

New York
October 1, 1950

Dear Jochen,

It is time for me to begin correcting the VIII's summer reading reports. There are so many that I have been postponing them all day. Instead, I have read through the Brearley Grammar book and have read some English history in addition to washing clothes, ironing, and reorganizing bureau drawers. This weekend's housekeeping has taken me much longer than I had expected. The floors that I washed and waxed Friday night had to be done all over again yesterday after Joy and the superintendent got through. She has left behind her a pile of stuff that occupies one-fourth of the kitchen. When that has been disposed of I shall feel quite satisfied with my housekeeping. The superintendent, a horribly ugly and surly looking man, surprised me by working almost five hours replacing broken window cords and broken panes. At first, he was very reluctant to replace the glass, but I looked sad and said how nasty it looked. He kept me busy getting materials, holding things, and talking to him most of the time. He had a terrible time fitting the panes of glass to the frame. He began each one swearing and moaning. Then he would quiet down for a quarter of an hour and emerge to tell me that "business was good." You are the only person that I have ever seen work as patiently and persistently. I think he must have been surprised too. In spite of the black and red paint which he, like you, deprecates, he found me amusing to talk to. At first, he addressed me as "Big one" (Joy was "Little one"), but he became much more respectful when he discovered that we were teachers. He worked hard at pronouncing my name, asked all sorts of questions and told me kindly that he thought Scotch was just about the best drink there was. He also told me about the dock work that earns him most of his income. We agreed that New York was a horrible place to live. We understood each other very well though his English sounds like nothing I have ever heard except that of the Lone Ranger's faithful Indian friend, Tonto (ask Alex).

This tells you the extent of my social life for the weekend. I should really have started on my homework sooner, but the knowledge that I will not have much time this week for housecleaning drove me on until I was exhausted. The work for the first week or two at school will be as much as last year. In actual teaching hours my schedule this year is heavier than last year's. When it is properly organized it will not be so difficult. I must spend a great deal of time now inventing the short-cuts. The American History course presents the worst problems. The combination of Xs and Xlls is difficult in itself. But that is nothing compared to the fact that there are one or two girls who seem to be intelligent while all the others are "slow workers", many of them evidently quite lost so far.

At school I find it fairly easy to concentrate on my work; here I sometimes fall into a trance. It is a good thing that I have so much to do and that the pressure is great enough to make me feel that I must hurry. I am very glad to be here by myself, at moments quite calm and as close to peace as I ever come. Those moments are ~~however, not related to any~~ real serenity. There are other moments when I feel this place so haunted by other people and by my other selves that I feel very troubled and uncertain. I rearrange the furniture in the back room, ~~but~~ here's a spot.

I shall probably bring work with me next weekend, but you must let me do some of the housework and cooking. Please! And please do not think me indifferent. Remember what I said as we drove over the mountain on our way to Marion. You should not make it harder for me. Now I must write to my family. And then all that homework.

Deine,

Margaret