My very dearest Friend,

That you took the time to call me and wish me well on my trip has meant more to me than I can ever say. I am not good with words, and hope to do better in a letter than I do in person.

That I sensed a disquieting melancholy in your voice when speaking of the obvious lack of stimulation from an elderly Mrs. Bacon, is a disturbance also for those who love you, and who feel with you the stronger and stronger need for your heard to keep singing with agelessness, freshness and youth. You are a real beacon, as you know very well, for everyone who knows and loves you, for your defiance of limitation

and an endless inspiration to all of us who look to that beacon as Example No. 1 of How To Do It. It must be getting tiring, in those harder moments, to keep having to be leaned on and looked to, we all think you can take everything, but something in your voice gave me a funny feeling that its time now that you could rest a bit from those thousands of obligations to place people and the conventions of years' standing, and now you should have others outdo themselves in a great outpouring of gratitude and understanding, and they should do what they could to repay you for all the life and rejuvenation, joy and beauty, poise and majesty, you have given them for 75 years — You should be surrounded by those things that would keep you happy the longest, those people who stimulate and rejuvenate you, the gayety you find in California — the same understanding for what <u>you</u> need

as you have for what they need. How many millions of people in the world have been understood and rejuvenated by you? Gigantic efforts should be made to do the same for you. We can never repay you, but there are deep, subtle ways of trying.

Your playing has always meant the deepest meanings of life to me. It is deep, unfathomable beauty, boundless joy, utmost simplicity, weakening ~~by~~ renunciousness, the essence of love for everything, the constant striving for more, for more perfection, the staggering calm of assured knowledge and always deepening understanding of life, of realities, of possibilities, the epitome of taste, of elegance, of charm, the strength and courage of the most dauntless nature, and a freedom noone can equal. When the sunshine comes out over the clouds in a sequence

of the first movement of the Brahms Bb concerto, with a very high C then Bb, C Bb, etc on down into the theme again, one can hardly see for the shimmering drops of tears through the sunlight — it is blinding, warm beauty. Noone can do the Carnaval or Kreisleriana like you, the Fantasy, the Schubert Sonata in Bb, the Brahms literature, all the Chopin in the world, the Debussy Poissons d'Or is etched in gold sunlight in my heart, that French record that won the prize still has my stomach in the air, the Valse Nobles et Sentimentales I see you in a gray mist of sophistocation, while alone, walking, dolly, floating in and out of moods and melancholia, of memories, nostalgia — I could never have you end a program or a thought there — you never would — it would be the defiant triumph of a Polonaise, a Mephisto, or a feeling you may not know in Charles Ives — "A strength of hope that never gives way to despair." You have always left me with that, personally and after each concert. This time perhaps the feeling was more like the Ravel — and it is somehow extremely disquieting —

But I am quite certain that by the time you get this letter, you will have forgotten that mood and will have passed into defiant joy once again — I wish everything to help keep that feeling of triumph there — perhaps my naive prayers for you seem hopelessly unrealistic — but when your realism becomes tinged with a certain melancholy which after all must come to you, your devoted friends can only pray for that realism to be replaced by waves and waves of gayety, love, rejuvenating spirits of psychodelic proportions — I want to hear you say, Je m'en fous de la future — like you used to — and surely still do, with that sign of the devil in your fingers.

You are my inspiration, and in that I join millions in saying so. I take it for granted you know that I feel this

way, but I write it down to make sure you know it — it would be very difficult for me to say without crying if I put into it all that I feel. So I stay quiet. But I can write it with every ounce of feeling, so here it is. (Tomorrow I'll feel no differently!)

My love extends to Nela, whose understanding I could only wish to include less jealousy for those who inevitably love you, the millions of us who cannot help it because you love us.

Your devoted

Ceme