

Cambridge, June 11, 1951

Liebes Kind,

the people upstairs were already in bed, when I asked them for the envelope in which to mail this letter. It was a little bit embarrassing. But I was afraid to leave the letter overnight, for fear of what it would look like tomorrow morning. Alex has already packed his envelopes and he is out with Cecile, so that I could not ask him where they were.

Last night, after I had talked to Mrs. Vietor on the telephone, I went for a long walk, - to the Buckingham School, for want of any other place to which to go. On Sparks Street a Spitzedog came up behind me, sniffed at me, and followed me home, in spite of my efforts to send him back. When I took him back in the car and let him out, he started running after the car. He likes to jump about on my bed, but I will not let him. "He is very intelligent, and we get along quite well. I do not know what to do with him, when I leave.

I slept very little last night, and this morning, after buying a black tie and half a dozen red roses I went to see Mrs. Vietor. It was very difficult. Her pain has made her very hard. She has changed very much in the past three months. She spoke of her husband's death in very Rilkean terms. He spent ten days dying. "Er starb einen sehr schweren Tod. Er wusste, dass er starb, und es war sehr schwer für ihn. Er hat entsetzlich gestöhnt." He suffocated to death of a lung cancer.

At the moment there seems to be nothing which I can do, except to take some books back to the library. This I shall do tomorrow. Tomorrow afternoon there will be a memorial service in the university church. Instead I shall go to Mount Auburn cemetery with a book and spend some time there reading. I do not know yet when I shall go home, but it will probably not be long. On Wednesday I have an appointment with Dean Fitz of the Medical School. Alex has been writing him a letter on behalf of Cecile.

This afternoon I helped Alex move his things to his cousins where he will stay next year. He was driving Aunt Priscilla's station wagon, after having had what seemed a respectable dose of Sherry. Apparently his cousin frequently offers him strong drink. This matter worries me considerably, though I know that it is none of my business. If I knew your father, I would speak to him about it. You may want to. Alex is quite incapable of refusing a drink when offered. Apparently such offerings are made rather frequently at his cousins. Knowing his weakness and lack of self-restraint, I fear such a situation may lead him to habitual drinking and/or drunkenness. (You may quote or read this letter to your parents, if you wish.) - *I believe this to be very serious.*

After I have mailed this letter, I shall continue packing. I will soon have finished. Then I shall work here, until I am ready to leave. Today I had some needed repair done on the car. Except for greasing and a change of oil, it is ready to go home. Will you come with me? I think much of you, but last week seems very distant now. Death is all around. I love it greatly; that is why it is painful. I think often

of the Chorale from cantata # 56: "Komm Du Tod, Du Schlafes Bruder,"
and even more of the passage from the Johannis Passion:

"Du Kannst vor Schmerzen zwar nichts sagen,
Doch neigest Du das Haupt und sprichst
Und sprichst stillschweigend: "Ja"

I feel very close to you now. I need you; please take care of yourself
for me.

Dein

John