

Germantown
June 29, 1950

Dear Jochen,

Margrit arrived here late yesterday afternoon. Except for a cough she seems very well and cheerful. I wish that the attempted telephone call last night had succeeded; Margrit had suggested that you might like to talk to me, if you were there. You always sound very unreal and remote to me over the telephone, and yet it would have been good to hear even a shadow. Tomorrow Margrit goes to her camp near West Chester. This morning we talked a little about teaching and went to the Library to get some books of children's games which she will need for this month's work. When she comes back from lunch with Molly Jarden I will ask her some questions about some of the German passages on which I got stuck.

I feel very much better, much quieter and more reconciled to my summer, than I did last week. My trip to Cape May, if it did nothing else, reminded me how good it was to be out of the confusion of so many different people feverishly pursuing other ends—or just running for the sake of the hunt. And now my possessions are mostly in good order. The one big gap is the lack of pictures on the wall. I have had very much less time for studying than I had hoped. I have been doing most of the kitchen work so that Mother could have time to put her papers in order and to work in the garden. In a few minutes she and Alex will come back with plants and seeds which must be put into the garden immediately; I shall have to leave this letter, as I must leave so many things, and help her. I console myself with the thought that this, after all, is the way that almost all women must learn to work, and that continuity must exist in my attitude rather than in the task itself. I have not yet investigated the possibility of piano lessons. Since I have barely time to read German, and have not yet found time to read any history, it seems ridiculous to plan anything else. More than anything else, I wish to avoid the feeling that the things I have to do are impossible. I have had enough of that to last me a long time.

It seems to me very unlikely that Papa and Mother will be able to come to Konnarock this summer. Papa is planning a shorter work week, as I believe he mentioned to you. Perhaps in September we will go to Pocono for a week or two. So far as his health is concerned, I am sure that it is better for him to have a shorter working day and week than to work furiously all the time except for the vacation. When I asked him whether he thought he would go to Konnarock, he did not say no, but he did say that the first trip that he had to make was to see Priscilla as he promised a long time ago. As you say, that will take him in the opposite direction. As for Alex and me, I do not know. Alex is now working on his car; he is very vague about the future. I don't want him to go, simply for my sake. Since your sister will be working all of July, and since she plans to go to Connecticut in August and you plan to guard Mrs. Jarden's house, I do not see how plans can be made for all four of us to go anywhere, either in July or August. I am very glad that you will be here in August, though my pessimistic and doubting heart refuses to believe it until it actually happens. I like to make plans as little as you do, and I do not think that I can bring myself to engineer a trip to Konnarock, unless Alex seems more interested. Sometimes my plans to be with you make me feel uncomfortably aggressive and unfeminine.

I liked your letter of Monday very much. I wish I could write to you anything as nice, but I feel tired and tense today, very much in need of time to read and to rest and to fill myself with beautiful sounds and images. I had a very disturbing dream last night (very rare with me) that woke me up, kept me awake a long time, and overshadows my day. I am not unhappy that you worry about me; sometimes I have wondered whether you were enough aware of my own dark moments, my fears and loneliness. And yet depressed moments are not what I fear the most, but rather the fact that there is no peace which binds together the dark and the light, no sense of the continuity and oneness of my experience; each moment is lived too much as if it were the only moment ever experienced. So do not be concerned about the moods of depression in which I sometimes find myself when I write to you. You remember from being with me, how quickly my mood will change.

There is nothing that you "can do to help" me, except to seek for yourself the balance which I cannot supply either for myself or for you. I do not expect you to provide it for me either, though I think that if each had some, both would have more.

Deire Marguerite

Marguerite arrived here late yesterday afternoon. Except for a cough she seems very well and cheerful. I wish that the attempted telephone call last night had succeeded; Marguerite had suggested that you might like to talk to me, if you were there. You always sound very unreal and remote to me over the telephone, and yet it would have been good to hear even a shadow. Tomorrow Marguerite goes to her camp near West Chester. This morning we talked a little about teaching and went to the library to get some books of children's games which she will need for this month's work. When she comes back from lunch with Molly Jordan I will ask her some questions about some of the German passages on which I got stuck.

I feel very much better, much quieter and more reconciled to my summer, than I did last week. My trip to Cape May, if it did nothing else, reminded me how good it was to be out of the confusion of so many different people feverishly pursuing other ends--or just running for the sake of the hunt. And now my possessions are mostly in good order. The one big gap is the lack of pictures on the wall. I have had very much less time for studying than I had hoped. I have been doing most of the kitchen work so that Mother would have time to put her papers in order and to work in the garden. In a few minutes she and Alex will come back with plants and seeds which must be put into the garden immediately; I shall have to leave this letter, as I must leave so many things, and help her. I console myself with the thought that this, after all, is the way that almost all women must learn to work, and that continually must exist in my attitude rather than in the task itself. I have not yet investigated the possibility of piano lessons. Since I have barely time to read German, and have not yet found time to read any history, it seems ridiculous to plan anything else. More than anything else, I wish to avoid the feeling that the things I have to do are impossible. I have had enough of that to last me a long time.

It seems to me very unlikely that Papa and Mother will be able to come to Konnarock this summer. Papa is planning a shorter work week, as I believe he mentioned to you. Perhaps in September we will go to Pocono for a week or two. So far as his health is concerned, I am sure that it is better for him to have a shorter working day and week than to work furiously all the time except for the vacation. When I asked him whether he thought he would go to Konnarock, he did not say no, but he did say that the first trip that he had to make was to see Priscilla as he promised a long time ago. As you say, that will take him in the opposite direction. As for Alex and me, I do not know. Alex is now working on his car; he is very vague about the future. I don't want him to go, simply for my sake. Since your sister will be working all of July, and since she plans to go to Connecticut in August and you plan to spend Mrs. Jordan's house, I do not see how plans can be made for all four of us to go anywhere, either in July or August. I am very glad that you will be here in August, though my pessimistic and doubtful heart refuses to believe it until it actually happens. I like to make plans as little as you do, and I do not think that I can bring myself to engineer a trip to Konnarock, unless Alex seems more interested. Sometimes my plans to be with you make me feel uncomfortably aggressive and unfeeling.

I liked your letter of Monday very much. I wish I could write to you anything as nice, but I feel tired and tense today, very much in need of time to read and to rest and to fill myself with beautiful sounds and images. I had a very disturbing dream last night (very rare with me) that woke me up, kept me awake a long time, and overhadows my day. I am not unhappy that you worry about me; sometimes I have wondered whether you were enough aware of my own dark moments, my fears and loneliness. And yet depressed moments are not what I fear the most, but rather the fact that there is no peace which blends together the dark and the light, no sense of the continuity and oneness of my experiences; each moment is lived too much as if it were the only moment ever experienced. So do not be concerned about the moods of depression in which I sometimes find myself. When I write to you. You remember from being with me, how quickly my mood will change.