

#4 GLENARIEFF, Thursday 20th March, 1997.
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Today is two (2) years since Sha left us and I am still bleeding. When the phone rang at 6.15 this morning I was afraid that it was Sha's nurse telling me in trying to stand up Sha fell to his death, but it was my darling Betty telling me she would take me to hospital at 7.30am. Clinton too has had surgery to his knee, but he wont have Sha's bad luck.

My trip to JHB was a wow. Gonda picked me up at 6am on Thursday 6th March, 1997. How she managed leaving Ayanda asleep is beyond me. It had rained incessantly and did not let up until I left on Sunday 16th. The trip up on a Translux coach in pouring rain was nerve wracking. At Swinburne the coach stopped and we sought the loo in pouring rain. No umbrellas were available since we left Durban in sweltering heat.

My friends (not comrades) note that my birthday was on the 5th January and I was 69. I told Gonda that I was in my 70th year when she phoned to tell me Ayanda had fallen and hurt her mouth requiring stitches. I promised to come up to see my baby. But I could not get away till now. So Gonda organises a late 70th birthday. Never has so much fuss been made on my birthday. In fact I had a birthday calender of my nieces and nephews and friends - (over 300 names) and one year in exile no one remembered mine so I destroyed the list.

Gosh Translux has had an accident killing its driver and one passenger - last night. Our bus did not have a change of drivers. It was tiring driving in the rain. I must write to complain.

I have a years supply of toilet soap from my friends. I am sure they are sending me a message. I shower daily and twice in Durban in Summer and that should have sufficed ne? Trish and Derek brought sugar free ice cream/yogourt to cater for my recently arrived sugar diabetes. Food from Ingrid and Rishi, Joyce and Simon, Esther Barsel, (she phoned and greeted me on the 5/1/97) Helene, and booze from many others. Desi's book on Cuba waits to be explored. Ebi, Mandla, Ilva, Clare, Carmen and Martin and others. Thank you. You realise that now that I have celebrated my 70th birthday, you cannot do it twice. So no more. Thenji arrived with a lovely track suit not wrapped and assured me that it was not Mpando (2nd hand clothing that the ANC provided for us in exile). It was a wonderful party. Thank you all

My whole week in JHB was super. Lunch with Benjy on Saturday; Stella was great; breakfast with Tami, Cobb and Reed; Dinner with Rashid and Esther; Spent a few hours with Blob who is recovering after a nasty accident riding in a Kombi;

Dinner with Bill, Margaret, Conning, Marlene and Eric dear friends; On Monday dinner with Crystal; Cooked dinner for Jenny Cargill; Mistake Clare's dinner invite; dinner with Helene; TRD office had a another birthday party and Cheryl gave me a signed copy(Oom Nel) of the Constitution; Friday, lunch with Esther B, dinner with Benjy Francis and family;Breakfast with Des on Saturday. The watch from the Sengalese at Chicken Licken does not work. Will send back with Gonda. Tackle him Des; lovely Saturday afternoon with Martin, Carmen and Carmen's parents. It was wonderful. Thank you all.

The journey back home was lovely. There were two drivers which eased the driving load. It rained daily in JHB. I had taken two outfits thinking I would wash one and wear one. No such luck. It is warm/hot in Durban. Summer seems endless and yet JHB 5 hours drive from here was into Autumn.

Did I tell you all that when Sha returned from Cuba after 10 years, he brought a taped recording of Harry Belafonte's songs. Whenever we went out to Verulam to visit my Dad who was ill - I had to report 4x 2 in Durban and 2 in Verulam. When they saw me coming out of the police station, they would sing his Matilda. Sha remembered and brought me his music. Also he found in Cuba a translation of Fidel's "History will absolve me" speech at his trial in English. He brought these precious gifts for me. Today Haroon came to see me and like Martin he had not read Fidel's speech. I gave it to him. No revolutionary should be heard saying he has not read it. It is a must. I hope you like your copy Martin.

The monthly trip to the hospital tells of the vagaries of the HBP but the sugar seems under control.

Unless you come this way, I shall not be sharing your winter this year. However the Cosmos was in bloom and - " 10,000 saw I at a glance " on the way home. It was breathtakingly beautiful. Just before PMB they faded out of sight. I wont tell you who but someone high in the ranks and much travelled did not know what was Cosmos. My Mother Josephine at Masite tells me they are on show at Masite as always for Easter. That is where I met this phenomenal beauty. Thenji you should write to Mother Josephine and the other Nuns at Masite. They remember you with so much affection.

All my love to all of you.

Phyllis Naidoo

