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Letter 1969, April 3, James Tate to Gene DeGruson

James Tate

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Verizon
Personal

3 April 1969
514 East 12th Street
Apartment 11
New York, N. Y. 10009

Dear Gene,

I made ^{it} at least this far. The infinite details involved in moving from one place to no-place wrought a maniacal kind of SS efficiency upon me those last 2 weeks. I sold my car and much of my "furniture," as it was. And I do have three readings in Pennsylvania before departing the continent; plus one charity reading at Yale.

It's good to be away from Kansas City: as you know, I had no real stimulating friends there, just a few drinking partners and a nice girl, which is enough to get by on for a while, but not nine months, for me. I attended a wild party and poetry event last night at Saint Mark's Church on the Bowery--LSD punch (really!) pot birthday cake, pkus 350 joints circulating for the special occasion, plus wine, a small conciliation. I abstained from the punch, but indulged in the cake and joints. The wildest thing was this: good old Ingrid Superstar herself picked me as her evenings entertain~~ment~~, Warhol's debutante. Cosmic mindlessness! I was absolutely giddy with the whole thing, couldn't stop beaming at the ridiculousness of it. Since she was the big catch at the event, everyone had their eyes on us to see what would come of it (I think she had vaguely heard of me, though I couldn't tell for sure, and I made no effort to inform of my literary inclinations because nothing could have been more irrelevant to her designs.) Well, I blew it. It was too mcuh, I walked her to her apartment, listening to her gobbledegook about the eclipse in China that night and how she was a scorpio, and how many pills she had taken that day and her last bad trip and her next movie in Rome, etc etc., and finally stole a big kiss goodnight and slithered back down 10th to the Church where the party was still writhing. All the East Village poets were there-- Ron Padgett, Michael Brownstein, Peter Scheldahl, Anne Waldman, Gerald Melanga, Lewis Warsh and more, plus a few friends of mine, Charles Simic and Nathan Whiting, both of the later being very good poets--the former six being extremely suspect though much celebrated in this part of the world, thanks to their dial-apoem innovation. I have seen Saint Geraud, yesterday; his new book, not to be out for a year, is called Autonecrophilia. He says he is still interested in coming to Pittsburg--to contact him write Paul Carroll, at Follett Publishing Co,

I will meet with Peter Davison from Atlantic, Little-Brown next week to make final decisions on the possibility of doing a book with them. We are now down to bargaining on eight poems--the mss has dwindled from lllpoems to

82, without, I think, too great a loss; but these last eight will tell the story, I may not be willing to surrender them, since I think it shows a very basic lack of sympathy of my work on his part if he is not willing to include them. But I really don't want to be hassling around with this book forever. I'm tired of being identified only with The Lost Pilot.

I tried to call you innumerable times before leaving; sorry to say part of the motivation was mercenary. Yes. Without that 350 my trip will be rather severely limited. I didn't mean to force those prints on you, Gene, and I hope you didn't feel obligated to accept them. If it's at all possible I hope you can post me a Cashier's check to this New York address, c/o Piersol, within two weeks. I feel plenty guilty about mentioning it a second time, believe me, but enough other plans didn't go right in K. C., and I am as of now sitting with only about 200 dollars, which is hardly stuff for a six month jaunt abroad. If it's financially just impossible, please drop me a note and I'll start plotting frantically in some other direction.

My plans for Europe are still vague. I read books and brochures and get ideas but I guess I won't know till I get there. I'm be sure to keep in touch.

There are as always many plays and movies and poetry events buzzing here: and you keep thinking you'll take them all in but when the clock says it's time to go you sink deeper in your chair at the thought of three subway transfers and you end up reading a book and drinking a bottle of wine. I don't know where I'll live when it's Columbia teaching time next year.

The City is in a mess in so many ways. Lindsey is in fact a baboon. Norman Mailor is going to ^{be} running with Jimmy Breslin as city consel chairman. He might even win. The schools are hopeless, much money has been cut for all budgets, there is no housing, rents are skyrocketing, etcetera. Aguh. Oh for the prairies. You cant win.

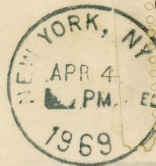
Let me know what you're up to, now and in the summer ahead.

Adieu,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be the name 'Gene', written in dark ink.

James Tate
c/o Piersol
514 East 12th St.
Apartment 11
New York, N.Y. 10009



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