In some people’s book, I’m sure that half a century of friendship, admiration, and gratitude adds up to love or something very similar. I haven’t thought about this complex salad until this opportunity.

The gratitude part is because—something irrelevant here—I was one of the beneficiaries. Of complete relevance, Lucy opened doors that were normally closed to outsiders, which is one of the big reasons they were outsiders. This defined her as a great and memorable doorwoman. It has been one of her many missions and it has had a big cultural impact.

This is the point where admiration starts. Lucy proved that it is possible to be a gate-crushing gatekeeper. Some may call that treason, but others may have the enlightening realization that her actions actually improve and refresh what is becoming stale behind the gate. Art criticism is often a self-absorbing and ambition-driven activity, muted by jargon and oblivious to real life. Gatekeepers of this kind, usually stand behind the gate, and keep it closed while looking at and fighting off the philistine hordes. Lucy always was, and is, in front of the gate in an effort to ensure access. Amazingly, she does this without losing intellectual standing or rigor—forcing respect among those she fights.

This is where I feel I have some kind of claim. I think it’s partly because the gratitude part is because—something irrelevant here—I was one of the beneficiaries. Of complete relevance, Lucy opened doors that were normally closed to outsiders, which is one of the big reasons they were outsiders. This defined her as a great and memorable doorwoman. It has been one of her many missions and it has had a big cultural impact.

So far, gratitude and admiration do not necessarily lead to friendship. U.S. art critics occasionally landed in Latin America. Juries, symposia, and other intellectual activities encouraged quick intellectual tourism. This helped to internationalize ceremonial activities on one hand, and allowed visitors to claim homeopathic erudition on the other. Lucy was claimless, though certainly not clueless. She grasped political situations on the fly, perceived the art angle on them, both in terms of cause and effect, and opened her mouth and typewriter accordingly. She acted as an active bridge between cultures—inocent of aloofness. That is where friendship came in, and grew, and continued to grow.

Among the many (positive) epithets one may hurl at Lucy, unorthodoxy is probably the most appropriate. Maybe, on second thought, she is just devious. Come to think of it, I’ve never met anybody that would make negative comments about her. This may be a sign of her successful demagoguery, of my own isolation, or—more probably the truth—her phenomenal intellectual stature combined with the absence of any (visible) ego. I think that after so many decades of this, that is where love starts.