

Germentown

September 3, 1950

Dear Mrs. Meyer,

The music of the Passion is being played downstairs. Though this house is so big, I seem to hear every note clearly in my room. Alex, Mother, and Papa all like it and have each said that they intend to write to you and Dr. Meyer to express their pleasure.

It was good that I came home, though as you could see, it was not easy for me to leave Konnarock. I had quite forgotten my parents' wedding anniversary which is September first. On Friday I had a long conversation with Mother, much interrupted by Peter's wanderings in and out. My poor father was so busy and preoccupied that I almost had to make an appointment in order to talk with him. You see your house is not the only one in which such conversations are difficult. I am afraid that I expressed myself even more awkwardly than I did in talking with you, but I think that both my father and mother understand matters more clearly and that they will be less anxious about me and my moods.



Mother's chief anxiety is concentrated on the question of finding a job next year. She does not think that I should give up my present very good position and go to Cambridge and take whatever position I can get—"unless you were engaged." She seems to be afraid that being together would not decide matters. Part of this feeling is certainly a reflection of her own experience.

Papa and she wrote many letters to each other and saw relatively little of each other. And as I have told you Mother is afraid that I could not stand the simultaneous strain of difficulties with my teaching and in my friendship with Tachen. She has seen me so often in school and in college and in teaching upset over my work and sometimes almost sick because of worry. I think that I have grown out of some of this silliness, though my parents have not helped me much in this respect; I have had too much sympathy, or as the psychologists would say, I have been "over-protected."

Mother also worries because I now care so little for the friends that I used to need—or that I thought I needed. She does not



remember that I had outgrown most of my friends before I knew Tochen. At one point in our conversation Mother said that she did not think that my life should be turned all in one direction. I asked, "why not, if it's a good direction?" And Mother answered that she had thought of that even as she ~~she~~ spoke. You see, in spite of her doubts and anxieties, she also knows that it is a good direction.

I would not tell you all this at such length if I were as good at condensing and generalising as Tochen. But I must try to describe the significant detail. I hope that I have succeeded and that you understand my Mother and her worries a little better. My father is less troubled about me. I wish that Tochen could feel as much at home here as I felt in Konnarock. I am afraid that it is as much my fault as anyone's that he does not feel comfortable here.

I do not know how to thank you for your kindness and understanding, yours and Dr. Meyer's and Margrit's. I feel so much more at peace than I did before my visit with you. When



I try to analyse my serenity, I add up long walks with Margrit, the foggy evening on White Top, photographs, apple cake, music, candles, and apples falling into the grass - a queer assortment of symbols for what cannot be analysed.

I hope that you will not be too tired to enjoy your vacation when it finally comes. I like to think of it beginning just as mine ends. Otherwise, I should want too much to be with you.

Sincerely,

Margaret McPherson



German town  
September 3, 1950

Dear Jochen,

It has been raining softly all day. Friday and Saturday were so hot that I was unable to do anything except to wait around to talk to Mother and Papa. Now that is over. If you stay at home long enough you will see the letter that I am writing to your mother. I think that Mother and Papa understand better. Much depends on whether I can live through this winter in a less troubled manner than last winter. The matter of finding a job in Cambridge troubles Mother most. I do not believe that you should find this difficult to understand.

In talking about you both with your parents and with mine it hurts me very much that I cannot say anything of your help and understanding in the things that are hardest for me. In everything I say I seem to stumble awkwardly around the central facts, and however much I explain, I conceal still more.

Francis, the bird-killer, has been sitting in my lap, but finally went away disgusted because I wigged so much. A great deal was waiting



for me when I came home. Papa had planted marigolds by the front gate in the shape of my initials; only the informed eye can read them. The record-player has come home. You will probably not find the laws to your liking, but by this time I am used to it and like it. Alex has changed his mind and now likes the Ascension Cantata very much. You should see him sitting and listening to it with Vicky in his lap and beating out the rhythm on her ample back. Everyone likes the Passion - except Peter who seems to be indifferent to everything but radio blood and thunder and baseball. He is developing into a much too "all-round boy" for my taste.

Alex asked me anxiously whether you regretted your decision to live with him this winter. I said that you did not, though you worried some about his attitude toward our friendship. I will talk to him more when he drives me to New York. He said that for his own part he was not worried, but I am not sure that his feelings are so uncomplicated.

We ~~may~~ may go to Pocono on Wednesday, but it does not seem likely. I shall probably

be here when you come. Now I must try to do  
a little reading before it is time to ~~to~~ help with  
supper. Please give my regards to your parents  
and to your sister. Vicky and I send you the  
same kind of affectionate greeting.

Deine  
'Margaret

2-2-23