

New York, April 10, 1951

Dear Tochen,
All the way home I thought of your letters and of this letter. I was sure that I would leave the second letter in the box, like a wise Pandora, but when I opened the door to look I knew already what was in it and that it could not make me more unhappy than I was already.

I had been thinking of my life and work and of you and your work. You are troubled by the lies and deception of American life; I am only afraid that my own deception will be found out. Each day I stand in my classroom, hold conferences with other teachers, and make red marks on papers, pretending that I am a teacher and that I can do this. And because I look so tired and messy and distraught the teachers think that I am very good and conscientious and never realize that I am only afraid that they will find out. You know so little of my life here. Because it would be so easy a job for you to imagine that it is easy for me. You cannot imagine how hard it is each day to struggle for concealment behind words and books and paper and to know that your nakedness is not seen only because the people aren't looking.

But in this room and in your room I make no pretence. You have deceived yourself and have found it out - again, because this is not the first time. You are right. It would be better if you did not pretend that I am more than I am. You will only hurt yourself more at the end. You cannot hurt me as badly as you hurt yourself. You are like a fire at which I warm myself and in which I see glowing images that cannot be deciphered. If I cannot be by the fire I will catch cold and I will see nothing that is beautiful. But I should be used to the cold. I have always been cold.

You should not come to see me on Friday for pity of me. If you do not come I will find something to do to make me forget

the cold. I will go ~~to~~ to the museum to see pictures in which there is sun and fire, and I will read books.

But if you need anything that I have, physical or spiritual (though you must create the spiritual in order to have it), come to me. I will give you whatever I have to be warm for a little while.

If you want to come to see me ^{but} ~~and~~ not go down to Philadelphia it will be all right. I will think of something to tell them and stay here.

Deine,
Margaret

I am writing a letter to Alex to ask him to be good to Peter. You must not imagine that concerns anything else.