

BRIDE

OF

GAME  
CROSSING

SPLAT





Last time, you will recall, our heroes crossed America from Daly City to Minneapolis in a Ryder truck to join Terry's fortunes to those of Denny Lien. Mog, who hadn't sat behind the wheel of any vehicle for five years, had come along to help drive and keep up a companionable babble. Terry did settle in the Twin Cities, while Mog took an unexpected 6-month detour through Denmark on her way back home to San Francisco. Now, 4½ years later, it's Mog who's moving, and Terry's decided to help.

BRIDE OF GAME CROSSING 9/87-12/87 BRIDE OF GAME CROSSING TERRY GAREY BRIDE OF GAME CROSSING MOG DECARNIN BRIDE OF GAME CRC

### The Plan - Mog

Let go the reasons. Most seem to think there could be no adequate reason for moving from San Francisco to Minneapolis. But my decision was made. I had engaged a Ryder truck made of beaten gold (I assumed from the price), Terry had found a way to work a flight to the west coast and long drive back into her computer training schedule at work, and I'd been deedily drawing up The Loading Plan.

This miraculous Plan, based on a 12' x 7.5' truck van, was drawn to a scale of one inch to the foot, and accounted for every item I owned. I had calculated again and again the precise number of identical xerox-paper boxes filled with books required to make bed foundations under one 3'x6' mattress and one 38"x80" futon, so that Terry and I could sleep in the truck. The Plan would avert hassles and time-consuming errors during loading, and assure everything I wanted to keep would fit in. I had checked and rechecked the dimensions of the truck with the out-of-town Ryder franchise that had offered the best deal. With my Plan in hand, nothing could go wrong.

### The Reality - Mog

Except...

...wheel wells.

Wheel wells, for those mercifully unacquainted with trucks, vans, buses and old cars, are housings, usually hump-shaped, that stick up inside a vehicle to allow room for the wheels underneath.

The wheel wells in the truck we picked up were only a few inches high, rectangular, and flat.

They were, nonetheless, wheel wells. And they weren't in The Plan.

Nothing would go right now. Loading would take hours and hours, the beds wouldn't fit, friends who showed up to help would revile me in their twilight years, and half my earthly belongings would have to be left behind. The Plan was in ruins. The gears of my mind stripped with a mighty rending noise.

The friends who came to help -- Cheryl Cline, Lynn Kuehl, Will and Linda, Jim Jones, Lyn Paleo, Misty Gottlieb, Dan Kresh, Linda Frankel, Ctein, and Paula Butler -- looked at the Plan (I'd made plenty of xerox copies), looked at the truck, scrutinized the wheel wells, and loaded all my stuff in about 45 minutes. There was lots of room left over (as well as an extra xerox-paper box of books that wasn't needed under the beds, and I still haven't figured out where I miscounted). Paula in particular came equipped for the fray, with tape measure, spare Swiss Army knife, lengths of rope, and even a large padlock to lock the back of the truck with!

### Hail and Farewell - Terry

With everything packed into the truck and only the debris and a few bodies left, I looked around Mog's place, and sighed.

It had been a second home to me, and I felt that not only was Mog leaving the neighborhood, but so was I.

The Haight is mostly too inconvenient to go to very often without a good reason. And Mog had been a good reason.

The weird little flat itself had some good memories for me; hours and hours of good conversation, interesting meals, interesting people, interesting mice, and an interesting place to sleep now and then. Somehow part of my literary career, such as it is, is tied up in that place, and much of what I know about the writing of Delany and Russ, and of course, of Camilla Decarnin.

I remembered when I had helped move her in about 8 years before from her studio on Haight. "I have so much stuff!" she had wailed at the time.

And for the last several months as we wrote back and forth about the coming move from SF, she had wailed the same thing. For months I wrote back and firmly told her that she didn't have that much stuff. I had crammed a 12 foot truck to the gills and she had less than a quarter of the junk I had when I moved (see GAME CROSSING).

There was one point when she had overlooked the wheel wells in her Master Plan to Hold and Bind

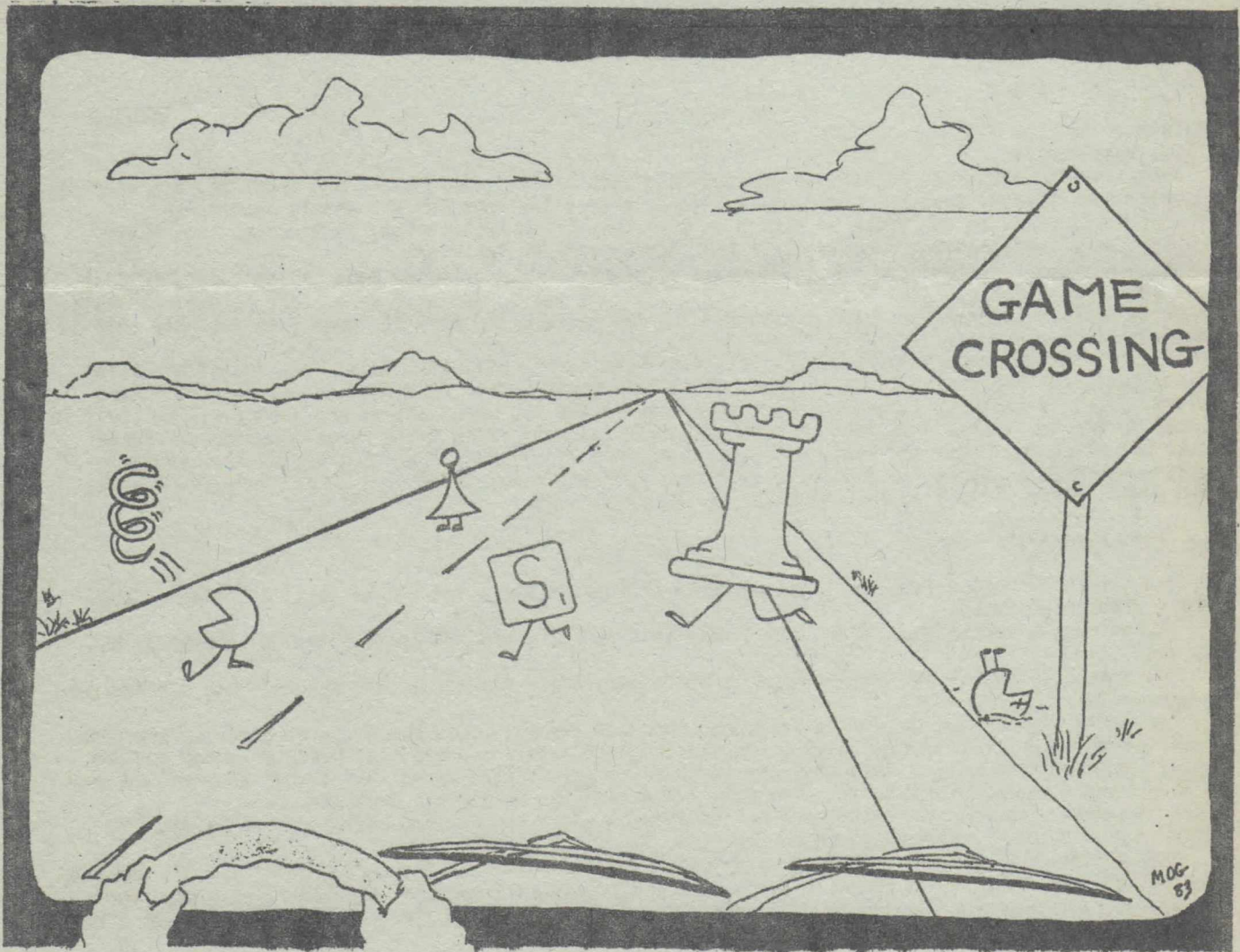
the Universe in a Ryder Truck, and she turned pale and quivered. That's when, taking inspiration from Lizzy Lynn's invention of the Spayed Gerbil (she was at a worldcon and root beer and vodka were the only drinkable things left), I invented the Wheel Well, a deft combination of Fresca and brandy. It wasn't half bad. We slept better for it, too.

Now here we were, packed and ready and several hours of daylight left. What the hell, we said, and got into the truck and drove off into where the sunrise would be if it had been the morning.

I knew I was capable of driving a 12-foot truck up Oak Street onto the freeway and over the Bay Bridge to 180, because I had done it four years before, but nonetheless I have to admit that I considered the possibility of simply camping in the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park and never moving again. I also knew I could never admit this to Mog, who was in a state of shock and completely glazed over.

Sometimes a person's gotta do what a person's gotta do, and I did.

It was funny, but this time I was saying more of a good-bye to my old stomping grounds in the East Bay than I had done when I had moved four years before.



Albany Hill (better known to Albany residents as El Cerrito Hill) was crowded with ugly high rise apartments. They had been there before, but I resented them even more now. And we whizzed by El Cerrito so fast I barely had time to peer through the smog and the hills behind the flats. If we hadn't been driving Andre the Giant, as I mentally called the truck, I would have been tempted to go past my grandmother's old place, and the old Ewing place, but even as I thought, and pointed out to Mog an apartment building I had lived in once down on the mud flats, we were in Richmond, and then San Pablo, and then through Rodeo, the once tiny Hercules, and approaching the Carquinez Bridge. "This is Crocket, do not knock it," I hummed to the tune of "Hello Mudda, Hello Fadda", which is sung to the tune of something else. And then we were across the water and on the way through some of the most beautiful hills in California, which always, always look like sleeping tawny lions to me, except in the spring when they look like sleeping green lions.

Mog's defences were finally breaking down, and the glare from the sunset was bounding off of everything, so she retreated to the beds in the back and I drove on. We stopped for dinner in the heat of the Sacramento Valley, and then I drove on and on, trying to get past Auburn before I got too tired and we had to stop for the night.

Every time I drive that stretch I overlay more and more memories until I am surprised the road holds up underneath it all. The more recent memories are much nicer than the old ones, I am happy to say, but sometimes they seep up, full of old hurts and hungers, and pinch me a bit.

I blew a kiss towards Grass Valley, where I am sure my old friend Sue Ewing's ghost spends its time.

And I passed the Ground Round, a little dinner place where I once had supper with a bunch of friends who were going up to a pow wow in Reno. The waitress ignored all of the Indians at the table and I had to tell her what everyone wanted.

We went up through Auburn in the dark. I could smell the cleaner air, and wafts of pine came through the window. The little ex-state capitol building gleamed bravely at me. Finally, we stopped for the night in a rest stop, and I went to sleep a little lightheaded, but content. And the next morning I woke up chilled, but with the scent of the pines and firs all around me so sweetly I could have cheerfully sat for hours, enjoying it. We ate our breakfast in the mountains and relished it exceedingly.

#### Fear and the Open Road -- Mog

I undertook this trip in a mood of intense foreboding. The last time I went east, I had the same feeling very strongly, and macabre events did seem to dog the journey. But I made it back safely to San Francisco. The next day my brother phoned to say my mother had just gone into open heart surgery. Two weeks later, she died. It seemed then as if the whole awful ambience of the trip had been leading up to that.

Perhaps the source of my fears now was really nothing but the break in my quite hermetic routine. Still...I felt afraid. Unused to speed, and acutely aware of the forces evoked by a split second's pilot error or mechanical failure at 65 mph, I focused on the idea of a front tire blowout. The sides of the highway were littered with the black rags of truck and car tires. It could happen. As could other things.

Somewhere in Utah, I said to Terry, "There's something strange going on over that hill." Ahead, I had seen a light-colored object do something odd and fast -- now there were clouds of dust, or smoke, or something, rising up on both sides of the highway. More roadwork? But no warning signs...I wanted to say "Terry, slow way down." But you don't do that for no good reason, and we were just then surrounded by a small range of hurtling jocund semis.

We crested the hill. The trucks playing tag ahead of us hit their brakes. Off to the left, two semis were pulled up on the shoulder. In the median strip a trucker frantically waved us on while another ran up from behind him. To our right, a white car lay on its crushed top. Its wheels had already stopped spinning. Spread out in a swath from a sprung back door, clothes, ice-chest, vacation toys. The dust rose.

We were past. At 65 mph, there was nothing we could do, except get out of the way and not cause a second smash-up. Still surrounded by trucks -- not chasing each other now. Two miles ahead was a weigh station -- we'd get off, tell them --

But the trucks all turned off ahead of us, and we knew they'd gone in to report the accident. We drove on.

It was two days before the horror really left my system. By that time, of course, we were in Nebraska.

### Gremlins -- Terry

A short stop in Salt Lake City at my brother's house provided us with showers and clean clothes and the opportunity to discover that the funny 'lag' in the engine at certain speeds was a governor fitted to prevent hot-dogs from speeding.

Then there was the horrible howling sound the steering started to make. It was quite maddening and also caused us to wonder if the steering wheel was going to suddenly fall off or lock up.

In Rock Springs, WY, we finally called the Ryder trouble line in Florida, who routed us to Salt Lake, who connected us to a mechanic in Rock Springs.

Ten minutes before we found the mechanic (a feat in itself) the howling stopped.

We told this to the mechanic, who thought it was hilarious. He explained it was what steering in these trucks did sometimes.

### Really the Midwest -- Mog

Terry has an aversion to driving through 500 miles of Nebraska, but it is the shortest way. "Nebraska" -- Cherokee for "land of little tiny extremely irritating tenacious flies" -- only seems interminable. The salt bitter smell following the grasscutters over the border; and everywhere the black rinds of exploded tires. The highway instantly develops faultlines patched with tar, and our ride takes on a new rhythm. Before long the last straggling desert turns into farmed fields. We cross and recross channels of the mild-mannered Platte.

Overnight in Kearney, and a feeble "Yee-ha!" as the circumnavigation of Omaha dumps us out into southwest Iowa -- always a surprise next to the myth. Shapely tree-seamed hills, quilting in green and brown, corn and wheat patterns, haystrips, earth, shorn nap and pasture. True, they stuck the road in a flat spot, northbound.

Terry has done all the hard parts, and actually almost all the driving, despite her bad back. Near dusk I take the wheel. The wind seems to be picking up. I remark upon it, embarrassed at the way the truck is swerving back and forth across the road. Semis and cars pass us in our broad-sided van as I slow down to 50...45...40...yet it seems the big trucks themselves aren't high-balling as fast as is their wont. I keep seeing signs for "Mason City 50" -- "Mason City 30". It feels like I've been wrestling this vehicle twice that far through the dark (in fact, I have -- somehow I didn't see the signs at first saying "Mason City 100").

Suddenly there's something in the headlights scooting across the highway. "What the --!"

Hay. Farmers are harvesting into the night, and some of their crops are escaping. The flashes of light-colored just-seen things sweeping under my wheels unnerve me.

It's Terry's ambition to press on that night another 130 miles to Minneapolis and home. I can barely envision it. It would be a third more miles than we'd covered in any previous day. I'm beat already. And honestly, the wind does seem awfully strong. Okay. We'll stop at a friendly Perkins, then decide whether to camp at the next rest stop or trek on.

We pull into the parking lot between the restaurant and a big motel, gather our coats and purses and Terry unlatches the door --

-- it slams open under pile-driver force wind and almost wrenches her arm out of its socket.

As we fight gasping and blown every-which-way toward our restaurant sanctuary, we wonder if maybe instead of trying to make the rest stop we should just spend the night right here in the parking lot. From a vacant area nearby topsoil is blowing in a heavy stream over the road, like a river.

### Wayhaven -- Mog

I'm not sure just when it was that the idea of staying in the motel first arose. But it got finalized in the shaking, wuthering back end of the truck after supper. Even parked tail-to-the-gale the poor beast was barely holding its own (huddled among an unusual number of parked semis for that time of night). Anyway, we could both use a shower and a bit of luxury.

We toiled around to the motel entrance and booked the last room available. Seems earlier that evening there'd only been three people in the whole 2-story motel, and now here the place was full up. Tv said the wind was up around 50 miles per hour... We accepted the key gratefully.

From our window I watched the lashing trees bend nearly double, and tried to air a little of the mousse-thick cigaret smoke out of the place. It was good to be under shelter -- only you had to wonder, with those forces loose just outside, if any puny human-made walls were really safe harbor. At least, I had to wonder. Never a dull moment when you're paranoid.

Albany Hill (better known to Albany residents as El Cerrito Hill) was crowded with ugly high rise apartments. They had been there before, but I resented them even more now. And we whizzed by El Cerrito so fast I barely had time to peer through the smog and the hills behind the flats. If we hadn't been driving Andre the Giant, as I mentally called the truck, I would have been tempted to go past my grandmother's old place, and the old Ewing place, but even as I thought, and pointed out to Mog an apartment building I had lived in once down on the mud flats, we were in Richmond, and then San Pablo, and then through Rodeo, the once tiny Hercules, and approaching the Carquinez Bridge. "This is Crocket, do not knock it," I hummed to the tune of "Hello Mudda, Hello Fadda", which is sung to the tune of something else. And then we were across the water and on the way through some of the most beautiful hills in California, which always, always look like sleeping tawny lions to me, except in the spring when they look like sleeping green lions.

Mog's defences were finally breaking down, and the glare from the sunset was bounding off of everything, so she retreated to the beds in the back and I drove on. We stopped for dinner in the heat of the Sacramento Valley, and then I drove on and on, trying to get past Auburn before I got too tired and we had to stop for the night.

Every time I drive that stretch I overlay more and more memories until I am surprised the road holds up underneath it all. The more recent memories are much nicer than the old ones, I am happy to say, but sometimes they seep up, full of old hurts and hungers, and pinch me a bit.

I blew a kiss towards Grass Valley, where I am sure my old friend Sue Ewing's ghost spends its time.

And I passed the Ground Round, a little dinner place where I once had supper with a bunch of friends who were going up to a pow wow in Reno. The waitress ignored all of the Indians at the table and I had to tell her what everyone wanted.

We went up through Auburn in the dark. I could smell the cleaner air, and wafts of pine came through the window. The little ex-state capitol building gleamed bravely at me. Finally, we stopped for the night in a rest stop, and I went to sleep a little lightheaded, but content. And the next morning I woke up chilled, but with the scent of the pines and firs all around me so sweetly I could have cheerfully sat for hours, enjoying it. We ate our breakfast in the mountains and relished it exceedingly.

#### Fear and the Open Road -- Mog

I undertook this trip in a mood of intense foreboding. The last time I went east, I had the same feeling very strongly, and macabre events did seem to dog the journey. But I made it back safely to San Francisco. The next day my brother phoned to say my mother had just gone into open heart surgery. Two weeks later, she died. It seemed then as if the whole awful ambience of the trip had been leading up to that.

Perhaps the source of my fears now was really nothing but the break in my quite hermetic routine. Still...I felt afraid. Unused to speed, and acutely aware of the forces evoked by a split second's pilot error or mechanical failure at 65 mph, I focused on the idea of a front tire blowout. The sides of the highway were littered with the black rags of truck and car tires. It could happen. As could other things.

Somewhere in Utah, I said to Terry, "There's something strange going on over that hill." Ahead, I had seen a light-colored object do something odd and fast -- now there were clouds of dust, or smoke, or something, rising up on both sides of the highway. More roadwork? But no warning signs...I wanted to say "Terry, slow way down." But you don't do that for no good reason, and we were just then surrounded by a small range of hurtling jocund semis.

We crested the hill. The trucks playing tag ahead of us hit their brakes. Off to the left, two semis were pulled up on the shoulder. In the median strip a trucker frantically waved us on while another ran up from behind him. To our right, a white car lay on its crushed top. Its wheels had already stopped spinning. Spread out in a swath from a sprung back door, clothes, ice-chest, vacation toys. The dust rose.

We were past. At 65 mph, there was nothing we could do, except get out of the way and not cause a second smash-up. Still surrounded by trucks -- not chasing each other now. Two miles ahead was a weigh station -- we'd get off, tell them --

But the trucks all turned off ahead of us, and we knew they'd gone in to report the accident. We drove on.

It was two days before the horror really left my system. By that time, of course, we were in Nebraska.

### Home Stretch -- Terry

Getting home through the rest of the wind was really interesting. Mog did a lot of it, because my back had simply had it.

And early in the morning, back at the wind-blown motel, I had awakened screaming (Mog claims it was actually a loud groaning). My lower left leg was having muscle spasms and I could barely speak well enough to tell Mog what hurt.

Noticeably pale, she massaged my calf and we nursed it along until it got down to a dull roar.

So I was now feeling as we drove along, buffeted from side to side, like a time-bomb ready to go off without warning.

But we got home, nonetheless. And in fantastic time -- only 5 full days from San Francisco!

It was good to be home. Denny was at work -- we'd called to let him know we'd be in. The cat said hello. I picked up the paper off the couch.

It was dated Friday. Mog and I looked at each other in puzzlement. We checked the date. But it was supposed to be Thursday! We were sure it was Thursday. Could the Strib have misprinted the date?

Twilight Zone time...

Finally, embarrassed, I called Uncle Hugo's s-f bookstore. I knew Scott Imes wouldn't lie to me.

Ken Fletcher answered. Yes, he said kindly, not laughing much. It is Friday and no I wouldn't lie to you. Besides, Scott works Thursdays and I work Fridays.

I somehow (as official Keeper of the Days and the Maps) had done one day twice. No wonder Nebraska seemed so endless --

### Lighting -- Mog

Total and virtual strangers came to help Terry and Denny and I shift my stuff out of the truck into a garage for the time being. Karen Schaffer, Lee Reynolds, Todd McInroy, Mark Goodman, and M.K. Digre were these kind souls. We were home, yes, but not home free. There was still an apartment to find for me.

I'd decided to try for two weeks to get a place with a "study" I could close off, before giving up and settling for a one-bedroom. Terry and Denny drove me around town and gave much advice about locales; after looking at a succession of relative dumps advertised as two-bedrooms but in reality having one bedroom and an open dining-room, or some such, I went without much hope to see a "1½" bedroom with a low rent. Terry and I followed the young landlord up 2 flights, in past a tank of gigantic black angelfish, and gazed skeptically around the familiar living-room/dining-room set-up. Was this all? "In here is the bedroom..." Oh! Well -- We went through a door into a carpeted room "...with a view of downtown. And the bathroom -- watch out for the cats --" Terry coped with fugitive felines while the landlord opened the other bathroom door. "The kitchen..." I gasped at the charmingly trimmed old-fashioned cupboards, and behind me Terry whispered, "Take it! Take it!" "That door goes back out to the living room. Then through here is the half-bedroom..." Cats scampered anew. A garrety little space with guest bed and desk. "This is the back door...washer and dryer down these stairs here...and back here is this other small locked room --"

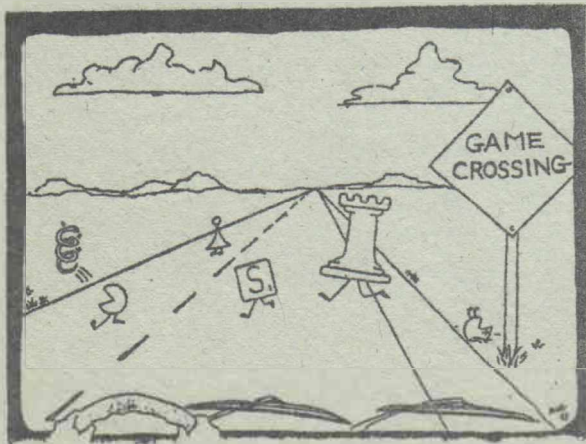
A 2-week trip to visit my family, then a truly heroic effort on the part of Terry, Denny, Karen, Blue Petal, Nate Bucklin and Lee Reynolds levitated everything I owned up those two flights like magic. Panting, sweaty magic. Later, Denny and Steve Glennon achieved a couch through the door.

Of course, in the light of day the apartment turned out not to be perfect. Paint and plaster are peeling, hot water takes 3 minutes to reach the kitchen sink, and the floor does a good 5.8 shake with each passing truck. I'm getting used to the traffic noise, though, and I read How To Talk Minnesotan, so all I need now are boots and balaclava and some long underwear and no one will be able to tell me from the natives. You bet.

2020 Portland Avenue South #3, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

Write and let me know about your latest trips. Or write to Terry at the usual address.

2020 Portland Avenue South #3  
and  
2528 15th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, MN 55404



FIRST CLASS

Jerry Kaufman + Suzle  
8738 First Ave. N.W.  
Seattle, WA 98117

