

May 9, 1950

Dear Jochen,

This has been an exhausting and discouraging day. Only your letter at the beginning of it and my solitude now at the end of it hold it together and give it some meaning. I seem to have been struggling all day and losing--struggling against my own inadequate knowledge, against impatient and contentious children, and against physical exhaustion. Hay fever adds the final indignity. When I came home I took a pill for the last ailment, to clear some of the confusion away. And now I have lain still for almost two hours, tense and hot and then shivering, and reading the end of "Dr. Faustus." The physical results of the pill and the reading make a strangely fitting combination.

When I have finished and mailed this letter and have gone to the library, I will begin again on the Modern History examination and all the other things. I could work all night if I had the strength, and still be badly prepared for the next day; I am so far behind. Yet somehow, in a month, it will all be over. But I cannot live in terms of a month, so I tell myself that by the 19th the worst will be over. I don't know. I am very childish in the way in which I measure out my difficulties and fears so that I can look at them without being completely over-whelmed.

Please do not be anxious about Bethlehem and how I will behave to you there. I will not seek out the people that I know, except for my family and perhaps one of my students whose strange warmth and shyness and sensitivity I very much love; I think you would love her too. But you are the person with whom I most need to be; and I will be with you as much as I can. Only think seriously of what has troubled you before: how you have worried lest other people, especially my family, make of our friendship a simple equation which you thought inappropriate. You know that that does not trouble me, and that I do not think that my family misunderstands. But I think that your attitude toward this problem of outward appearance is still very confused and contradictory. Perhaps I am mistaken, I will not act as if I had never seen you before, but remember that if I am awkward and silent or seem aloof, it is not because of coldness or indifference.

I have made arrangements with the head of my department to leave early Friday; unless the office makes difficulties (it might), I shall be able to come to Philadelphia and drive down with you and Alec and whomever else ~~was~~ going. I hope that will be possible.

Thank you for telephoning to me, and for this letter. I have tried not to think much about the



possibility of your being in Philadelphia, for fear that my disappointment if you could not, would be too great.

I would like to be with you without the knowledge that this was a temporary escape from something to which I must soon return. Next year when my work is easier, perhaps it will be better. And yet the shortness of each weekend, and even of that week in which you had so much to do, seems to accelerate and make harder for us what is already very hard. Am I mistaken? Am I only inventing excuses for something which I cannot face? I think we need more time for things which only a great deal of time can answer. And these letters are so very unsatisfactory; even your voice sounds unreal and ghostlike over the distance.

Margaret

When are you going to teach me German?