

Dearest Mom and

Forgive me for being so long in writing. I know you understand. In Shell Mera it was a madhouse, with even his brother coming and going, the rescue squads, soldiers, officials, missionaries, and as five widows with eight children all in one house, one could not get anything done. I don't know when you must have gotten the word, but be assured I was thinking and praying for you, as I knew it would be a great shock. I did not know that Jim had told you anything at all about his plans, until your letter of Jan. 4 reached me yesterday. It was something of a relief to know that you had known something ahead of time. I do not know how much Jim told you, or what all you have gotten in the reports. We have read some newspaper accounts which have been perfectly preposterous. I have sent you under separate cover an accurate account written by Abe VanDerPuy of H.C.J.B. Anything which you read in the papers which does not appear in that account is false. His account is complete and accurate. If you have any questions whatever, please write me and I will be happy to answer them if I can, but I will not tell you any of the facts now, as I assume you have them by now.

I would like to say first of all that I was 100% with Jim in this venture. He and I have talked of it for years, as you perhaps know, and when the opportunity came for him to go, I was one with him in it. I have never seen him so keyed up about a project. He put his whole heart and soul into it and could think or talk of nothing else for months ahead of time. We fully faced the possibilities involved and when I asked him what he would expect me to do should he fail to return, he said simply "Teach the believers, darling. We've got to teach the believers. And by all means, close the school". So of course I expect to carry on as always here in Shandia with the Lord's help. It would, I think, be too bad to close the school in the middle of the year, but whether I will run it next year is another thing. The Lord will show the way.

I came home yesterday with Katherine Morgan, who came from Colombia on Wednesday, my brother Dave, who came from Costa Rica, and Olive, who will be here till she gets some of her stuff organized, after which she'll be going home to the U.S. Marilou left this noon for the States. Barbara Youderian is returning to the station among the Jivaros, and Marj is to run a guest house in Quito. So the Lord has answered prayer that we may be guided. Pray that we may each one fulfill all the good pleasure of His will in the days to come, and above all that we may be delivered from self pity.

I want to tell you of the wonderful peace which God has granted to me through all of this. He has very literally fulfilled His word in Is. 43:2 "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee and thro' the rivers, they shall not overflow thee". I cannot describe to you the joy He has given me as I think of dear Jim, without fault before the throne of God, serving Him here, and so dearly loved without hindrance or stain of sin. The glory and triumph of the manner of his death gives me great joy -- can you think of a way in which he would rather have died? At the height of his manhood, in the work closest to his heart, and with his dearest friends, Ed, Marilou and I were thinking how lovely of the Lord to let them go together. It is not a single regret. He went out, knowing full well the dangers, singing "Thee, our Shield and our Defender", yet confident that he was going God's will. He was just as sure as he was that God was directing (otherwise you can be sure I would have raised some objections). I can only thank the Lord over and over for the two years and the months of perfect married life which he gave to us. I feel now that I did not deserve even the very memory is so sweet, I am filled to overflowing with gratitude for it all. I have no pangs about looking at his pictures, handling his things, etc. Every thought of him is happy. They died the happiest of men. All the reports which came back from the beach tell of how the forests rang with their songs and praises. Oh, what must it have been on Sunday afternoon at 3:12 (Nate's watch, brought back from his body, was cracked and stopped at 3:12) when they passed triumphant through the Gates of Pearl.

Jim's body was found very close to the airplane, in the water as were all the others. His shoes were gone, nothing in his pockets, but they brought his watch back to me. It had apparently run down -- said 7:30 (it was waterproof). All were believed to have been killed by lances, though there were machete marks as well on some. It did not last long, the doctor said. None of the bodies were recognizable except by clothes (Jim's name in his shirt). I have a lance which was found lying on the beach right near Jim. Nate had a lance stuck in his head, Roger had one in his back. The others had no lances in them. Ed's body had been found on Wed. by an Indian from Arajuno, but when the rescue party got to the site on Friday it had apparently floated away, as they could not find it, though they searched almost 7 miles down river. Pete's body was the farthest away about 1/2 mile downriver from the site. So just the ~~gout~~ were buried together in one grave, under the tree house on the jungle side. The Navy plane took us wives out over the site after the burial to see the beach. We were all so glad

for this opportunity.

I felt that women took it well -- no doubt because so many were praying constantly for us. No one could have taken it harder as I'm sure I would have, too had I been pregnant. Some of the rest of us are pregnant, for which we are thankful, as I think that would make it doubly hard. Dear Marj -- she and I were together every minute all day from Tuesday (when she was taken out to Shell) till the final word was confirmed on Friday that all five were dead. Then at night we sat up and talked till one o'clock or so, enjoying each other's reminiscences of the other's husband, comparing notes on God's leading etc. We just hated to go to bed. She has been a real help to me in these days and I thank the Lord for her.

I wish there were some way to tell of the comfort God has given -- not just comfort, Joy. I have never known anything like it. I almost felt an exuberance this morning, in spite of Indians wailing and howling, asking to see Jim's picture, etc. The house holds no horrors for me, though before I had sort of been afraid to come back, thinking it would be too hard. I am happy in the joy that Jim knows at this moment, and am constantly praising the Lord who never wastes anything, who makes no mistakes, and who has guided us with a Father's love and a Father's hand. Our times were in His hand -- mine still are, and Jim doesn't need time anymore. Oh, how I pray that you, too, may know this peace. I do trust there has been no bitterness or regrets on your parts. Every possible precaution was taken. God ordered it as it was. You've no idea of the preparation which went into the project. Frank Drown, head of the ground party told us wives that they felt not one mistake had been made. God has His reasons for allowing it to turn out as it did. I look forward with great anticipation to that Day when we shall know all and see the glory and victory of it all.

I feel that I have had the greatest privilege any woman in the world has ever had, to have been the wife of such a man. I am seriously considering writing Jim's biography. Tell me what you think?

I must stop -- you can just imagine the volume of correspondence which faces me now -- not only all the letters Jim left unanswered when he went away, but all the cablegrams, cards, letters, etc. I have received since his death. I will try to keep you all informed of the work here. Pray that the Lord will give special wisdom in carrying on where Jim left off -- I feel so utterly helpless to instruct the believers as he did, but I trust God for His wisdom. Never has heaven been so close, material things so useless.

Much love to each one,

Betty