

Cambridge, April 21.

Dear Margaret,

Let me answer your letter ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ quickly before the impression it made on me is lost in the haste of my work. The frantic uncertainty which your lines betray make me feel guilty for whatever I wrote that was the cause. I console myself with the thought that there are many other things beside my pessimism which disturb you and that I am not wholly to blame for whatever makes you unhappy. As for my letters, I wish ~~nothing~~ they could help you and make you steadfast in the things which trouble you, and begin to clarify the confusion of which you complain. In that case, my letters might have some value.

As for myself, I know of nothing that can help me; I do not even know whether I should look for help, whether things are not good as they are, whether I should not accept them and whatever happiness or pain they bring me as sent from God. I would be wrong if I complained or if I burdened you with my own fears. If I did so in my last letter, this was not my intention. I wrote you simply because I thought you would be glad to hear from me, and nothing that I wrote was consciously critical or ironic.

Perhaps it is wrong that when I write you I never try to conceal my state of mind or to write anything but what I momentarily think or feel. Americans are very different in that respect. All their lives are an unceasing effort to appear ~~xxxx~~ to be something which they are not, and when they resemble one another like their mass-produced articles of commerce, not only in thought but in appearance as well, they think they have attained success in life. I can never be like that.

When I write you my present state of mind is always the absolute substratum of my letter. I do not like to think about my feelings. I would feel like an actor if I presumed to measure the heights of happiness or to plumb the black caverns of despair. All I can tell you is that I am better now than I was, both physically and spiritually, but I am very conscious, perhaps too conscious, of my proximity to depression.

You should have learned by now how moody I am, and how small are the things that suffice to frighten me. I am awed and horrified by the power which the irrational elements have in my life. If I could, I would subdue them, but they are too strong and they ~~will have~~ must be appeased like the malicious and terrible gods of old. The first thunderstorm of the summer is approaching in the West, and all the sky is leaden and grim with anticipation. I must mail this letter before it comes. I was planning to send it "Special Delivery," but I do not have stamps enough. Besides it is not worth it.

A week from today you will be here. I look forward to you coming, and I shall try to work this next week as hard as I can. Some work will be left to do when you are here, but it will all be work which I can do while you are talking to me. It would be very bad for me, if I had no work at all to do. But thank you for coming.

John