

Germantown
July 5, 1950

Dear Jochen,

I probably should not write to you at all tonight. There has been a demon of bad temper and impatience in me most of the day. He seeks provocation, makes long-buried wrongs the occasion for an outburst, and wounds all innocent bystanders. It would probably hurt you more if I did not write, so I will try to restrain him, though you must take your chances with the rest.

One would think that he would have been exorcised by the theology I have been reading. I was so depressed by my vacant mind on Sunday (and in fact every day) that I have taken one of Papa's books, quite a good one I think. It is bad that I understand so little of the Bible without a commentary. Still worse is the possibility that I should sit long hours in my room listening to the "sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal" and forget that I have not Love. Teri is home for her vacation. She has done all sorts of errands and helped in the kitchen in the nicest way. Yet the fact that she leaves the radio on and that she causes Tchaikovsky to surge through the house makes me almost completely deaf to her kindness and good will. Poor Papa has been terribly depressed today--the kind of deep depression that so frightens me that I cannot even attempt to do anything for him. The only person to whom I have been of any use was Mother. By putting up with my demon, she has managed to get several messy places cleaned up.

Alex got what he described as a "nice, friendly" letter from Saja today. He asked me how far it was to Washington. I was restrained enough not to say that it was on the way to Konnarock. Then I told myself that it was perhaps better if he did not think of it. What would you do if my demon came too?

My imagination is not so good as yours. I see you very vividly in Konnarock, on the hillside, or writing to me when you should be asleep, or collapsed in your day-dream. But here, where I need you, you are not. And for that reason, each letter, though I read it and reread it, is a shock and a disappointment: as I wait for it, it is you, but when it comes, the mailman shoves it through the slot with all the bills, and I know however good a letter it may be, it is only a letter. Can you forgive me such lack of imagination? I hope so, because it is a nasty, close prison in itself. Only, sometimes, in my letters to you have I the illusion of a real connection because my loneliness reaches out so far that I can almost walk across the bridge.

Good night

Margaret