

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Most of the letters that form the core of this book were written to my family at home whilst I was living in Cameroun. The others that I have drawn upon were circulated among friends. These are more substantial and written in a more studied fashion, which may occasionally remind some readers of the notorious purple passages in Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*. The problem with purple is that in some cases it may be the only appropriate colour: sober beige simply will not do.

I have edited these writings only minimally. Whilst I can see all too clearly from a distance of fifty years the faults of style – the over-writing, the gush, and recognize the features of a somewhat immature young man – he often appears affected, jejune, sometimes insufferable, I trust his eye. Reading these letters again I remember what they describe as intensely now as I experienced it then.

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