

Wednesday
March 29, 1956

Dear John,

I have been restless all evening, and now I turn to writing to you, hoping that I will be able to work and then to sleep after it is written. I have just spent an hour housecleaning and listening to the First Brandenburg and a Mozart concerto. But neither the music nor the physical activity has concentrated the restlessness into the energy I need for studying. I must teach the Hundred Years War and the First World War tomorrow.

I should be quite calm and happy to be alone tonight. Joy is away, and the Czech girl who has been here for two nights, has left the city with the fiancé she came to meet at the ship. They had not seen each other for two years. He sat in the kitchen with her and looked tense and ate oranges slowly.

Today was a good day. I should be more thankful and not so anxious for tomorrow. My classes were more coherent than usual and the children were attentive and responsive. I came home in a warm rain. I had missed the weather report

This morning and was completely unprepared for all ² that wetness. But I was glad to be. A nice lady, who said that she was almost home, offered me her newspaper that she had been sheltering her own head with, but I declined because it was so nice. The Italians in my fruit store were even more nice and cheerful than they usually are and scolded me amiably for getting so wet. On the seat opposite me in the Elevated a secretarial looking lady lent another woman a supply of Kleenexes with which to dry off three dripping children. Do you suppose that it is because it is a spring rain that everyone is so kind and happy?

I have been thinking about you very often. My thoughts have not been elaborate or complicated but rather simple responses of gratitude for the fact of having known you and been with you - and the hope that this will continue for a little while. You must not be troubled by what you feel is my too great dependence on you. Now that I am back here and settled into a pattern of work, and since I do not at the moment feel despairing about my work, my dependence is much less intense and yearning. It is very bad that I have not learned to be able to work easily in different places under varied circumstances.

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If only I could do more work while I am with you, I think that my sense of identity and separate existence might be greater; and my affection would not be such a burden for you — nor the need to express it so intense for me.

I think also about the thoughts that go in and out, and sometimes stay all night — and all the rest of what I read to myself and what you read to me. You must not feel that because I do not speak of it, I ignore it or feel it unimportant. Quite the contrary. But I think I have told you how troubled I am by the negative quality of ~~so~~ so much of Rilke. Only pain and loss and separation are affirmed. Yet I have nothing more positive to say — and, if I had, it would have no meaning for you. If there is any other way for you to feel, you will have to find it for yourself — or it will have to find you.

I have been reading Donne these nights when I could not sleep. I do not think that I have ever showed you the passage which means most to me. I wish that at the center of all my life and feelings, there could be the beauty ~~which~~ ~~which~~ ~~which~~ which this contains for me:

. God made Sun and Moon to distinguish seasons, and day, and night, and we cannot have the fruits of the earth but in their seasons: But God hath made no decree to distinguish the seasons of his mercies; In paradise, the fruits were ripe the first minute, and in heaven it is always Autumn, his mercies are ever in their maturity. We ask panem quotidianum, our daily bread, and God never says you should have come yesterday, he never says you must again tomorrow but today if you will hear his voice, to day he ~~is~~ will hear you. If some king of the earth have so large an extent of dominion in North and in south, as that he hath winter and summer together in his Dominions, so large an extent East and west, as that he hath day and night together in his dominions, ~~so~~ much more hath God mercy and judgement together: He brought light out of darkness, not out of a lesser light; he can bring thy Summer out of Winter, though thou have no Spring; though in the ways of fortune, or understanding, or conscience thou have been benighted till now, wintred and frozen, clouded and eclipsed, damped and benumbed, smothered and stoppered till now, now God comes to thee, not as in the dawning of the day, not as in the bud of the spring, but as the Sun at noon to illustrate all shadows, as the sheaves in harvest, to fill all penuries, all occasions invite his mercies, and all times are his seasons".

Christmas Evening, 1624

I cannot explain what it means. I read it first⁵
nine year years ago. It still expresses what I
want and what I would find, or be found by.
When you ask what will become of me, it is this
that you should wonder about and that I should
think of. Perhaps if this were my only anxiety....
but I do not know how to stop worrying about
the other things.

Margaret