

May 2, 1950

Dear Jochen,

I have been slowly and laboriously composing short-answer examination questions. I had promised myself that I could write to you after two hours of that. It is the only concrete thing that I have done today.

A good part of the day at school was passed in a state of sick and confused exhaustion. Finally, I became quite dizzy in the hot library and went into my room. There on the desk was the package; when I shook the book, what I needed most of all fell out on the desk. Thank you very much. It is a good letter.

These two days have been very hard. I continue to sleep very badly. My mood is very unstable. At moments I am so oppressed by the amount of work that is to be done, and by its variety, that I sit quite numb. I start but cannot finish jobs because I am too tired, or because, in my tired confusion, I have left the important books or papers somewhere else. Last night all my difficulties sought for expression in irritation at Joy. Fortunately, it was not expressed except in curt and ungracious replies; but every detail of everything she did built fires inside me. I suppose this is a mild form of insanity when the sound of coffee being swallowed, a snuffle, the scratch of a pen, or the sound of shoes that slip off the heel make it impossible to work and, finally, to sleep.

Tonight I am very grateful to her. She is not here. A little while ago she telephoned to tell me and to say that Marty had gotten for me a book which I very much need. Both of them are as good to me as I let them be; I should feel more ashamed than I do.

I have been thinking of my instability and changeableness in another way too. I am astonished again that I can turn from the role of a dependence upon you which is almost complete to a pattern of living which is, at least in appearance, quite independent. My classes have not been good, but that I can deal at all with noisy and difficult children, that I can ask or answer questions seems incredible. It has all been poorly done; I feel little satisfaction in it. If only I could sleep away my nausea and headache perhaps I could do more than simply act my way through the day.

For the weekend itself, I only regret that the last part was made difficult for both of us by my anxious and well-meaning stupidity. We should have gone for a walk. We must avoid the occasion for questions and feelings which cannot be answered now, perhaps never. You must forgive me the fact that I seem to give you so much more responsibility than you can bear. I do not think it is right that you should have to. I hope

that if I were a little less tired I would not be so heavy and inert a burden. Yet I fear too that there is a tiredness that is much more important than the physical exhaustion and which will for a long time make things for us both very hard.

yet in the midst of this physical and emotional exhaustion, there is something else; I do not know how to say what it is. I think it is related to the pleasure of recognition which one feels in coming upon a passage of poetry or a painting which states clearly the beauty which one knew before, only imperfectly and through confusion. When I am less tired perhaps I will be able to see this more clearly, it will become a part of me, and then my letters will be less confused and obscure in sound and meaning.

Good night,

Margaret

Will you send me your
sister's address. Mother has a
letter written but no address.
Send it to me in Philadelphia,
for I will be at home this
weekend