

September 20, 1996

Dear Family,

I have been so busy "starving" my body to get it to perform as it ought, that I have unconsciously been starving my intellect and soul. This only became evident to me as I had my senses heightened by several occurrences this past week. First, Barry got us some spur of the moment tickets to the Washington Concert Opera Tenth Annual Gala which was Tuesday evening. We took a friend and neighbor, Marjorie Merrell, who, like Barry, religiously listens to the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoons. It was a wonderful concert and for once I didn't feel fidgety or wonder what was or was not happening at home. In short, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and lost myself in the performers and their music. Secondly, after returning some overdue books of Warren's to the library I stopped at the new book release shelves to scan through the titles. I happened to pick up some interesting titles, including *All Rivers Run to the Sea*, the *Memoirs of Elie Wiesel*, and Bill Moyers' *The Language of Life*. I apologize for not underlining the titles, but the icons at the top of the page disappeared and I don't know how to restore them. I resorted to F8 which used to be underline on my dated Windows program but when I do that it just freezes the screen. My kids are at school and are not here to enlighten their brain-numbered parent.

Losing weight takes an inordinate amount of self awareness and energy and I have found it leaves me little for other outlets. I have not been quilting or sewing or doing much of anything in particular. I wonder why that is? Anyway, I recommend both of these books to all of you. I think that Tracy Jr. would particularly like the Elie Wiesel book. I confess ignorance concerning the dozens of other published titles under his name, but I intend to rectify the oversight. Beautifully crafted and moving, I found myself wishing I knew him and could have a conversation with him. I have only read about a third of the Bill Moyers book, but find it very interesting and stimulating. I was at first annoyed by all the poetry being without rhyme and meter. I kept thinking "Why can't any of these poets write in traditional ways." The wonderful thing about the book for ignorant people like myself is that Mr. Moyers talks with the various poets about their poems and their life experiences behind them and they way they were crafted and how the poetry came to be. It felt rather like I was back in my AP English class in High School with great "old" Virginia DeHart standing on her soapbox and enlightening the thick-headed amongst us about what was actually meant by the words in front of us.

Reading both of these books has awakened my mind to the wonders of language all around me. I have particularly noticed and enjoyed in the past week the wonderful way that Roland puts words together. I am of course a doting parent, but I think he has always had a particular insight and creativity in a totally childish and innocent way for language. Here are two quick examples that happened in the last two or three days. Roland's Grandmother Wood sent him a check for \$8 and a pair of Batman pajamas for his sixth birthday which was last Saturday. I encouraged him to write her a letter to thank her for the gift. He began by laboriously typing out letter for letter on the computer but this soon gave way to me typing and him dictating. He told her that "the pajamas are just perfect, not too hot and not too cold," and he went on to say, "Thank you for the pajamas and the money. I slept in them last night." (Isn't

really page 3 go to next sheet !!

accompany a little basket of items we sent to his mother on Mother's Day. She loved it and it made her cry. So she will remember it and I'm glad he wrote it. Mothers need sons and daughters to make them feel they are loved enough to shed tears for memories and joy. There's a little exchange between Rita Dove and Bill Moyers in The Language of Life. It is as follows:

MOYERS: That sign above your desk says "One lives by memory, not by truth." What does that mean to you?

DOVE: Memory is untruthful and inaccurate. The memories that inform and haunt us are actually probably very skewed--they aren't exactly what happened so much as how we felt about what happened. So our sense of ourselves is often rooted in how we felt in certain situations, but that's only a kind of truth.

MOYERS: And what we make of our experience, how we interpret it, is an ongoing process?

DOVE: Yes, I think even when we begin to understand how wrong we might have been about a certain situation, we still carry the memory of how we felt about it when we thought it happened in a certain way. So what's really strong in us is not truth but memory.

MOYERS: I think it was James Merrill who wrote that one only knows eternity in a grain of sand and one only knows history in the family around the table.

I'm grateful for the history and memory that I have that unfolded around our kitchen table. I'm sorry there aren't more kitchen tables with my siblings in my life right now. How much more of life still needs to be sorted around a kitchen table.

Well, those are my musings for the month. We've had but one letter from Nathan. He sounds upbeat and enthused, so all is well in Zion. Press on, press on.

Much love,

Ginger

Warren is home from school and I asked him how I got the icons back up on the screen. He said he had no idea. It took him all of two seconds to find an idea and restore my icons. He went to Edit and under Edit to Preferences and under Preferences he found various options and restored my Tool Bar to the top of the page. Now how did he know that it was under Preferences? I checked Edit four or five times and never thought to look under Preferences. When I asked him how to underline without using the Icons he showed me, but now I can't remember how he did it already. I know I had to go to two screens just to underline one phrase, which makes using the icons so much easier. Oh, you go to Format and under Format you go to Font. Now who would know that without being told? Good grief.

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