

October 10, 1949
5 A.M.

Dear John,

My tense hope that I will relax and go to sleep seems pretty empty now, so I will begin my day by trying to write you a better letter than might be scratched out in the ordinary hectic course of things. First of all, I will try to postpone my trip until the 28th. I have not so far heard from Aunt Priscilla so I cannot write to say please may I come the following weekend instead. However, I could probably stay with some of those other people I must see anyway if she cannot have me the weekend of the 28th.

Perhaps by then, I will really have things in hand. That is

not so now, and I feel more than a little distressed by my inability to make some of my classes go. I simply have not time for all the planning and preparation which I feel compelled to do. Of course, I spend too much time on some things - on finding primary sources and all sorts of things not in the textbooks. Yet I cannot really understand and be interested myself without that additional material. My Senior Year American History class particularly upsets me. It is almost entirely composed of exceptionally intelligent girls - one or two gifted. A heavy boredom only thinly disguised by good manners ^{has hung} ~~has hung~~ over every class, except one. I keep looking for a formula which will repeat my one-day success.

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Aside from the continuous effort my work requires I have had almost no time to live and think for myself. Last week I saw Papa very briefly on his way to Saranac and Cambridge. He asked me what I would say and what I thought he should say to Alex to advise him in his problems of registration and conscience. I told him that I didn't think he needed things to be said but rather an opportunity to talk his way to his own decision. I wish that the issue had appeared concretely earlier in the summer. There was time and occasion for such discussion then. Is there anything you can do for him? I am so afraid that Papa's

concern may have only increased the pressure and turmoil of decision. Do you know your own mind on this matter? Or do you think "it doesn't matter"?

This weekend I go home - also Jay and Janet and Dorey, the Grace family's old cook and retainer, now abandoned ~~like~~ ^{like} the rest of us by the Karakeviches. The house will be crowded and I will have to tell everyone about my job. I hope I will have grounds for feeling more skillful and successful by then. At the moment I have an almost pathologically intense desire to creep underground and go to sleep.

Leo came to see me last Tuesday. We sat and talked together for

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almost three hours without mentioning ourselves as we had been, Janet, or ourselves as we really were at the time. When he left I said something about "all the things left unsaid" at which he smiled and replied that "it was the condition of existence." He has become wiser. It was a curious evening, careful and bored.

I have been sitting so still that a little mouse came into the room, poked around a little and went out again. Our housecleaning of last weekend has left him little to hope for. He is really quite attractive, much more so than these cockroaches which have multiplied so horribly.

in the course of the summer. Unfortunately, Joy seems to accept them much more calmly than I do. Our campaign suffers from being so intermittent and uncoordinated. Do such silly details annoy you? When I am not thinking about history, how to teach an event or a relationship, how to ask a question without betraying the answer, I am usually occupied with these mechanical details. It is perhaps fortunate. I can take a concrete satisfaction in the windows I washed Sunday, the fresh paint of this ~~room~~ room, while the end product in teaching is so intangible and precarious.

Margaret