

10-5-49

Dear John,

I have just written two rather superficial letters, one to Aunt Priscilla; I hope I can do better for you. It is not that my life is silly and superficial. I have not had a moment for such temptations. The task of planning my ^{first} 19 periods of teaching a week and of painting a room of our apartment have kept me busy and sleepless. Only one of my courses is running in a manner that satisfies me, or nearly ~~s~~ satisfies me. In one I feel quite helpless, and only the niceness and youngness of the little girls gives me any kind of security. But I will have time this weekend to plan and also to stop and think - ~~and~~ sleep. If I had had time yesterday

afternoon I could have written you a really good letter. After I had spent the afternoon working in the school library, accumulating a list of primary sources (carefully tailored to help and not confuse) I started walking toward the Elevated. I realized suddenly again all that this kind of life means for me as I walked along looking a little at the sky above the austere shapes of the buildings. I looked a little at the rowdy children playing in the street, and the groun people. But I have not looked very much recently. I have learned to exclude some of the ugliness and distraction and think my way through something. Now I stumble and humble trying to tell you what I suddenly perceived and knew.

The pressure of work demands an ~~and~~ intricate and detailed schedule. Within this I work and think and am free. The besetting sins of inertia and vagueness are controlled. Because my work forces me to think ~~and~~ small problems through I am more easily able to think the big ones through also. No, I will say nothing more. This time the

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attempt to express clarifies nothing.

What can I say that will tell you anything. I still feel so unsure of my state of mind and spirit. Yet in the midst of all this activity it is very quiet. I can sit quietly at lunch and listen to one of the more ~~ne~~ nearly unbalanced of my colleagues rattle on and like her and not be afraid of her - or my own difference. And even when I see that ^I have made a foolish mistake in class before 15 witnesses it only troubles me for their sake. Next time I will be able to avoid the error - or the time after that etc.

They are so young and serious and
gay too - most of them in self-conscious
and understanding of the facts and ideas
which we study. Hard as I work I know
that it is all too easy.

I will try to write more another time
when I am less tired. This will at least
tell you that I am quiet ~~and~~

and that I will see you
on the 21st.

Margaret