

New York, February 28, 1957

Dear Jochen,

Do you know a passage from Goethe that begins something like this: "Des Todes ruhrendes Blick steht nicht als Schreden der Frommen oder Ende den Weisen..." I see it each time that I go to the Ottendorfer Branch of the Public Library, which is around the corner. It looks up at me from under the glass top of the librarian's desk. I look at it and try to learn it, but I must move away so that I will not block the passage or make the librarian think that I want something more. The whole passage is very beautiful. I think about it for a long time afterwards. Sometimes I spend a few minutes in the German collection upstairs. Only to look at the books awes me and also comforts me. There are so many, and I know nothing about them; but many of them you know. Often there are many people here, but they are as quiet and unthreatening as their books. Do you remember the passage from Rilke about the library?

I have read only a little from Angelus Silesius. I have held the book in my hands every night, and I have read the so lightly penciled verses in the front. Someday perhaps you will rewrite them in ink for me. Tonight I will be able to ~~write~~ read a

little more. For the first time this week I have known all day long that I would be able to finish my work today without staying up all night. Every other moment since I returned has been so desperate. Yet the reports were finished last night, and I slept seven hours and taught fairly well today. Tuesday my classes were so bad that I doubt that anyone who witnessed them would ever hire me to teach. No, I am not being dramatic.

There was a letter in my box tonight, but not from Winsor. Mary Bundy, my friend in Winthrop House, has written to reassure me about Brimmer and May. She tells me of graduates who did honors in music and biology at Radcliffe, one who went on to Harvard Medical School. I have decided not to telephone Miss Knapp yet. If I do not hear from her by Friday, I shall probably see her at the Secondary Education Board meetings on Friday. There is to be a "conference" in the afternoon on "The Teaching of Current Events". The head of Brimmer and May's History Department will be there too. The possibility that Miss Knapp might come to visit one of my classes has also crossed my mind. I hope she will not choose an American History class. I am a little worried about keeping Brimmer and May waiting, but I do not believe that they will go to the trouble of looking for another person or that will select some one lower down their list without warning me.

2.

I am sorry that I was so uncontrolled and tearful last weekend. Probably, you have your own explanation, and perhaps it is better and truer than mine. I was very much worried about my work, and yet I could not do it. I do not work at all well, except at my own desk and in solitude. Even here I am very inefficient. It is very hard for me that my work and my relationship to you are so completely separate. I want to talk to you about ^{my work} ~~it~~, and yet there is so little time, and I am so exhausted by the time I come, so confused by the different environment, that I can hardly ~~talk~~ at all. On Sunday afternoon when I must leave, I seem to leave everything that I love and return to what I hate and fear and what destroys me. Here I live a very narrow existence. Much of the time I feel nothing and perhaps think nothing. You become almost a dream. The moments when you seem to sit or stand close by are very hard. When you left me Sunday, I was so torn that it seemed better not to come at all.

But I will come again, and I will have to leave again, and it will go on like this for a very long time. Some day it will end, but that is quite unreal. The reality is now. The foot that beats on the floor, my ceiling, the air in the room, my ears and thoughts. And there is nowhere else to go, because the streets are more frightening.

In a little while it will be spring. The week-
end in Cambridge or Philadelphia will be more
beautiful, but the week here will be far worse. Already
there have been a few warm nights when angry
voices, the sounds of radios, and people coughing came
through the window until 1:30.

Now I must stop thinking of these things and
feeling them, and work. I will write you again this
weekend, if you can, write to me. But I would
rather have no letter than have you go to bed later
because of writing to me.

Deine

Margaret