

**Monday, May 16, 2005**

Airport one hour early. Already having internet access withdrawal.

I want all information available to me at all times. Imagine it flowing through the air but I cannot access it. Wasted frequencies. I am convinced that I am on the coolest Mission of all the LA-Cleveland travelers. 5 days of uninterrupted reading and writing ahead. I'm so happy.

The script is coming in a fluid and fluent way. I have 35 pp and plan to double that number in the coming week. I just need to divide/find the right balance between research (IN) and writing (OUT). Stasis ---flow. I enjoy knowledge of the situation I am heading for. The expansive dark wooden table next to the long bank of windows that reach to the ceiling of the spacious 1917's reading room. The 1850's Inn with spring flowers abloom. I wonder if I will have any conversation in the next 5 days or spend a monk's week of silence and contemplation.

I will focus on the letters, also the time of 1968-1970 that I saw little of last year. There are no journals from that time, but a couple of daily memo books and many letters. I will also ask about contacting Tom Doyle, Lucy Lippard and Helen Chirash. I will work on the approach to explaining my project and my commitment to the respectful investigation and staging of this material.

**Tuesday, May 17, 2005**

Got some sleep, in 3 long naps. 4 poster bed with many, many pillows all French Provincial many, many patterns. Quiet old home from the 1850's made into a B&B by a Cleveland native who left the big city for country life. Flowery grounds with azalea and Hostas blooming up a May storm of color.

Got to Allen Art Museum at 10 am and at work by a quarter after. Decided to start at the end and spent morning reading letters from 1962-1970. Interesting long-term correspondence with Dorothy James that goes from the mid-60's through the end of her life. Very passionate, at times troubled, from a woman whom Eva had touched deeply.

..."Only living is important if only one could compose one's life into a beautiful form. The there would be peace; then there would perhaps be a reason for not making things, for not writing things."

Also many letters from Jack Taylor a curator at the Art Museum in Milwaukee. Great humor esp. a letter written when Eva was ill. It differed from so many of the get well letters in that Jack had also struggled with serious illness in his life.

..."It's really not fair, you know, how can I expect sympathy when you consistently outdo me? The solution is of course, simple- you get fully well immediately so I can get sick again. Believe I'll write Tschiesenichy, the Polish God of Tumors and Cataracts, tell him to quit fucking around." (this continues for 4 pp)

After short lunch (good home-made dolma at the local Greek place) read from Eva's journals. The fat, fancy one that Bochner gave Eva for 1966. She didn't use it much as it was too heavy to carry around and maybe too formal. Also read from the journal/diary of 1955 (she is 19 and in Cooper Union). The voice is one of both a searching young adult as well as a lost child.

“I would have been so different if I would have had my mommy. A companion, (?), a real person who loved me not in a purely selfish way and would have sincerely told me when I was wrong would have corrected me with an example or explanation of the right way.”

Started by attempting to work back in time from illness to childhood. Read through letters that cover 69-70 but there are no journals from that period in the collection. Will now skip to earliest writing, teenage letters and the Cooper-Union diary from 1955,

### **Wednesday, May 18, 2005**

Woke at 8 and had fresh blueberry and peach cobbler. Ron does a good job of starting his clients day in a classy manner. Walked to Allen and started with the 1955 diary. Took most of the morning. Eva's 19 year old sensibility used her day planner as an understanding companion. Cooper Union bored her and most of the page space is taken up with psychological self-evaluations. This use of the diary/journal is consistent for most of her life.

Eva comes across in these personal writings as vulnerable, brave, uncompromising and scorchingly honest. Even when comparing the 1955 material with the daybook of 1970 the voice remains consistent. Age and perhaps illness made the words sparer but her commitment to examination of life and work seemed to be ongoing.

### **Thursday, May 19, 2005**

Huge day at the museum. Worked my way through binders 1 and 2. Letters from Eva as well as many undated personal writings from mid fifties up through 1969-70. Have 17 pages of transcripts and about 100 photos of pages with additional writings to be transcribed. The working process has come down to scanning each sheet for relevance and using a combination of logic and intuition to chose the work to photograph and transcribe. Looking for both personal material as well as writing that deals with the development of her artistic process.

Also found today a letter (journal entry?) that was written just after her first operation which describes the experience of falling that ill and the difficulties of her getting good treatment as the cause of her illness went un-diagnosed (mis-diagnosed ) for some time.

“I went to sleep.—such a long sleep. I did  
Not wake till after April 18<sup>th</sup>, evening. Not really,  
I spoke, they say mostly as I were  
cognizant of life of what was going on.  
but- I was not. I remember only  
Monday April 5<sup>th</sup> finishing the box and  
going to sleep. A few isolated images  
and sounds.” .....

I am both photographing as well as partially transcribing pertinent documents and then will, back in LA, continue the transcribing process. I try not to think too much at this point how I will use each entry. Trusting that I will/am being thorough and will leave here with enough solid material to do the job.

I am very happy at this process. Uncovering the words of this deeply interesting person long gone. I would be content to write biography I think although the issue of what to write and how to present a person under the guise of ‘non-fiction’ is problematic.

This all makes me want to return home and put my papers in order. Not that I have as interesting a trove as Eva's, but the sense that one can organize a life and thereby get it under some sort of control is appealing.

Evening back in B&B after walking tour of Oberlin 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Pizza and NY Times. This peaceful Ohio backwater was one of the last stops on the Underground Railroad and Oberlin graduated the first black woman from College, maybe in the entire world, in the 1850's.

Going through the photos from archive. Taken about 100 shots so far. Quality good and will be able to make further transcriptions from these sources.

### **Friday, May 20, 2005**

Still on LA time. Sleep at 2:30 AM up at 8:00 AM. Looking forward to Binder 3 which has correspondence to/from Eva, early years as well as late (nothing in the middle). Tonight I will go to the Art Library where the oversized binder has been put on reserve. A lot of personal corresp. In that binder as well.

Had a chance to see some of Hesse's drawings today. Also photograms. It is remarkable how someone who was so self-conscious in her personal life could have such freedom in her work. The drawings were glorious, funny, original, what a line. Some early figure sketches, but the beauty were in the collages from 1962-3 (pre-Germany). (see photos). The reproductions cannot show the sensitivity of the line. The searching quality and the layering.

Mulling over and am anxious about the idea/action of contacting Lucy Lippard/Tom Doyle/ Helen Chirash. Maybe also Sol Lewitt (who is sick with cancer). I know that my intentions are good and respectful but am afraid that will hear the word 'play' and react negatively. But if not me, who? I am uniquely positioned to do this work, understanding

both the world that she worked in and the theatrical medium, which I now understand she also valued (A nice Jewish girl from New York likes the theater, what a shock).

So when I contact them, do I fess up front that I am working on a play, or just that I am researcher wanting to talk to them about her life? Terror. What to do? But as Lucille says, maybe they'll be excited or even pissed if I don't tell them that I am working on this project. I will deal with that another day. Off to the library for round 2.

Evening. Just back from the Art Library. Binder of oversized correspondence had some treasures. 5 pg. History of the Hesse family (taken by psychiatrist?) letter from Eva's mother Ruth from 1944, Lippard letters (good for voice) , letter from 'daddy' in 1965 (maybe last?) much corr. From Friedrich in Kettwig. More tomorrow then home to begin to sort through it all.

Image count tonight- close to 650, mostly of journal pages and letters, some drawings.

### **Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>**

One session left. Library opens at 12:30 so I have morning to explore. Take bike down Oberlin bike trail East through farmlands and spots of woody areas. Lots of wildflowers birds, open spaces. Ride about an hour and return to B&B to grab computer and head over to Art Library. The collection where I've been working is closed on weekends so the registrar, Lucille Stiger, has kindly left a couple of binders that I still want to look through on reserve for me.

I finish the oversize binder which doesn't take long, but find a very interesting doc near the back. It is an official multi-page doc from the German government. From what I can make out, this may be German reparations sent to Eva and her sister in Dec. 1969. I also have time to make a copy of the manuscript of Cindy Nemser's interview with Hesse done in 1970, just a couple of months before her death.

I just re-read my first-day journal entry. I found much more material than I imagined would be of interest in terms of the development of the project. Therefore, I accomplished something more and something less than what I had originally intended. I am returning with 26 pp of transcripts and over 650 images of journal pages and letters. But I have produced no new script pages. So this has become a journey of intake rather than the balance of IN and OUT that I had originally imagined it would be, I will need time to digest this. And then see where it takes me in terms of new directions in the development of the script.

I have been thinking a lot about the relationship of fact and fiction and how I am to write a dramatic piece about someone who lived and died, whom I never met except through this material which is perhaps more intimate than what we are usually allowed to see/experience of others. Eva comes thorough in these pages as complex, passionate, self-doubting, anxious, determined, astonishingly brave, frightened and meticulous. How much can I/ do I begin to mirror the 'real' Eva and her family and friends or use this life as a stepping off point and create the play 'based on' rather than 'of' her world? Can I ever hope to accomplish something true and accurate of anything other than my own reaction to this material?

Final leave-taking. I return the bike to the Oberlin Bike Co-op, eat a final lunch at Weia Teia. As I am finishing lunch and drinking some light green tea, I cannot help but overhear a conversation taking place in the booth next door, Two women are talking about the coming apocalypse in language one might use to describe a kind of spiritual circus coming to town. They imagine a connection to the shutting down of military bases hat has just been announced by Rumsfeld. This cutting back on national security, they believe, will make way for "All those Asians on the docks" and somehow "something will slip in and we'll be taken by a surprise attack". They surmise that this may be how the Lord wants it to happen and they imagine themselves , after the second coming, as walking around the earth just as they are now, but without sickness or conflict. Just like Jesus walked on Earth, spirit make flesh. This is the last conversation that I 'partake' in before I leave Ohio.

Then I hoof it back to the B&B to meet the car to take me back to the airport.