



May # 8—Swimming at UBC and Touring the Architecture Department

Visuals: photographs of campus—pools, Lasserre building and displays, view from rose garden, clock tower, library, and a sculpture

I'm just back from UBC (the university that Sandy is from) and I'm feeling a bit like a voyeur....

Mary met me at my school and we got an express bus to the university. The campus has a different feeling than the city. Just inside the university's gates, there is a long, tree-lined drive that goes through a full-size golf course. Green and more green.

The bus stops close to the outdoor and indoor swimming pools. I paid and we went into the change room. Mary met two women she knows. Apparently lots of people go to the pools at the same time each day or week, so they know each other. This makes the place somewhat social, but then Mary is always chatty!

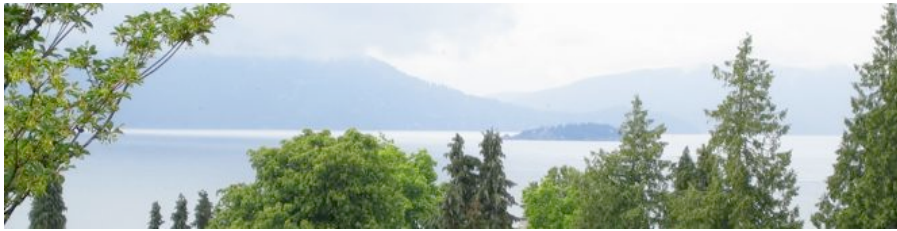
We spent a few minutes in the hot tub. Then Mary asked me if I were ready to make a run for the outdoor swimming pool. We did that. Mary admitted she is not a fast swimmer, so she tries for endurance. I had tired arms before she showed any intention of quitting. When I thought we were getting out, she suggested we do some exercises in the indoor pool.

After a few minutes in the steam room, we dressed and headed off to see other areas of the extremely large campus—so much space between the many buildings.

Mary showed me the two of the apparently many libraries. I noticed a sculpture, within sight of the main library, of a mother and child and wondered if that image, could be viewed as a deterrent to young women students in suggesting they should be preparing to become mothers rather than getting seriously involved in their studies. Otherwise, nice sculpture.



We walked to a flagpole and a rose garden with a view of ocean and mountains beyond, proving as Mary had said that the university site is isolated high up on land surrounded on three sides by ocean.



Then we turned back toward the architecture building, which Mary said was built in the 1960s. It seems a remarkably sterile place, considering that creative people (in fine art and architecture) work and study there. But inside in the main lobby area there was a display of professional architectural projects with models and panels of photographs. And in an upper corridor we found an exhibition of student work. Both were fascinating, and included scale models of buildings as well as architectural sketches.



It was almost silent in the upper hall because of summer schedule having fewer classes. Yet there was one large room where the presence of architectural students was still very much apparent. Within what would have been a large traditional classroom, there were many six-foot square mini studios that apparently the students have assembled for themselves.

Mary explained that this arrangement has been included since the opening of the building in order to counteract the barrenness of the space for architecture students.

She explained these students are each given a permanent space where they create an appealing work space for themselves. These studios include a drafting board and chair, perhaps a table, and whatever else the student wants and can fit in that space. Some of the studios are carpeted or raised above the existing floor, and have a unified colour scheme so that the spaces are more clearly defined as separate, unique rooms. Some have posters, draped fabric, or bookshelves serving as partial walls. Some contain personal possessions—cushions, a guitar, sandals, a kettle and coffee cups, cookie tin, photographs. So appealing. So revealing of each individual.

I couldn't help thinking about Sandy being part of this. Having a place here. Dare I admit, I was even feeling his presence? And I confess I was thinking, is there any chance I could study architecture here instead of at home? And what if this could be at a time that Sandy is back in the department?

Being a very intuitive person, Mary senses my interest in Sandy. She knows that he has studied architecture at UBC and is now taking time off from his studies. She must have been reading my mind, because when an instructor of the department came by, Mary managed to strike up a conversation with him (another chance to be friendly!). I was somewhat embarrassed by my thoughts, so I kept my distance pretending to be totally absorbed by the displays.



Mary asked, "Could an international student be accepted into the department?"

"You mean into the Master of Architecture program?"

"Is that what it is called now for someone entering who already has a bachelor's degree?"

"Yes, that would be for the Master of Architecture program. And the answer is 'yes.' International students can be accepted providing that person has excellent marks, a strong portfolio and, of course, the language requirements," he responded.

"And when would that person need to apply?"

"Early in the January prior to the desired September admission date."

"I see."

"As you might expect, being accepted into the program is highly competitive, but we do have a fair representation of international students."

"So it would be difficult but not impossible," Mary commented.

"Exactly," the instructor said as he excused himself and turned away from Mary to speak to a student who apparently had an appointment with him.

And the student? He was Asian! What I heard of the beginning of the conversation indicated he had a non-Canadian accent. Not Japanese, but at least Asian!

Again I was thinking how wonderful it would be if Sandy and I could attend at the same time. Then I thought of Sabine's advice and did an accounting. I've seen Sandy three times and been in his presence a total of how many hours? Six maybe? That's it.

"Get a grip," I tried to convince myself while thinking of Sabine's attitude and expression: "Or you will be dreaming your life away."





MAY # 9—Goodbye Evening for Sabine

Visuals: photos from lookout lounge and from Korean restaurant

Sabine is leaving tomorrow morning to return to Switzerland, so I am feeling understandably depressed. Tonight our classmates had a goodbye dinner for her.

First we all we went for an appetizer or a drink at a rotating lounge with a 360-degree view of the city on the thirtieth floor. The rotation takes an hour to complete as it shows the West End and Stanley Park, south across the city, the East Side as far as Burnaby Mountain, and the Harbour and beyond to the North Shore Mountains.

In being seated at a table, Bae confirmed his fear of heights, as he avoided going too close to the window. Or was this just an excuse to hold Sumi's hand after seeing Daniel standing with his arm around Song's shoulder? Barry and Se-Eun (she seems to be back in good spirits) sat beside each other without apparent concern about how this might look.

For a moment, I tried to think when I felt someone was missing from the group. Oh, yes, Claudia. She is in Europe with her boyfriend while he is there on business. Having travelled with him many times in Europe and Asia, and because of struggles with his parents over her relationship with their son, she apparently doesn't find such trips the pleasant, romantic events that one might imagine.

As we prepared to leave the revolving lounge to go to a nearby Korean restaurant where we had a supper reservation, Noboru tried to convince us to stay where we were for dinner. He said he wanted to see the nighttime view of the city.



In trying to persuade us to stay, Noboru revealed (again) that he never thinks of the cost implications for others (dinner at the rotating restaurant is significantly more expensive than at the Korean one). Certainly the high price would be prohibitive for Nicole, and there are others of us who simply don't choose to spend that much.

Luckily Marina spoke up saying she would rather stick to our original plan. There was some discussion, and then she took a vote. All but Noboru and Juliana decided to carry on and go to the Korean restaurant. The two of them said they would join us there later for dessert.

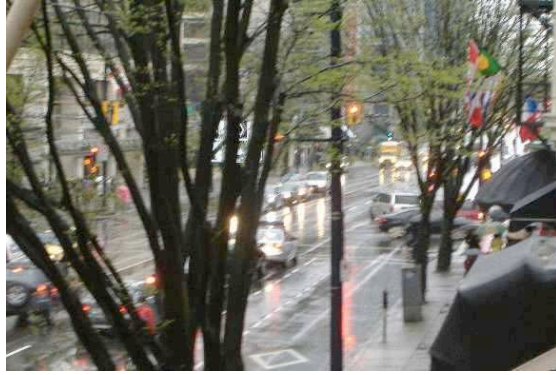
Until this incident, I had been thinking of apologizing to Noboru for my somewhat harsh words to him on the bus on the way back from skydiving. With this episode, I felt, instead, that I needed to give him another lecture! But I held my tongue at the time.

It was just becoming dark and was raining as we left the rotating lounge. Sharing umbrellas, we walked in pairs to the Korean restaurant. I thanked Marina for speaking up and for conducting the vote.

The Korean restaurant was also above street level but only on the second floor. It was warmly lit by the glow of the flickering flames in the centre of each table. It seemed an intimate setting and dare I say I was thinking I would love to have dinner here with Sandy.

We left the ordering to Se-Eun since most of us don't know much about Korean food, except for Bae and Song, but of course they didn't interfere. After Se-Eun talked decisively and at length in Korean to the waiter about our order, he brought a wide variety of ingredients to our table. She had indicated that she would do the cooking (optional for customers).

Se-Eun proceeded to do this as if it were a choreographed performance. Her chopsticks danced over the flames. (She has lovely hands.)



Just in time for dessert, Noboru and Juliana arrived shaking out the umbrella they had shared. We all shuffled aside slightly because we had closed in around the table ignoring the chairs that originally had been set out for them.

“How was your main course?”

“Excellent. Excellent.”

“And so was ours. Thanks to the wonderful cooking of Se-Eun.”

The waiter directed the two of them to sit between Marina and me. Noboru took the seat further from me. Trying to avoid me again?

We had a few quiet moments as everyone went over the dessert menu. Se-Eun answered questions as to what certain items had in them or tasted like. Most of us followed her well-considered advice.

As people were finishing dessert and ready for some tea or coffee, Sabine opened our gift—a cuddly Canadian teddy bear—and a funny going-away card we had all signed. She seemed to enjoy them and said she will be very pleased to have the bear sit on her bed reminding her of all of us and her wonderful time in Canada.

“He can sit on your bed AND keep a certain unwanted boyfriend away from your bed,” Marina commented.

“Yes, even better,” she agreed.

“So what should we call him?” Nicole asked.

“Right, this bear must have a unique name.”

We were laughing as we brainstormed silly rhymes starting with “Ready Teddy, Heady Teddy, Steady Teddy, then turned to “Beddy Bear, Fair Bear, Hair Bear, Pair Bear.”

Finally Noboru said, “These are all so boring.”

Juliana agreed with him.

Marina said, “Look, let’s be more serious. It should be a Canadian name.”

“Good point,” Barry said encouragingly.

So then we started calling out every word we could think of with Canadian associations to it. Again we laughed a lot at the absurdity of some of the names that were suggested.

Finally Daniel declared, "Hey, I've got it. Remember that guy we heard about when we studied seventeenth century settlement in Canada? Talon. The one who recruited settlers from Europe...."

"Great idea, Daniel. You are referring to Jean Talon, intendant of New France," Noboru stated.

"Yes, he's the one."

"And what a good association. The Talon part."

"That means having claws worthy of a bear. Right?" Bae dared to add.

"Yes, talons are very sharp, hooked claws," Barry confirmed.

So we all agreed the teddy bear would be called Talon (even if his talons are yet invisible), and his duty is to keep Hans out of Sabine's life (and specifically out of her bed). All this was in good fun. I don't think Sabine appreciated Juliana when she provided somber, contrary advice—which is to marry Hans!

"Obviously he has good genes. And biologically it's the right time for you, Sabine," Juliana reasoned. "Have your kids now and then re-think your relationship later if you want to. It's not worth risking never having kids just because you hope to find someone you think you might love better."

Daniel and Marina helped Sabine recover from this annoying comment in promising to see Sabine once they are home in Switzerland and nearby Liechtenstein. As Sabine's closest male friend in Vancouver, Fernando seems particularly affected by this pending separation. The likelihood of his getting to Switzerland from Mexico anytime soon is almost non-existent as he plans to do further university studies on his return home.

Fernando and I are going to accompany Sabine to the airport in the morning. We are all aware that this is the first experience of part of our group breaking away. Yet we all know having to say goodbye will happen often, as most of us will be leaving Vancouver to return home at different times.

Because Sabine has been my main confidant, I know I am going to miss her. (And what will happen when she is not here to caution me against trying to increase my bond with Sandy?) More than ever, thinking about parting makes me want to make the most of each moment that I am here in Vancouver.

When we were waiting to leave the restaurant, Noboru and I were standing alone somewhat awkwardly at the entrance. I didn't know whether to start with my positive or

negative comments. The positive seemed much easier to express, so I acknowledged that he deserved an apology from me for being frank, rude even, to him on the bus on the way back Richmond.

I thought he was going to just sulk when I said this, but actually he accepted my apology graciously. He admitted it had been painful to hear my opinion of his habits but admitted it has given him useful insight into what others might think of him too—lessons that he will try to remember.

Then I said, “However,” and paused.

“However?” he asked, prepared for more disapproval.

“I need to say I think you were inconsiderate, selfish even, in suggesting we stay at the rotating lounge for dinner. Inconsiderate because you again disregarded the hardship that the additional expense might have had on the rest of us.”

“I see. And selfish?”

“For putting your interest first rather than recognizing that tonight we are out as a group to honour Sabine.”

“So, I still have a long way to go to win your respect, don’t I, Erika?”

Luckily I didn’t have to respond to this because at this moment the rest of the group gathered around us. We filed out the door. And when we got to the bottom of the stairs, looking out into the dark rain, Daniel helped Song put on her raincoat. Wouldn’t that be nice....

There were a lot of hugs for Sabine, some tears, and all of us seemed reluctant to venture beyond the first step to disperse. I decided to take the bus home, as the bus stop was right there. The North Shore group waited with me.

As I climbed the step of the bus, Noboru sheltered me with his umbrella as he might do for an elderly aunt who he feels needs help. So does this mean he is even more annoyed at me for my comments, or was this his non-personal approach to me?

“See you in the morning,” Sabine and Fernando called as I waved from the window of the bus.

The group waved back and then began to walk in the opposite direction. Barry and Se-Eun, however, were still standing close together, not moving with the rest of the group. What were their further plans for the evening, I wondered....

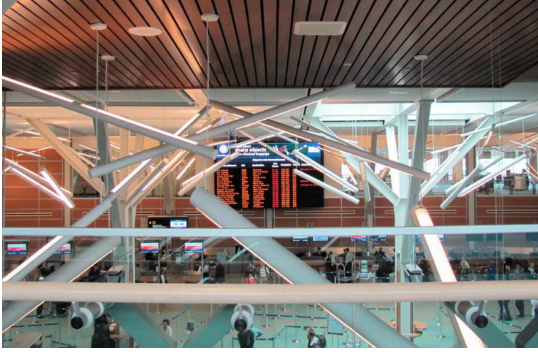
Later last night, when I couldn’t sleep, I received an email from Noboru—a surprise, as it was a first. I have never exchanged emails with friends who are within reach for face-to-face conversations. Noboru explained, saying he doesn’t have

Sabine's email address, and he asked me to forward a letter of apology to her. (So my advice has had some effect on him!)

He attached a photograph of the city at night that he had taken over dinner after the rest of us had left the rotating restaurant. Striking view. But strange to see the city looking orange and brown. To me it more usually looks green and blue.



This aerial view of downtown Vancouver at night courtesy of Matthew Gemin, France



MAY # 10—Sabine’s Airport Departure

Visuals: photographs of airport interior, Bill Reid’s canoe sculpture, and totem sculptures

In a cab from North Vancouver, Fernando and Sabine picked me up on their way through the city to the airport. Sabine told us she felt numb about leaving those of us who have been so much part of her life for the past two months. Still, she was excited in anticipating seeing family members who would be meeting her at the Zurich airport. She said she hoped Hans would not be among them. (How likely is this?)

With Sabine’s luggage checked, we were we free to pass some time on the departures level before Sabine had to go to her boarding gate. We looked at some First Nations sculptures nearby—totems and Bill Reid’s famous huge canoe with First Nations people.



Fernando had his arm around Sabine's shoulders. She seemed comfortable with this perhaps knowing their intimacy wouldn't go any further. Perhaps she was even feeling glad to accept Fernando's attentions, as something Hans would disapprove of.

"Water? Coffee? A magazine?" Fernando asked in trying to anticipate Sabine's needs. When Fernando momentarily left us alone, Sabine in lowered voice gave me her parting advice.

"So promise me you are not going to go and fall in love and get hurt, Erika. I mean it. I don't want to hear about any heartbreak over Sandy." She added, "Well, I'd want to hear about it, of course, but I don't want it to happen. Are you listening?"

"Yes, Sabine," I laughed. "I hear you."

I was misty eyed when Fernando and I finally waved as Sabine headed for the gate. On the way back on the bus, in order to divert Fernando's attention, I tried to talk to him about Nicole. I realize now this was insensitive. Anyway this was to no avail as Fernando was just thinking about Sabine and how much he is going to miss her.

This seems somewhat strange to me as the two of them never seemed to belong together. It's as if, despite being the same height, she is too big for him, especially in personality. Except when Fernando is on the dance floor, he is quiet and shy.

Sabine, however, was always up for meeting anyone and willing to do anything—walking through the bush, swimming in the ocean, skydiving, hiking, nightclubbing, etc. It is as if she purposely did things that her (ex-?) boyfriend wouldn't approve of and went out of her way to be other than her at-home, conservative banker self.

I wonder if, back in Switzerland, will Sabine continue to be relaxed and able to live a balanced life, beyond the demands of her work and the dictates of the controlling Hans?

I can't help worrying about Sabine succumbing to the advice that Juliana verbalized—that she marry Hans and rethink their relationship after she has at least one child. I hope it doesn't come to that for Sabine.





May # 11—Birthday Party and Seawall Walk with Sandy

Visuals: photos of pool, shots of sculpture on the beach, totem poles, cityscape in evening sun, nine o'clock gun

To: sabine.gerhardt@gmx.ch

From: May 31, 2004

Subject: A Sandy update

Dear Sabine,

Today was Juliana's 31st birthday, and we celebrated with a party in the basement of the church she has been attending. She knows some of the international students there who have been billeted in an adjoining house for the past few months, so they came too. I think everyone enjoyed the food that Juliana, Claudia, Se-Eun, and I put together after buying the ingredients. Even Barry helped us in the church kitchen. It all came together as a nice spread on a cheerful tablecloth (one that Mary lent me). We had music and lots of us danced.

Nicole felt sorry for Fernando for missing you, so she spent most of the time dancing with him, as they are the two most enthusiastic dancers in the group. When she was not dancing with him, she was busy trying to teach Salsa to everyone else.

I wondered if Barry and Se-Eun might dance together, but as a teacher Barry must know he has to be discrete and avoid obvious favouritism that suggests further closeness.

Nevertheless the two of them sat together the entire evening. Even Nicole hardly interfered with them.

As much fun as this was, the party was not the best part of my day. That came after.... Of course I am referring to contact with Sandy. Yes! Finally! Sandy is back from the tour. Now I know you don't want to hear this, but I also know you'll want to hear all about this! And I need to get this out, so here goes....

After Juliana's party, as I was walking toward the back door of the apartment, I spotted Sandy standing at the side of Larry's van holding a large acoustic speaker. As he glanced up and saw me, I stopped. Just stopped.

"Hi," he said, obviously pleased.

Seeing him felt like a wonderful hug. I was so happy. He looked so good in cutoffs and a bright blue version of the Alums tee shirt, like the first one I had seen him in.

When I got my feet working again, I walked over to him and managed to sound calm in saying, "How was your tour?"

"Pretty good, but exhausting. We've just driven nonstop from Calgary."

"Is that a long way?"

"About 1,300 kilometres. We shared the driving but it's all through mountains. It's certainly not a relaxing drive. So I am certainly glad to be back."

[Could I be part of the reason he was glad to be back?]

"And I'm looking forward to sleeping at least 10 hours straight."

[Am I so transparent that I registered this comment as a disappointment?]

"But listen, I just need a few minutes to unload this equipment."

He paused a moment, looked at me directly, and then added, "Could we go for a walk on the seawall once I'm done?"

The seawall. I had to smile to myself in remembering about Nicole's dream of walking on the seawall with Barry.

"I'd like that."

He seemed pleased again. Larry came around the corner.

"Erika...."

"Hi, Larry."

I'm still trying to interpret the look that passed between Larry and Sandy.

"Leah is inside," Larry said.

"Is there something I could carry in for you since I'm going that way?"

"Sure. How 'bout this?" Sandy said, offering me a guitar case.

I stopped at the open door of the apartment, but Sandy carried the speaker inside the apartment without hesitating. Leah seemed happy to see me again. Despite having just completed a long, tiring drive, she looked as fresh and lovely as ever. Why do I think she looks more like a ballet dancer than the manager of the band? As well as singing, she apparently organizes all the bookings, travel arrangements, and is in control of the finances of the band.

Sandy told me he would come up and knock on the apartment door when they'd finished unloading. Luckily Mary hadn't started making dinner yet and I wasn't hungry after all the party food, so I just had a glass of juice and put some grapes in a bag to take along. Mary could tell I was pleased at the chance to spend some time with Sandy.

When Sandy arrived at the door, he was wearing light khaki pants and a cream tee shirt.

"You look refreshed."

"Yes, there's nothing like a shower, even a quick one, to revive you."

"That *was* quick!"

"I was motivated," he smiled.

He mentioned bringing a camera and a sweater, saying it could sometimes be cool near the water.

"Actually I always have my camera in my bag."

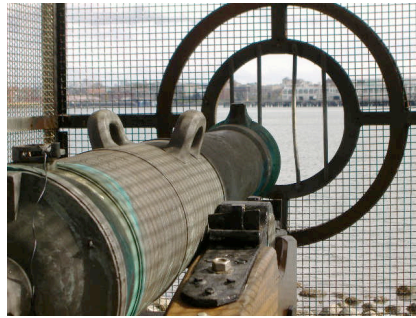
I put a light sweater around my shoulders. Then we headed down toward the beach before turning into the path that borders between the last of the high-rise apartments and Stanley Park. We followed the path till we got to the harbour side of the seawall. While I have been on the seawall with Mary and with boisterous, energetic students, walking there with Sandy made me feel much more alive.



As we made our way around Coal Harbour, the downtown cityscape was glowing. All the tall buildings looked like they were made of gold as they reflected the sun.

We sat on a bench and watched this glow and the diversity of people going past along the seawall—couples, families, babies in strollers, groups of teenage boys, trios of fit looking young women, joggers, cyclists, those on roller blades, and dogs walking their human companions.

Finally Sandy suggested we head toward to the nine o'clock gun. Having heard it while sitting with Mary at the dining room table, she had alerted me to the fact that it sounds louder sometimes more than other times, depending on which way the wind is blowing. Nevertheless, I was unprepared for how it sounded up close. I physically reeled back a step or two as it went off, so Sandy laughed at me.



We headed back along the Lost Lagoon path. We were out in the shade as we walked over the little footbridge and through a wooded area. As soon as we were back on the seawall, we were again bathed in golden light. We walked directly toward the sun.

Now I know you don't want to hear this, Sabine, but I admit the whole time we were walking I was wishing Sandy and I could hold hands. What would have to happen between us for that to ever happen? It seemed such a gap to bridge.

We walked awhile squinting at the glitter of light on the ocean (I had forgotten to wear my sun glasses). Seagulls were still squawking overhead—do they ever calm down? We stopped briefly and watched a heron patiently standing on one leg waiting for a fish to swim by. More patient than I am, I was thinking.

As we came close to the viewpoint with five benches all facing in slightly different directions, Sandy asked, "Shall we sit down?"

"Okay."

As I stepped to the left, a cyclist came speeding past from behind us. Luckily Sandy saw the red streak just in time and reached out and drew me toward him. I felt the surge of air as the cyclist swept by touching the loose sleeve of my sweater, almost crashing into me. Shaken and leaning against Sandy's chest, I could feel my heart pounding in my alarm.

"Whew! That was close," Sandy said.

"Yes, close. Glad you saw that in time."

"You okay?"

I didn't want to say yes too quickly as it felt so good leaning against Sandy, his arm around my shoulder, the side of my forehead against his neck. Wordlessly we revealed that we were in no hurry to move apart. Really, we didn't make any attempt to move even as I recovered from the shock of nearly getting hit. So we started to laugh.

We laughed away our awkwardness and my dissipating freight. I was sorry that, when we sat down on the bench, Sandy took his arm away from my shoulder. But we were comfortable and we sat close. I got out the bag of grapes and shared them, sitting there in the glow of the evening sky.



I love these long Vancouver evenings. And it's still almost a month from official summer. While I felt that we were fairly relaxed, I was surprised that I couldn't get my self to tell Sandy I had gone to see the architecture department at UBC. And why? Did I feel like I was spying on him by going there? Trying to get close to him through understanding that part of his life?

Would he feel I was taking the side of his parents as if to encourage him to return to his architectural studies and give up the band? Perhaps another time I may be able to admit to visiting there.

Also, I had taken some pictures of the scenery and of course I would love to have a picture of Sandy. Why am I afraid to even admit I'd like a picture of him?

But now the worst part....

Sandy stated that, after playing tomorrow night at a sold-out concert in West Vancouver, the band is to leave early in the week for the part of the tour that goes into the Interior.

I felt crushed, yet all I could say was, "The Interior?"

"Yes, Penticton, Kelowna, Vernon, Revelstoke.... Have you heard of them? They are about a five- to eight-hour drive."

"But when will you be back?" I was sorry this sounded like a demand.

"In about three weeks. These few days in Vancouver are a stopover on our Canadian tour. A time to get a decent sleep and do our laundry before proceeding with the rest of the trip. And speaking of sleep.... I really should be getting back."



I felt wounded. Could he feel that? We were quiet again as we walked in the mauve-pink light through the park and past the tennis courts on the way back to the apartment. I was still wishing we could hold hands, but we didn't. He made no effort at any physical contact in parting. He simply said goodnight, and I said, "Good luck with the rest of your tour." (How impersonal is that!)

I am so deflated. Already I can feel you being critical, Sabine. Really, what would you have expected me to say when Sandy asked me to go for a walk? "No, I am washing my hair tonight?"

Mary said that is what the girls in her high school used to say when approached by some guy they didn't like. But for me this is not the case. So... don't be too hard on me!

I hope your trip home had no unexpected difficulties. Your relatives and friends must be glad to have you back. What

about Hans? Did he know not to be at your doorstep the minute you returned? Why is it that I somehow doubt this? (Was he even at the airport?) So how are you handling him?

I really miss you!

Love,
Erika



Photographs of rock sculptures courtesy of Christian Knaus, Austria



To: yoko.yamishiro@chiclooks.co.jp
From: erico.yamishiro@mobilityelite.co.jp
Date: June 1, 2004
Subject: Attachment in lieu of diary entry

Hi Yoko,

Please add my message to Sabine as a diary entry, as it is an update on my contact (unsatisfactory) with Sandy. I don't have the energy to communicate this again, even in Japanese.

As you can tell, this message has been thoroughly edited. My English writing has been improving significantly but not to this level! I confess I accepted Mary's offer to help in upgrading this, as she and I had finally talked about how I feel about Sandy, and how disappointed I am about his going away again. So I don't mind her knowing what I was telling Sabine. And I certainly appreciate what she can teach me through examining my writing.

I would like to hear more about Dad's pressure to get you to make a commitment to Koji. I hope I don't need to be worrying about you on this point. After loving Andrew so much, I can't see you settling for second best. If you have any doubts, think about what marriage has been for Mom....

Love,
Erika

p.s. Nice pool, eh? (Note Canadian expression!) Easy to see why it is so pleasant walking on the seawall on a summer evening with someone you care about.

From: yoko.yamishiro@chiclooks.co.jp
To: erico.yamishiro@mobiityelite.co.jp
Date: June 1, 2004
Subject: Intimidation tactics

Erika,

Your curiosity regarding Dad's approach is understandable, but the details on this need to be reserved for when we talk in person rather than spelling them out in writing. I've already told you some things in emails that I would hate for Dad to see. But yes, as I mentioned, Dad is making things awkward for me; you know his attitude. However, don't worry— I'm not going to buckle under his pressure. Luckily Koji is not eager for marriage right now either.

I confess, however, I am trying to think if there is someone I could introduce Koji to, someone he might love, someone who would not be jealous of my friendship with him and would allow for our continued contact without the assumption (by those around us) that we will become a couple. Too much to expect?

I am totally impressed with your lengthy email to Sabine even if Mary did heavily edit it. But, Erika, I'm worried about you too and your preoccupation with Sandy. He may notice you but, if so, he definitely seems to have some issues that keep him from acting in a direct manner. (What are they?) Meanwhile, don't restrict yourself at this point. He can't be the only interesting guy in Vancouver.

Love,
Yoko

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