

Germantown  
September 16, 1950

Dear Jochen,

Alex does not expect that we will arrive before four o'clock on Wednesday. If Mother has her way we will probably bring some food suitable for supper, but perhaps you had better not count on it.

I do not know what to say to you about the things that trouble you. The problem of the scholarship is so far outside my experience. I failed to get almost every academic honor or award that I aimed at—except my scholarship to Bryn Mawr which first astonished me and then worried me sick for fear I should not be able to keep it. I am so accustomed to failure that I can hardly appreciate what it means to you.

As for Hall, the only comforting explanation which I can find is that he has been living alone all summer (hasn't he?) and he hasn't yet accustomed himself to the altered situation. His standards of housekeeping are undoubtedly much less rigorous than yours. I have always lived with people who were less perturbed by disorder than I am. If I attended to all the cleaning-up I hated them; if I did not, I lived in an emotional state of confusion even worse than the physical confusion around me. The house now seems to me incredibly messy. If I begin to work on it I shall have no time for my own work. I have often thought as I walked past Alex's room this summer that you would have an annoying winter if you took all the responsibility for cleaning the apartment.

If your relationship with Hall is so strained that you do not want to ask his approval on my staying in the apartment, I am quite content to wait until I get there and then make arrangements with Priscilla, Ann, or Caroline. While it would mean a great deal to me to be under the same roof with you, I do not wish to complicate further an already complicated situation. I don't think I will say anything to Alex; he has plenty to worry about already; Sally seems to have attached herself to him.

You say that my letters are "infrequent". I think that I have written every other day, though all the days since you left seem so indistinct and meaningless that I may have gotten mixed up. Your use of Schopenhauer's description of the dead seems much more appropriate to me than to you. I cannot make myself work as you can. I think of you almost all the time, yet what I think adds nothing to what I have thought before.

About what, ~~then~~, can I write to you? It was an indifferent day, neither good nor bad. I spent the whole morning in doctor's waiting rooms and offices. After my medical examination, I went to the nose man, who yanked out some polyps and then kindly comforted me with kleenex and ammonia ~~and~~ a funny story while I bled and felt faint. Papa could drive no where this afternoon because of a slightly infected leg. Alex brought Sally to supper and now sits listening to our new Shaw Mass. I have taken a few notes for my English history course and must take more before I go to bed. My head aches and I feel trammelled by all the unnecessary things around me. Do you remember in the Inferno: "Sullen were we in the sweet air, that is gladdened by the Sun, carrying lazy smoke in our hearts; now lie we sullen here in the black mire." I have nothing really to complain of except myself. Would you have a daily letter of such complaints?

I have sat here almost a quarter of an hour listening to the music and wishing that I could feel or think anything beautiful to send to you. But I seem to be all dried up ~~or sealed over~~. I think it is better to tell you Good night and to work. If I find something nice I will send it; if not I will come myself and you can have a good look.

Deine  
Margaret