

Robert Clancy
33-53 82nd St.
Jackson Heights, N.Y. 11372

Sept. 17, 1990

Dear Agnes:

I'm glad you agree to the proposal for the care of the Henry George grave, and I hope we'll soon receive your letter of authorization.

I enjoyed reading your latest book, "Portrait Gallery." Lovely picture on the jacket. I hope you don't mind but it reminds me a bit of Helena Rubenstein.

I wonder that you included Isidora Duncan (whom you did not know) and left out Martha Graham (whom you do know). I note you say there is no film of Isidora. But there is a bit, after all. Although she forbade it, some one hid in the bushes at a lawn party and took some footage of her cavorting around. (It was shown in a documentary about her.) I have to say it didn't look like much to me, just random leaping. She probably instinctively realized that a record of her dancing wouldn't hold up, that it had to be viewed live to get the magnetism of her personality. This seems to be true in some cases, but not all. I remember a film of Carmen Amaya dancing with Toscanini conducting, and I can still feel the electricity of that film. Adelina Patti, a 19th Century idol, unfortunately lived long enough to have her voice recorded, and so another legend goes out the window. Unrecorded Jenny Lind is still a legend. But Caruso's golden voice manages to come through the atrocious recording.

The description of your Hollywood party was quite amusing and reminded me a bit of the hilarious description of the high society party given by Mrs. Bavardage in Tom Wolfe's "The Bonfire of the Vanities." You ruminate on what it takes to make a good party. Most important of all, I think, is, you have to enjoy it, and I have the impression you didn't.

Your anecdote about Rebecca West and Elizabeth Bowen reminds me of another. Various friends worked hard to get together the two greatest writers of the century, James Joyce and Marcel Proust. They succeeded, and after leaving them alone for a while, some one eavesdropped and heard them competing about which one had the most ailments and aches and pains.

Your book was most enjoyable but belies your claim (via our phone conversation) that nuts don't last long in the performing arts/entertainment industry. Also - it's not my imagination - the few times you write about Single Taxers, it is with disdain. Come on now - we're not that bad!

Affectionate greetings,

Bob

P.S. A couple of Henry George School connections. Isidora's equally nutty brother, Raymond, spoke a couple of times at the School. The School had the opportunity to buy some choice real estate from the Marquesa de Cuevas, but the shortsighted trustees turned it down.