

September 6 1949

Ted-----

Right now a kind of haze for me--not, unfortunately, a blurred dreamy one. It's all a strange new world quite unlike the place I left some years ago, which was bad enough. The LA influence has its foot here in the architecture, all the drive-ins and the fancy facades. Quite horrifying. And the names....the Territorial Cancer group (or whatever their name is) has its office in what's called the Cancer Kottage. They might as well have added another K. But then the old guard still remains, all the little Japanese and Chinese shops (you must have noticed them) somehow anachronisms now.....my father's business included. Still, even in the midst of all the new things going up Honolulu seems to be a dying place... the strike, the unemployment and what not. Incidentally an imitation of Forest Lawn is going up now. I've seen the prospectus written in Japanese. Idea is Forest Lawn but the architecture is oriental-modern. I take it as a sign of the dying city although the whole affair I suppose can be seen as a kind of new vigor. Everything seems more and more grossly commercial. There may be a possibility in a satire on the whole damned new pace. Shall always be a reactionary.

So far I've made little effort to contact the people I've known since the ones I've already bumped into have somehow depressed me the more--they all seem ghosts of the people I knew. And everybody talks of nothing but the strike.....and kids. The record so far is someone I knew all during my childhood--four brats to his credit and hardly able to support them. And hearing about the birth rate among all the people I know, I'm inclined to think that birth-control is less widely practiced than I'd supposed. It could be the old thing about the tropics making people more passionate although those people look to be without much passion. Wouldn't know.

What I mentioned to you has happened. The issei slapping me in the face with their solicitous attitudes--being kind to someone else's prodigal son. I wish I could be flippantly fluent in Japanese. By the way I just saw a Japanese movie that was a scream--it was horrible in that utterly horrible way that you can't help but enjoy it. Begins with a judo match--the winner just after winning the match (he wins by throwing someone through a wall!) receives his draft call. Meanwhile someone listening to the match over the radio has a stroke (he and his daughter keep coming into the story for really no apparent reason except for lengthening the movie). Next shot is after the war, the hero surveying the ruins of Tokyo (he wears the soldier's uniform). Walking through town he has a run in with a gang of hoodlums wearing rather zooty American type two tone suits and shoes. Hero eventually gets mixed up with the gang because the leader happens to be an old friend. On the first job (one of those protection mobs) he goes to some market with the bunch to collect protection money--encounters the opponent whom he'd thrown through the wall, now a cripple because of the match. Has a lovely sister. close-up of her face, closer close-up of the crucifix

dangling down her neck. Cripple delivers lecture on judo, a wonderful ~~sport~~ sport not to be prostituted for the ends of crime; hero meanwhile chases out the mob. Hero contrite. Returns to mob-leader to hand in resignation, leaves, followed, surrounded. Must pay the penalty of hundred strokes; bows and is beaten by sticks and stones. Cripple's sister leaving church (Japanese Gothic) to the tune of ~~the~~ sanctimonious ~~church~~ organ music. Unable to do anything about the beating but goes to his aid when over. Sit on church steps. Says he's going straight, that she'll never see him till he gets a respectable job. She hands him a Bible for his moments of tribulation. Fade-out. Big crosses in back-ground and three theatrical looking nuns singing the Ave Maria. Hero works pedalling a bicycle cab. Hero is real heroic, turning his other cheek and that sort of thing. Afterwards there's attempted rape, a real murder, a fight in which the hero saves the cripple from the mob and finally the police getting them all. ends with hero and cripples sister walking ~~in~~ towards each other--excruciating scene, wondering whether they'll kiss or not. at any rate they walk off into a painted backdrop of a sunset.

Well what did you think of sounding brasse?

That girl you met isn't here any more. But my folks had a picture bride living with them...no, not for me. Very pretty girl, born in Frisco but spent most of her life in Japan, came back as picture bride. Couldn't stand husband and walked out after two months.

Now it's mostly drivel coming out--but this far and I still haven't thanked you. I dislike making elaborate thank yous and yet without going through some such rigamarole I really don't know how to thank you for all the mooching I've done on you and the various members of your family. I'm beginning to trip over myself, so--thanks a lot.

Bob