

Germaotoun

Christmas 1958

Dear Jochen,

This is almost the first time that I have been alone since you left Saturday night. From my room I can hear the sounds of the entire household: the Mass from downstairs, and the clashing of dishes still being washed. Janet and Bob can be heard packing upstairs, and occasionally Papa exclaims over something. I must go downstairs to say Goodbye to Janet and Bob and Andy. Then I can begin to read and to work. Last night I paid a brief call on the Pope to borrow a German dictionary. If my school work goes well, I will probably have read enough of Rilke to ask you questions when you come again. The two or three pages read last night gave me much to think about.

I have been good, but I deserve very little credit, for other people have been even better. My goodness has been passive, for the most part. I helped a little in the kitchen and talked a little to other people, but I went to bed last night at 11:00 and left others to wrap presents and clean ~~until~~ until 2:00. This morning, early, before ~~everyone~~ the entire household was assembled, Papa read from Isaiah, and Alex the 40th chapter, and I read from St. Luke, beginning with the Magnificat. Except for that moment my rôle in Christmas was very minor.

I have thought of you a great deal - almost as much as if you were physically present to me. Most of my thoughts have turned themselves in the music, which has been played constantly. The Mozart Mass which is now being played reminds me of last summer. I can see the candles burning and the curtains stirring gently. You remember what I remember when I hear "Do Hirt, Israel" and "Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis." (Alex says that they will sing the latter at Bethlehem this spring. Will we be there together?) Do you remember which weekend it was that we listened to "An die Ferne Geliebte" together? I do. Each piece of music that is played has a double beauty for me - its own and the beauty, and sometimes the pain, of a moment in which we experienced it together.

Tomorrow Alex and Aunt Martha and Mother and I will go down ~~to~~ to the Museum. Alex has been very restless and troubled. He talked to me a long time yesterday. A guilty conscience about his behavior ^{toward you} does not seem to be the least of his troubles. Some of the guilt he is willing to look at and examine; the rest he holds at a little distance. I think that you are both very foolish to

consider coming together next year. I think I said the same thing last spring with no effect. Will you please remember what you yourself have said and not continue to say "It is up to Alex".

I hope that you are taking walks with your father, that you sleep a little longer, and that your mother sees that you take your vitamins. Do be good to Margrit. I will be very happy when you come back to me again, though I feel much less separated from you by distance than I ~~was~~ ever have before. But in a few days I will wonder whether you are again depressed, whether you will throw away all the old evidence and demand ^{to prove that} new evidence to prove that I really do love you and ~~that~~ I understand you as much as I can understand now - and as much as you help me to understand. I will be patient until you come again - and after. Will you also remember the very particular meaning which the task of patience should have for you.

Jetzt wird ich ^{Rilke} ~~Deutsche~~ lesen und lernen und lieben. Grösse Deine Eltern für mich.

Deine

Margaret