

3-2-50

Dear John,

The moment for a good letter never arrives. I will write anyhow and try to create from my affection for you something to say. For, really, you see this week is nothing but confusion and difficulty and dizzy exhaustion. The only exceptions to this are things which have nothing to do with what I have been doing - or, rather, what has been happening to me; I have the impression that I have done nothing all week but that things have happened all around me while I watched with helpless and pained astonishment.

Last night as I crossed that terrible intersection at Astor Place I looked up and saw moon looking down quite serenely. But it wasn't a moon that belonged to the week or New York; it belonged to Virginia.

(2)

Do you remember that first evening? As we went down the side of White Top to sit on the rock and watch the moon rise, I stumbled. Alex and you took my hands. Even so, I think I fell once. But then I remember other moments when I supported one or the other of you.

In the midst of the confusion I have also thought of you last weekend as you took me to the train. That is almost the only part of the weekend of which I can think without feeling the burden of the decisions and problems with which I had to deal — and which I managed so badly. How was it that you managed to put me on the train and to send ~~me away~~ ^{me away} with so little anxiety on my part. But then I lost my book; I am sure it was then.

3
So many people at school are sick. Those
who are there stumble around tired and frantic.
My schedule is already so full that I have only
been given minor responsibilities in coping with the
substitutions. I hear myself saying such stupid
things, so badly phrased, in my classes. Then
at lunch I am frightened by sitting with other
teachers who are also terribly tired ~~and~~ whose
thoughts come out all tangled. One of the crucial
absences is caused by a nervous breakdown; perhaps
there will be others. The girls are also
tired and sick; everyone covers miserably inside
her shell hoping that she will not be asked
to do anything - or worst of all to sympathise
with anyone else. Nevertheless, they have been
good and kind to me. They try to help me
straighten out my plans, and some of them
take the responsibility of hushing the others; I
could not even begin to cope with discipline
problems.

4

I can reconstruct the outlines of plans that have been made for the rest of the year. It is the detailed record of everything that has been done that I am frightened at losing. Next year it will all have to be done again; I do not mind the work in itself, but next year I must really learn to teach with skill and assurance so that I can think less about the content and more about the girls and the ideas which I would like to give them. I do not think anyone else can measure what this means to me.

I am tired; in a minute I must begin to work on tomorrow's assignments though I think I will be forced to go to bed soon. It is ironic that the teacher who has a nervous breakdown is the one who has annoyed me all year by her apparent debonair manner — and by asking me, as she left school at 4:00, if I was still working. As for me, I complain so continuously and am so aware of my

Troubles that I will probably never be able to store ^{up} enough to explode.

I think of you often when I get up ~~at~~ in the morning. It is cold and dark then, but I remember you lying relaxed and peaceful with your hands behind your head and the sun shining full upon you — quite calm and quite separate from me.

Sleep well.

Margaret