphasize what a sportsman he was when  
younger. We meet, and discuss many ~~and~~ things many  
times, but nothing about ourselves. This cultivated man  
who sings so fervently, lives in a little student quarto,  
walks to and from work every day, eats with students in  
the University cafeteria every day. What is his personal  
story? A man like that hasn't just grown older. His life  
has been involved with someone else, with others. I  
imagine he is as curious about me. But we say nothing.  
It is a luxury just to be ourselves, not to have a past,  
not to be part of a story, to acknowledge each other  
privately on the basis of what we know directly about each  
other. But suddenly to me it seems like keeping secret,  
hiding something that is real, and I mention something  
about my children. And he tells me that he has children,  
and that he was divorced a couple of years back. And I say  
something about Stephanie. And in two minutes our stories are  
told.

Last night there was a concert at the gallery where  
photographs of the Mozambican elections are on display - there  
have been concerts every night, and last night a Portuguese  
group performed. João prepared some notes <sup>for the group</sup> on the meaning of  
elections in Portugal. He is very clear, puts things well,  
crystallizes the issues. He is clever, but I feel he also comes  
from a tradition that encourages clear political thought and  
uncomplicated exposition. The group sings quite well, they are  
friendly together, need to get to know each other a bit more.  
There are mothers and daughters and uncles and fathers, in  
the group and in the audience, all enjoying the occasion.



rigorous is the applause from the  
special affirmation of solidarity, not just  
the generalised internationalism directed towards all co-op  
groups. There is something very straightforward about the  
Portuguese group that makes it easy for the audience to  
respond to them. So in the end, the applause and the  
responsiveness turn out to be more moving, more evocative,  
more profound than the performance.

Ta-ta, bôlia, adeus. Corrige o meu português,  
faz favor, e diga-me um pouco sobre teus pensamentos.  
Bons votos para o novo ano — oxalá que <sup>tu</sup> aumentes a  
tua felicidade, e eu melhore o meu português.

Amor,

Albie

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Faculdade de  
Av. Kenneth Kaunda

Maputo, R.F.  
27/12/77.

Caro amigo,  
Podes ajudar-me um pouco? No próximo ano  
eu vou ensinar Direito Público Internacional. Aqui há  
uma falta dos textos e materiais. Conheces alguma  
professora ou advogado ou juiz que tem interesse  
no este assunto? Nos pensamos especialmente  
os textos com as perspectivas progressistas, que  
sublinham as ligações entre a política internacional  
e o direito internacional.

Eu hei-de participar no curso de direito da família  
esta é muito importante na vida do povo aqui,  
em particular a campanha contra o lobolo. Tens  
alguns artigos ou livros ou panfletos sobre a  
posição em Portugal depois de 25 Abril?

Bons votos para o novo ano.

Albie Sachs  
(Professor de Direito)