

Friday

My very dear Margaret,

I am chastely bent on the typewriter, supposedly about to engage in the day's labors, but my thoughts have been wandering, to you mostly, as I received your letter this morning.

Absence does seem to make the heart grow fonder. During the last few days, I have been going down to the mailbox in the paleness of early morning (for me--that's about 8:30 A.M.), even before stretching out in the traditional hot bath.

I have tried to ponder seriously some of the questions which you raise, but I must confess that they do not seriously disturb me. You may justly point out, of course, that this is the very proof of the differences between us, but I still think that these differences are largely linguistic and have little to do with us. You may believe in ~~guilt~~ sin; I feel just as strongly the load of guilt. You look to God and immortality, while I ~~think~~ feel the need of ideals, which, whether I like it or not, are in essence as transcendental as yours. And there is but a shade of a difference between feeling and believing, a shade largely due probably to the restraining hand of "la pudeur scientifique".

For these very reasons, my reforming instincts have never been aroused in reference to you, except in reference to ~~very~~ very minor points. If they ever were in the case of ~~Anna~~ Janet, for example, it was not because she was seeped through (I may have ~~inadvertently~~ inadvertently invented an expression here) with 17th century ideas and ideals, but because I objected to some of her basic attitudes toward people. And if I objected to these attitudes from the very beginning, it was because I felt that, sooner or later, they would put our own relationship in jeopardy.

The questions that have been raised in my own mind are of a far less abstract nature. I do not think that there is any need for me to elaborate insofar as my own side of the relationship is concerned; you should have a pretty fair idea by now. But in reference to you, I cannot help wondering whether I will be able to measure up to the role of the "strong silent figure", which I feel fairly sure that you must have visualized in the past as the ideal partner. It is this sort of question, and the necessary adjustments and compromises that it involves, which constitutes our chief problem, I think.

I must say that I largely feel ~~amused~~ the way you do about Ulysses. I found it ~~interesting~~ interesting technically, but the characters, unlike some though not all of Proust's (large chunks of Les Amours Infantines were a dreadful bore), didn't seem worth the exploration.

Life is peaceful here, for the moment. A fairly close friend, Aron Noland, whom I have always regretted not seeing more of, has set up shop next door, and I eagerly look forward to seeing a great deal of him this fall. He is really a very remarkable chap, probably the brightest ~~historian~~ ~~and incisive~~ I have met in my years at Harvard, and along with his vigorous and incisive mind

had possesses, in an inimitable "abelaisian" fashion, the jolliest of personalities. Used to work in a post office in Detroit, and his boisterous presence rocked the genteel Harvard history department to its foundations. (He was Alec's History 1 section man, if I am not mistaken).

you? This is about all there is to tell. When am I going to see

Love and "merde" for luck,

Leo