

environment" - ugh. We're staying in a room in a village concession, and it's a nice 10-minute walk each way.

Adjengé is a med-sized Kabiyé/Thosso village, a bit crowded & dirty, but in a lovely tree-filled setting. Stage is set in a grove of leafless teaks, ~~green~~ and with the overcast sky & hazy sun, has a feel of smoky winter mornings back home.

I'm dismayed lately by changes I feel in myself. My feelings for Mike have again taken a turn for the worse. There is no one I can talk to, no one who knows me well enough anyway. I feel it's best to continue pretending things are normal, as I'm afraid if I say anything to Mike it will precipitate the beginning of the end. I can't believe it's come to this. I can't begin to accept that things might not work out. I have the feeling of having been cheated. Never before in my life have I felt I made a wrong turn - always I've felt almost charmed by how blessed my life has been. Has the charm worn off - will I at last get to experience the other sides of life. Once always the optimist, gay &

happy & eager for the future, I find myself bitchy, crabby, pessimistic, cynical. I find myself snapping at Mike, not acting normal. I feel ugly - inside & out. I feel, for the first time in my life, a sense of despair & hopelessness. I feel very confused. I don't want a divorce - yet I don't want a life of marital mediocrity. I don't think I want to be single again - yet I crave a state of independence and non-coupledness. I think I might even write to my mother. I also feel a sense of unreality - as if all this is happening to someone else, not me. I feel I'm acting out my life, and living behind a facade. I feel I'm waiting, and hoping, and not really in control. What a rotten feeling.

Friday May 7

We've spent nearly a week at stage-hard to imagine! The organisation here leaves a bit to be desired.

They rented a leaky old 5-room house and constructed a series of pailloles for kitchen, dining & classes. As usual, space is very limited,

and as it's been windy, things blow everywhere. Stagiaires live in town with families. The food has been good, but there's never enough and the menus are a bit boring. Yesterday we had a fierce rain-storm. It's early this year, and caught people off guard. The one tin-roofed house leaked at every pore, and was soon a sea of soggy clothes, books, and people. It was a mess. They are damned lucky they didn't lose a hell of a lot of stuff.

Built stoves with the 6 stoves folks on Wednesday. There appears to be precious little clay available here, so the mix we used was way too heavy in sand. Should be interesting to see if they work.

Moto is going well, though. Mike + I feel a bit unneeded. Hard for me to sit back & watch all the time. All in all it's been interesting to meet new people, get to know a new village, & have a pretty lazy week. Am disappointed by my poor use of the time, though. Could have written more letters, gone exploring, gotten to know the village, done

more stretching! should have eaten less...
all those could's & should's!

Tues. March 11

Bogou

Saw Haley's Comet early this morning, just before dawn - just lovely! I had feared it would be very small & unimpressive, but with binoculars, it was clearly visible as a large star-like ball, its long, hazy tail preceding it, blown ahead by solar winds. A humbling sight, ~~and~~ made me think about the "larger perspective" & what an amazing universe we live in.

We left Adjougé Sat. and arrived in Kara that afternoon. Our bikes were fine, if dusty. Spent Sunday at the pool, then drove out to Pagoda to visit John & Erica. There's a small marché nearby where we drank some tchoukoton (tchakalo is sooo much better!). 2 Fulani families were there, selling various "medicinal powders". They dressed in black, and had their thick, matted hair tressed into various braids, with the sides of the head often

shaved. The women each had 4 or 5 enormous ring earrings in each ear. They seemed quite dirty, and were almost sullen, sitting on ragged cloths with their few bags of powders laid out. They are the gypsies here, and fit the traditional gypsy image: wanderers, beggars, vendors of traditional magic & medicine, fascinating but not quite trusted. The Togoese gathered round to stare, and I realized that these people are much more "different" to them than us white people. They often speak only Fulani & Hausa, and thus can't really communicate as they travel around. No one here seems to know much about them, or their comings & goings. They have much more caucasian features than the black people here: narrow noses, high cheekbones, slender hips. I found myself staring, fascinated, then realized I was doing the same thing to them that many Togoese do to us: staring. I wonder if it bothers them also?

Monday morning we drove
Pagouda to Bogou - ugh - stopping at
John's in Baga to "relieve" him

of some of his possessions, as he
LOS's in 2 weeks! ~~He~~ Also
stopped to see the Naboulgon
Hotel in the faune - nothing
special. Had our first Tchakbalo
in 2 weeks at the Barkoissi
marché - yum! Arrived home at
dark to learn that it had
rained during our absence!
Amazing to have rain here in
early March. Then it rained
again the night we got back.
Not much, but enough to
pockmark our stove ³/₄ garden
wall, and ^{ping-pong} tin roof.

Fri March 14

So our new shower is at last
ready to use, and it's wonderful:
gorgeous view, roomy, comfy, with
stone shelves & a smooth cement
floor! Today "Hoover" came
down our ^{trusty} but
extremely ugly & oily old
tin shower stall. The cistern
hole is half dug, the old

holes are nearly filled in, and if we're lucky & get some rain soon, we'll be very busy planting

anything we can get our hands on!

House projects & getting settled back in have kept us busy all week, and other than a severe but short-lived bout of melancholia & depression, all is well.

Went to see Atoukou at the nut center yesterday and arrived to find him scolding & haranguing ~~them~~^{women} in a most unpleasant way. He chided them for only coming to the center for the free food, and not paying attention to the lessons they're taught. I was very disheartened by his treatment of them, and ~~got~~ also by the fact that he's partly right: they do come only for the free food, and don't pay much attention to the "lessons". But I can't help thinking ^{that} if they were treated better in the first place, and the lessons more sensitively given, they would listen & learn.

Spent a few hours at the marché which was more animated & better stocked than usual. However, as it

was late afternoon, most everyone was fairly sloshed, some of my least favorite people among them, ~~and~~ it gets annoying, but isn't as bad as it used to be.

3 young women "Kondi" initiates were cruising the marché doing their guttural begging song & dance.

They dressed, sang, & acted just like the men Kondis we've seen, but did not hide their faces.

They were very polite and thanked me effusively when I gave them a little money. Their "begging" song says "greetings, we ask a little money or a little meat, nothing much". Their thankyou wishes that "god may bless you with nine children a day"!

Our mom has been having a lot of trouble in one knee. It appears to be arthritis or rheumatism, and she's in a lot of pain. I give her aspirin which only helps a bit. I realized today that her medical options here are pretty limited.

Medical training here is often very basic & a bit archaic. I took her to see the young "doctor"

here in Bogou. He glanced at the one knee & proclaimed it was filled with water & must be drained. I pointed out that the sore knee wasn't swollen, and was actually smaller than the other knee ^(which he means + looked at). Hmm, he says, and gave her a shot of "Vitamin B". Come back on Monday & we'll see, he says. Meanwhile, she's in a lot of pain. Sending her to Dapaong would be expensive, a lot of hassle for us, disrupt her family life, and on top of all that, she'd receive treatment of possibly questionable value.

The view from our front terrace should be of the cliffs. But aesthetics aren't a high priority here, and the view was sacrificed to Adia's house in the interest of "shade". So instead we gaze out upon the dusty, brown, cluttered area in front of the chief's house. This is where the children play, the pigs snuffle, and