

0291, 81 LingA
Cambridge, April 18, 1950

Dear Margaret,

It is midnight now and just before I go to bed I would write you briefly in order that you might have a letter from me before you go home for the weekend. Not having heard from you I was tempted to assume an "if you don't write, I won't write either" attitude, which would be silly, since most likely it is your wedding plans which have given you more important things to do. Alec told me some of the gruesome details, I do not know what to think, my mind has no categories for such things.

The past week brought its full share of troubles with it. My paper came back from PMLA filthy with bitter criticism from two German professors. My work this term, the prospect of the next six weeks, has begun to weigh upon my mind. An unusual restlessness, the desire to forget the past, the fear of the future, and the present desire only to have you close to me and dependent on me, and the knowledge that past, future and present are all impossibilities have made it very difficult for me to concentrate. Besides, I have caught a very bad cold or a slight case of influenza.

My telephone call to you was planned only as a pleasant diversion. I had no intention of asking you to come to see me, and still, when I was talking to you, I could not help saying what I most wanted. Now I am a little bit ashamed of my lack of self-control. I really do not think that you should let either Beethoven's Mass or me interfere with your wedding dress. You should not come merely in order to do me a favor, but only if you think you would enjoy it. It is very strange to think that you might actually yourself want to see me.

Sometimes I think I hear the earth trembling under my feet, and tearing the crevasse between the two worlds open to much larger dimensions. You have been very good at jumping across, but you must be careful not to fall in. And then you must never forget that some day the split will be too wide to jump across. You must make sure that that day finds you on the right side. There will be no changing of sides afterwards.

Please, please don't let my stupidity frighten you. My mind is tired and dull and tends to invent pathetic metaphors. They are of no consequence. Some day soon, I hope, I will be able to write a better letter to you; until then you must be patient with me. I wish you were here.

John.