

Kennarock, June 23, 1950

Dear Margaret,

If I close the door to my room, the air will soon get too sticky and hot, in spite of the open windows. If I open it, all kinds of extraneous sounds that have to do with activities that should concern me but do not, come in to disturb me. I hope that in a day or ~~to~~ two I shall have a firmer grip on my activity. At the moment it is very difficult for me to concentrate, although there ~~are~~ are many things waiting for my attention.

The only worthwhile thing I have done today, besides practicing Brandenburg Concerto is to write a letter to your parents. But I have not proofread it yet and I do not know how worthwhile it really is. One thing which I neglected to write them is that Mrs. Hewitt's offer of her house has been politely forgotten, but that mother ~~has~~ has spoken to the principal of the school and received assurance that

nice, newly painted rooms will be available for your parents when and if they come, although some advance notice would be helpful.

As for myself, I shall be in Philadelphia in August. I spoke to Mrs. Jarden over the telephone, and I must write her a good letter as soon as I am able. You realize that at the moment I am unable to write a good letter even to you. I wish I were more calm and collected and able to do well some of the work that I would like to do. Both mother and father are worried about me, although I don't think they themselves know why. My withdrawal into books usually disturbs them somewhat, but this time I must seem particularly offensive. Still I prefer aggravating my parents rather to feeling that I am in the way of yours and since whenever I go I seem to be in the way, I console myself with the thought

that this is probably the most appropriate place for me.

I think of you often and our being together at Bethlehem, in Cambridge and at Buck Hill Falls seems like exotic extravagance in a life which has no claim upon the extraordinary or unusual. Here it is the patients who reign and until now my efforts to maintain some independence of the general hurry and confusion have been in vain. But I shall keep trying. I wish we could be together, - but not where there was such hurry, heat, and confusion. Will you write me some time? I shall try to make my letters as regular as possible even if, as today, the results of my effort are not very significant. I can think back to last year about this time, when I was sitting at this table in a similar mood writing you letters much more artificial and constrained. At least the con-

straint and the artificiality between us have vanished, although sometimes I am not quite sure what it is on my part that has taken their place.

As for your attitude toward me, I know that it is the most significant thing in my life, though I believe I cannot appreciate it fully. I harbor a sense of guilt, and a feeling that you are throwing yourself away on me, and that I am quite useless and unable to receive receive, much less return the feelings which you have for me. But now as always I do my best that you should not throw yourself away. I do not know. It is very strange, and I am uncertain and depressed. You must be patient and wait until I can write you a less confused more sensible letter. Hearing from you might help.

Ben
Johen.

P. S.

- 3 -

It is evening now and the air is cool and mild. Outside the frogs are croaking, and on my table are two vases of white and red roses. I have been reading Hölderlin and I feel calmer than I did before. If you were here now, we would go out and take a long, long walk together in the night. Would you be too tired to go? - But since you are not here, I must try to work. Perhaps something worthwhile will come of it after all.