



Carbon
Copies

Margaret
Personal Notes &
Letters

Oct 10 2007
through

3-14-08 to
Fred Shino &
Alice (M.P.)
Rivero

eg:
To Alice
About making about
About poetry, shared
Language
To Anne Brigham 10/16/07

Copies:
- Some difficult -
to read (Carbon)
of letters to
Alice about
books

Also my
Schedules -
esp when
John was
away on
Nantucket

6"x 9"
Gregg Ruled
80 Sheets
White

→ Reread late in August 2012 ←
→ Some very good letters to Alice
my great-niece, daughter of
Peter McPhedran. ←

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Keep

Saturday, May 26, 2007
Kannarock, VA

Dear Nathaniel:

I brought along to Kannarock several envelopes of old letters to reread, to sort. It took me a long time to get started because I knew that I would often be distracted by what I might find.

However I did find this old letter addressed to you, that was never mailed. I'm not sure how to explain that omission, but I have reread it several times in the last few days and have not been embarrassed by its style or ^{sentiments} ~~sentiments~~ I hope you will like it too. It ~~recreates~~ ^{recreates} for me the place where it was written on Nantucket; the season: November 2004. Jackson's work on our Madaket property, and, most important: my appreciation ~~and~~ of your thinking and feeling about some apparently foolish remarks by one of your teacher's criticisms of another student's work.

And, there is also a reference to your pleasure in watching Benjamin's performance in a basketball game.

It is one of the better accounts that I have found in my literary digging.

I have also done a little digging and weeding ~~in the~~ backyard near the kitchen window, where Jacken helped me to replant a few plants that I had found in the woods. They are not "endangered species". A few seem to have survived transplantation to a spot that seemed pretty good, but has been overtaken by ~~weeds~~ weeds. Rainfall in Kennarock, even in this dry year, is almost double what it is in our part of Massachusetts.

We will be back at 174 in a few days. I hope that your busy schedule will allow you a few minutes for a kitchen visit or to practice your trumpet in your practice room.

Love Grandma M. I

6:54 am

Wednesday 10/10/07

Dear Alice,

This letter is an experiment; I mean the physical arrangements for writing it are an experiment. I am sitting in my rocking chair with my legs propped up on my bed, well wrapped up against the chill of an unheated room (perhaps about 68°F) — not nearly so chilly as many rooms ^{in which} my ancestors sat to write very good, neat letters. Why not sit at a table? The answer is that my weak old back and rather crippled legs ~~make~~ ^{make} too many complaints and they must be strong to ~~get~~ ^{get} me through a long complicated day. In ~~the~~ ^{the} long gap since my last letter to you, I have thought of you often; I imagine you at your new job. [By the way, I'm glad that you told me a story about the old job: that you visited an elderly patient, taking with you a book I had sent about the building of cathedrals; the patient and her husband were very pleased, happy with this adventure in an imaginary world of the past. The book was a happy meeting for three persons. That is one good thing about books — bringing you together.]

To Alice Stino

Think of you 23 yr old ~~and~~ aunt. She turns to
another page; she needs to keep the
page from getting stiff and crumpled. > Wed 10/10/07 ②

Now. About the New Job: Selling plumbing
Supplies. I can certainly appreciate the fact
that you ~~have~~ ^{like} a regular schedule, that you can
know ahead of time where you should ~~be~~, when
you work and earn money. I understand the
stimulation that comes ~~with~~ ^{from} being with a varied
population of co-workers and customers;
It must be satisfying to be able to find on
the shelves the correct package of fittings, to
bring it out, to collect payment. Are you
using a cash register? Perhaps that is much too
old-fashioned? Do the same customers return
from one work to the next? Are they all
professional plumbers or ^{are} some of them experienced
amateurs, who, like my husband, Jack Hager,
replaces a faucet, installs a new toilet, even
puts in new pipes, connecting them to the water
supply and sewage disposal? Of course,
you need not answer all these questions.

They represent my imaginary participation in
your working day. Whatever brief reply you
send will be interesting:

10.10.07 (3)

Now, my dear Alice, I come to the other thought that I want to send you today. These are the words that keep surging in my mind as I go about daily tasks: exercising, washing dishes, preparing macaroni & cheese for tonight's supper, reviewing a few insurance forms to be sent to Medicare for Jack's services to his patients: checking their eyes for glaucoma, adjusting their medication and/or referring them to a cataract surgeon. (He has been out of surgery for more than ten years.)

In your very good, well-expressed recent letter, you described an evening with Francis (or Fred, as he wants to be called, at least outside your home): You are both reading. He has his book, you have your magazines. A quiet companionable scene. But I, your critical, elderly aunt want to say that the major focus of this companionship should be shared reading. The books for children are many of them, probably most of them much better than the books, let alone magazines, available to adults. They are better written: in classic, forceful language, and sometimes the illustrations are ~~with~~ beautiful: a comment or condemnation in picture form of the story's meaning. →

To Alice Snow 10/10/07 ④

The meaning of these stories, the very language in which they are written should be your common language. He takes that you share mother and child, as I shared with my son,

Klemens, and with my grandchildren. When I say to my youngest grandchild, Leah, who will soon be 12 years old, do you remember Gerda going on her long journey to find her friend Kay? She remembers the devotion of this little girl; seeking and reclaiming her child friend, Kay from the icy palace of the Snow Queen in Hans Christian Andersen's story of that name. It is the story of love, persevering in a long, perilous ~~story~~ series of trials until the goal is reached. Leah will, I hope, remember this story which she learned to read over my shoulder as we sat together.

And she will remember The Emperor's New Clothes; how everyone pretended, all the grown ups pretended that they could see & admire the expensive new garments that the fraudulent tailor made for the

Vain emperor. But the little child, the honest child, saw that it was a lie. The King is marked

To Blue Star

5

(Or at least, he is just wearing his underwear, for propriety's sake.)

This story is such a classic, it sums up so much about the lies that power ~~tries to~~ uses to conceal the true nature of the ^{nap} extortions practised on the general public that it ~~has~~ ^{has} become part of our common folk lore.

Another modern, very short story that Lach and I share is Simple Pictures Are Best.

Ask your librarian for it! Tell me if she can't find it!

These stories (and poems like the ones I have sent you,) are our language. You must be familiar with ^{much} ~~some~~ of what Francis reads. It will connect you. The connections will survive the problems of days ^{and} years ^{ahead} ~~ahead~~. Whatever story is in your magazine, it is probably a choiced - up version of a classic tale for children, and the clothes the magazine story wears may be as false, as cheap, as transparent ^{as} ~~as~~ ^{Francis} The Emperor's New Clothes. Let him

enjoy Captain Underpants by himself, but share the really good stories with him. Love Aunt Margaret

10-10-07 Letter # 2

Dear Alice,

This will be mailed as a separate ^{message} letter, but it is really a continuation of the thoughts which I tried to express in the letter, which I expect to mail at noon today. It concerns the language, the stories we share with children and with the adults who also know these stories from childhood on.

Do you remember the card that I ~~mailed~~ sent you months ago showing a very distant figure, a Chinese fisherman in his little boat on a wide lake? I told you that I would write a letter later on explaining what this photograph means to me. Here it is.

The story that I read into this picture is that the old fisherman is not so alone as he seems. True, he has no book to while away the long hours ^{that he must wait} ~~while he waits~~ for the fish to come to his bait. He does not need a book; he is illiterate, never learned to read, but he knows the poems, the ballads of his people. He reads over in his mind or even chants softly. Sings the songs that

(Letter to Hui Shao letter #2 10/10/07 ②)
recreate for him, in the theater of the
imagination, the exploits, the loves and
sufferings of the ancestors. The songs
tell him also of the beauty of the spring,
the way the water mirrors the mountains
and clouds. To learn a poem by heart is
to have a sort of book that you ~~carry~~^{carry} with you
wherever you go, wherever you must sit, patiently
waiting for the fish to bite — or for the doctor
to invite you into his office to tell your story.
For you and for me, whatever poem we learn
is there, even if it's only a fragment of the whole
work, to provide us with a resting place,
something beautiful to contemplate. If you
memorize a meaningful poem, you have
armor against the trivial ~~gag~~ jingles of
TV advertising. Turn off radio, TV,
take possession of a few beautiful words.
Like the fisherman on his lake, you will
be in good company, not alone.

Show the poem with Francis. It is ~~there~~ then
part of your common language, the story to
which you can both refer.

Love Mark Maguire

First draft

Sunday 10/14/07
2:35 pm

Dear Rebekah,

It's a bright, windy afternoon. Jochen left about 5:00 am to drive to Hyannis ^{in his green} van fully loaded with tools and supplies for his Wantuchet project. When he called me to let me know his safe arrival, we briefly exchanged our appreciative shared memories of the long telephone conversation with you last night. Thank you for telling us so much about your courses: the overload ^{assigned} of reading by the part of the Survey history course professors; the research assistant for the English course, who in deep, resonant tones ^{expresses} gives you the terror and humor of Browning's monster enemies; the vigor ^{of} of Chaucer. I enjoyed visiting Annenberg ^{Hall} with you for breakfast, sitting in the library to work in silence as in your bedroom shut away from distracting other presences ^{behind} within a door. I ^{imagined} ~~was~~ you in your ballet class: mixed ages and sexes. I hope you also get ~~down~~ occasionally to the wind & sky of the Riverside and see the changing aspect of the beautiful Sycamore trees. Jochen says he will also write to you when he gets back to his studio →

This is the letter I will mail.

7 pm
Sunday 10-14-07

Dear Rebekah.

Thank you for your telephone call Saturday evening. It was an important conversation for each of us here in Belmont and a remarkably meaningful exchange, not often successful when the persons involved are so different in age, experience, occupation. When I spoke to Jackson in the middle of the day, shortly after his return to Manhattan, he said he would write to you again when he comes home - perhaps the middle of next week. These are some of the impressions and facts of your life that delineated your experiences for this listener, this writer: You are beginning to ride the surge of work, like the people in the tiny boat in the Japanese print of the Waves, you paddle hard in the right direction and won't capsize.

As you gave us the details of some of your days, I enjoyed your description of a quiet early weekend breakfast in Angenberg Halls, of working in the quiet big room of Widener or in the stacks, or in your own little room, where you can shut the door against distraction. I see you in your ballet class among the other dancers of varying ages, up to 50's perhaps 60's. I'm glad to hear about the graduate student, sitting in your midst, ready to read in a deep, impressive voice about Brontë's

To Anne Bryghun

Tuesday 10.16.07

Dear Anne,

Thank you for lending me your copy of Bill Bodger's Winter Cruise, which your mother brought along Saturday & Sunday. I guess when she came with photographs, old family letters. We exchanged various guesses and speculations about our ancestors, influences on our lives. I showed her a beautiful old copy of Andersen's Tales. She would not take it along so that you could study the illustrations at leisure - but she said that one day you will come with her and we will isolate you with the book and let you study and enjoy the remarkable illustrations in comfort. Yes, you will even get a heater in your secluded space. But do dress warmly. It is winter ^{here} too!

This is a Mr Bodger ^(akin) akin to the Wind in The Willows fellow. On a more somber - also heroic note, do you know John Charles "The Boyer", to be read in the Seamus Heaney & Ted Hughes anthology The Rattle Bag - possibly in your public library - a very interesting modern anthology - has been used at Harvard.

To ~~AA~~ Anne Birkin ②
10/16/07

I am reaching lots of poetry right now, trying to memorize a little and hoping to get 12 year old Leah to read & memorize too. My avenue of approach to her is to praise her already good speech patterns, tones and to try to ~~teach~~ teach her, help her to discover still better, & better ways of speaking. Her English teachers have no time for this. Too many standardized tests to confront. Another part of my sales pitch is the vocabulary - building that comes along with the project.

I am happily aware and grateful that you and Janet speak so well, so distinctly and with a range of tone.

Another project that I contemplate is a short talk (15-20 min) at one of our library programs, in which I would review, recommend some of the CD & books available in the Belmont Library collection, e.g. readings of Jane Austen's novels, a slightly distorted production of Hamlet, Wieland, Delta Wedding, Fair Stood The Wind from France by (?) C. Curran p. 101. Survivors (crash over Nazi-Occupied France, sheltered, helped to escape. More and more time for project

10/29/07

Dear Alice,

Thank you for your note received today.
Yes, I see that you are busy. I will enclose
a slip of paper with complete information about
Simple Pictures Are Best by Nancy Willard,
1976. with illustrations by Tomie de Paola.
A Voyager Book, South China Printing Co.
Hong Kong (paper back).

In your letter, you say that you
understand that it is important to discuss
the books that Fred reads. I don't think that
I used the word discuss. I said: Read/About
And I mean; read about more than once!
It's the words in the story that are
important. Often your words are superfluous
perhaps even irrelevant. An important story
or picture becomes part of the reader, and
is there to be re-read, re-examined in the
reader's mind. I think that what I am
telling you is important. Think about it!
Tell me if the librarian can't find the book for you.
I'll try to buy and send one. Love Aunt Margaret.

11-16-07

Dear Alice

Thank you for your note mailed 11-07-07. It was brief but did answer her question. I'll try to locate a second-hand copy of the better book Simple Pictures Are Best. It's not a great book, but one that

makes its point with humor. Earlier this week, Wednesday I think I mailed a package of books to you & Fred, one of which I like very much:

It is My First Book of Biographies. Arranged alphabetically by last name, it begins with the first men on the moon, Aldrin & Armstrong.

Richard Carson follows, then George Washington Carver, etc. It includes one or two of whom I had never heard. It seems to me well written. As for the illustrations, garish, but they get one's attention, though somewhat distracting

for figures like Pres. Lincoln. The book by Earl Gibbon, Clocks And How They Go, is not so interesting

as others by this author. There is a very amusing book that Fred & you should read, unless you already know it. It is Johnny The Bookmaker by Edward Ardizzone. All of our grandchildren loved it.

I would be interested in your reaction
to Fred's response to the book about buildings.
Does it make you uncomfortable? Does it
make sense? Does it make you understand
construction principles?

I included in that package another
Captain Underpants book, and at the last
minute found a book on the library scale
shelf; an Usborne book of mazes. I
had forgotten to bring my glasses, so had
to decide on the basis of title, colorful
pages. Glasses might have helped, but
(really) puzzles often annoy me more than
they entertain me. A blind spot in my humor.

I'll look for the Judy Blume book.
I don't know it. And I think it's good
for you to read up on plumbing. John has
a some books and a good deal of experience,
both in making repairs and in installing.
pipes, drains and new sinks. Toilets, bath tubs.
live

Miss Margaret

Dear Alice

First ~~last~~ draft

Thank you

Thank you for your note of Nov 7th
telling me about Freckle Juice by Judy Blume
which you said you wd read aloud to Fred.
I had never seen ~~any~~ of her books. so I
looked for it at my library - found it and read it.
It's simple, some fun ^{at}. I'd like to make other
suggestions but don't have much to send Fred
right now because I am Snow-Band, Ice-
Band. can't get out any further from my
mail box. ~~Sometimes~~ ^{Today} not that far. ~~I am~~ ^{I am} ~~I~~
were not 83 years old, very lame with
arthritis. ~~It would just be~~ ^{he seems to} ~~wd. be simply~~
another challenge. But it would be such a
nuisance for anyone, esp Tuckers if I shd fall.
I can't take any chances.
I'm going to re search my home shelves
hope to find something which might interest you
& Fred.

Of course I can not get to the
library to go through the ~~sometimes~~ ^{closet} shelves
where I have ~~searched~~ ^{often} ~~some times~~ found real treasures
but I have gone over my home shelves &
found some I had saved. It's soon as I can get
to the P.O. I'll send the heavy one.

1st Draft to Alice

I in the meantime with one tiny book enclosed by regular first class mail
= hope to get brief answer. To make it easier I'll
ask a few questions and ~~give you~~ furnish you with a small
in your reply: Does that seem too much like school?
Well, of course, I was a teacher. Anyway, it shall save you
time

About these books. They were both presents from patients
of my husband ^{E. Mr.} Jackson Meyer. The one about dinosaurs is
amusing and perhaps ~~more~~ ^{also} most ~~interesting~~ ^{fun} if you are
already interested in these long ago, mind-boggling
monsters.

Send to Mike

The tiny book about The Mouse & The Song ^{books}
is special. The patient who brought it to me loved the
~~writing of the~~ ^{Man in the story} who played the song on his flute
Has Fred, have you ~~the~~ ^{of them, or the} ever heard of him before.
Thoreau lived ^{from} (in the middle of the 19th century) ~~he~~
~~died about~~ ^{in the time} of Abraham Lincoln
in the Am. Civil War. He liked being in the woods by himself
when he was. He built that little cabin by himself
and sat listening to ~~the~~ ^{the} trees and birds. watching trees birds
and weather & working. ~~When he needed more to him~~
^{grasses} He had a garden & grew some ~~of his~~ corn &
~~beans~~ ^{potatoes}. Sometimes he visited ~~for~~ friends who like
hearty, had supper with them. He worked for the friends &
over regular in the nearby town

Maryland's
Vote Pack

Julia M. Star Gas

Hum heating Source
126

1 866-~~768~~ 678 2744

Michelle Will remove our #
from list

12/29/07 Sat Jochen on way to Nantucket
Breakfast & pills 1018 803 of 8903 milk
Gathered apple brown sugar w choc syrup

Books To be mailed 12/31 to Alisa & Fred
① Highlights Book of Science Questions That
Children Ask. (1995)

Why do Tigger like to swim when other members
of cat family do not
How ~~come~~ do bees make honey

② The Treasury of Animal Stories -

③ First Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening

④ Let's Play Dinosaur.

⑤ The Sea Eagle by L. M. Boston illust Peter Boston

⑥ de Paola Legend of the Indian Paintbrush

Send to Mike & Francis Stone

Usborne Story of Painting
National Geog. April 1991 A Season [✓] In The Minors
Alaska

Gentle Ben by Walt Morey

Mail separately: Tiny book about Thoreau & mouse

Dear Helmut,

^{omitted}
[I have had Das kleine Blumenbuch since the evening of
Dec 11th, when we were at Helen's house for a dinner-
time celebration of his birthday. ~~but~~ Our address is actually
174 School St, Helen & Lura are at 178 and there is
sometimes a delay in transfer of letters for me have to
see her. ~~The~~ It was a good occasion ~~for~~ to open
the little package, and to share the book with other Helen's
Lura and the children.]

^{delay}
I like the simplicity and beauty of the
drawings very much, ~~do not as a matter of fact~~ The I my
old age I realize the importance of taking another
look of seeing the single plant all by itself, ~~rather~~
^{as in postcard} ~~from as one sees it in nature~~ the shape, the
the "picture". (Of ^{and} course I have the larger plant guides and
enjoy the relationship ~~seeing the plant among its relatives~~

Yes. I have seen volumes of the Insel v. in Ko. Letter began
at my strong ^{prosecution} ~~is~~ ^{was} on about age 5 or 6. My first encounter with a volume ⁽¹⁾ here

~~As a~~ The Insel Verlag was to see
Pier's Die Klame Passim ^{seen} ~~in~~ in my father's hands ^{lower}
as he sat at our dining room table. ^{his desk at home} Are you
acquainted with it? ~~As~~ As a small child I was

always a little puzzled by it: the pictures of
Adam & Eve, ^{the serpent} ~~the serpent~~; the Expulsion from
Eden. I especially liked Christo als Gartner,
The Sugar & Embers. ~~The book came into my family~~

The little book was actually property of my mother, who
who was employed in the ^{Print} dept of the
met house of Mr. & Mrs. ^{(by Mr. Evans the chief}
head of that dept. and son-in-law of my grandmother
~~maternal~~ ^{Grandparents}) Mother ^{perfect} at the strong lines
of the woodcuts. V. well reproduced in that edition. and was
at Christmas 1960 it became my property. and stands on
or ^{identified & protected} ^{mailing envelope}
book shelf in a ^{costumed} ^{mailing bag} to protect it.

Jochen is again in Nantucket, working alone &
I worry about him. He worries about me, but Kleeneas is
trying to take care of me - as well as all his other
tasks

About books
mailed to you
about 1 week ago

1/17/08

Dear Alice,

I think I mailed you a short note several days ago — or did I just think about it so often that it seemed a project completed — but was not? Anyway. You will probably forgive some repetition. And I'll keep a copy this time.

I want to suggest that you practice reading aloud — while you are alone — before Fred is with you. a couple of the stories. I have such a long experience in reading aloud that I might overlook the fact that your experience is probably different. I began reading aloud a little during long summer vacations in the Porono Mountains on evenings when our light came from a Kerosene lamp and the fireplace. There was no electricity in that cottage. A little later I read aloud to my baby brother, Peter McPherson, born when I was 12 years old and on when I got the opportunity to practice a good many skills of child care. I remember especially a favorite called Osie Finds a Friend about the problems which a little skunk had in finding someone to love — and to return love

Before my graduation from Germantown Friends School
I had a summer job at a North Philadelphia
Day Nursery, where children of working mothers
dropped off little children about 7:30 am, took them
home between 4:00 + 5:00 pm. A large format
copy of Peter Rabbit was very useful.
I don't think most of those children had
any other experience with books. (As yet,
then, there was no TV.) Then in the mid
50's, from Klemens's birth in 1956 until
we moved to Belmont in 1963, I
read to my own child from books used
in my own childhood, borrowed from the
monthly visits of the Bookmobile, or ordered
from Blackwell's catalogue, Oxford England.
In 1964-66 I read aloud to 2nd
grade children at Cambridge Friends School
— later to my ^{(?) (?)} old grandchildren until
they progressed to Taped recordings, TV
and other entertainment. And I should
give credit to Germantown Friends School, which
especially from 8th grade on put emphasis on
oral recitation — individual and group of poetry.
French poetry too.

To Alice

Dear Alice, please excuse this long introduction: trotting out my qualifications for recommending reading aloud - and preparing for it. Here are some recommendations.

Take The Treasury of Animal Stories. Start with the Short ones, especially the one about how the raven got his black feathers. To yourself, read aloud the part Telling how Raven reads slowly to put the old man to sleep. Do it! drawl, prolong the sentences!

Of course. I also enjoy the Kipling selections, especially "How The Elephant got his Trunk", which I must have heard my mother read when I was very small. And I enjoy the retelling given here of the old fable about the lion and the mouse. What else do you find that you like?

I'll write a separate letter, perhaps even later today about the other books - except for The Highlights Book of Science Questions Children Ask.

If Fred has not already started on it, hand it to him while you are preparing supper or whatever. Ask him to make selections: Ask him to present an item to you. For example, How Do Bees Make Honey when you say: I don't know, have him read aloud to you! I'd use it gradually, it will be more fun. Love Aunt Ma

1-22-08 12:30 pm

Dear Alice,

I have already put a postcard into my mailbox so that at least that goes out if my letter carrier should come early; improbable on the day following a postal holiday. I wonder if you had the day off too. For me the holiday had this benefit: Our son, Klemens, had to participate in a conference telephone call, with co-workers in Nashville and Chicago. He was in the house for about two hours. I remained in the kitchen usually warm, while he used the bedroom, where I have a work table on which he placed his laptop computer. I answered incoming calls on one line, while he used our "office" line. I could have written to you then, but I was absorbed in sorting and reading some of the neatly kept letters in the box that Janet brought to me Saturday.

About one month ago I sat at this same kitchen table for about an hour ~~with~~ with a young woman who had brought ~~to~~ to Jochen for eye examination.

1/22/08 To Alice
We have known this patient and his family for over ten years, probably 20 years so we have a comfortable easy relationship. The daughter sat knitting and admiring the books that I was looking over before mailing them to you and Fred. The young visitor is an artist and has taken courses at local schools. She especially liked little paperback by Tomie de Paola, about The Indian Paintbrush. She collects his books, has loved them from early childhood, which is not very far behind her. Our visitor, Abby, also admired the little storybook by L.M. Boston with illustrations by Peter Bostor. The Sea Egg. It is possible that the black & white illustrations will not seem beautiful to Fred, but I like them very much, hope you will, too. The story, an interesting interweaving of reality and fantasy centers on the wonder and discovery of swimming. To me the element of water was very important. Still is, though my swimming is now so limited. For reasons based on my respiratory illnesses, I had never participated in school athletics. Water: the lake where I swam, where I ~~swam~~ ^{swam} since I saw P. They added a dimension to my experience. Love Aunt Margaret

1-22-08 to Margaret
②

Of the value of the friendship
~~but~~ than their bumper stickers or
where they send their political
contributions.

I would rather put this in
writing than quibble with you on
the telephone.

I am impressed - as I read the
old letters that Janet brought me
last Saturday - with how much
anxiety, how many questions raised -
had to wait days & days, weeks
& weeks for a reply. Perhaps
the ~~delay~~^{delay}, the necessity to write,
clarified some issues and ~~stemmed~~
the ~~flow~~^{flow} of irrelevancies.

Jochen is still sticking it out,
sleeping and working at temperatures
below freezing.

Love
Margaret

Tuesday Jan 22, 2008

Dear Margrit,

I think it probable that you were offended when I interrupted your story about the friends with whom you visited Virginia Beach. You were telling me how you became acquainted with them and you were describing their compatible politics.

I enclosed four relevant passages from the writings of Dr. Samuel Johnson. I had two copies of these verses in 2001, my book of reading notes. I thought they are copied out for me by Jackson's publisher, Richard Parnell, who shared some of my literary enthusiasm and brought the some of his books as he felt them necessary. I don't think that my objection to the verbal of your friends' political opinions as an endorsement of their worth is irrelevant. We could explore this at greater length. I think you if you search your experience could find much better proof

Letters

to Alice : abt her 2 recent letters
Thank you for writing to me even
when you see that the kitchen floor needs
cleaning. It is so important to me
- perhaps to you - that you ~~share~~ tell
me about reading aloud, you to Fred, Fred
to you. you to Fred's class at
his teacher's request. ~~That the reading aloud~~

I also enjoyed your description ^{both} of
Fred's success as well as his team games
and of the work on the drama. I never
played any team games, was excused for
almost all school activities

Write abt Fred.

To, Jane. Blue Highway.
copy in for up to two
Recipe for Crumb. Pome Pie

Dear Nancy (Gawron)
Perhaps bee our honey "so cool"

The ~~generous~~ bunch of daffodils
you brought to me on the 14th is still
remarkably fresh, ~~unfaded~~. (That's one benefit
of keeping our house quite cool.) Set off by
the pussy willow tamps in the clear glass
bottle they are still ~~throwing~~ ^{promising} a radiance
over chilly days here to remind me of your
visit and to ~~tell me~~ teach me that the
unseasoned gift from a generous spirit is
still the best ~~gift~~ ^{present} of all.

When I looked through my card collection
for an appropriate picture, ~~this was the one that~~ ^{I found this}
~~made me happy~~: a ^{spring} vista of the into Spring, summer.
Until I ~~let~~ ~~see~~ bring you back your pretty vase,
I'll look on ~~the~~ the window for time to time
to see you standing by Be careful!

Affection

y
advent →

2/26/08

Dear Ellen.

Thank you both for again bringing me home from a book meeting.

When Ellen mentioned that she had not liked Evelyn Waugh's A Handful of Dust I felt sympathetic cords vibrating.

I did spend some time in the Belmont Library looking for other writings of E. Waugh. I also dislike Brideshead Revisited and I found a volume of essays and a couple of biographical notes that helped me find a different Viewpoint. I enclose a copy of Waugh's The First Time I Went to the North, a wry look backward over an uncomfortable, somewhat humiliating adventure, which began in relative comfort.

I see A Handful of Dust as a satire. The author holds up a mirror to his shallow, selfish, narcissistic Society. He himself is reflected - at least in part - in Tony Last, with his wife, Waugh's first wife.

I was also amused by a biographical note to the effect that the combative, courageous writer circumvented rules or regulations to join the fighting forces in WWII, but was convinced →

2-2-08

Dear Margrit,

Thank you very much for another gift of picture postcards & photographs*. I will use or keep a few and bring the rest to Kennarock - when we finally come, which might be May or June, possibly even late April.

Torben is back on Nantucket since yesterday (Monday) morning. He sounds tired when he telephones, but resolute. He does not think that the time spent in looking for a helper is worth it, and I regret that I believe that he is right. So far the beautifully named Curlew-Nelson has not returned, and seemed somewhat untidy and undirected.

On the next page I'll tell you who I have been reading - and sampling, but often I read just a little, especially on re-reading books that I have read before.

Cards especially liked: Audubon: Yellow Warbler on Trumpet vine; Ethel Kirby of Susie gardening postcards of floor, painted like oak? & your photograph of Buzzards Bay. ^{flowers on} garden table.

2-26-08

Books Read or Sampled:

Suite Française (novel) by Irene Nemirovsky
(1940) published (in translation) 2006.
^{German}
~~the~~ occupation of France.

Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson & - Relin
Subtitle: One man's mission for Peace by

Building One School At A Time (In Pakistan,
Afghanistan. Schools for girls. Book chosen
for Belmont Reads month: Feb.

Blue Highways: A Journey Into America
by William Least Heat Moon, 1982. I think

There is a copy in Kennarock. Very well written,
I especially liked re-reading part about maple sugar
farm in Northern N.Y. state, makes me think of
similar family / communal undertakings in Kennarock.

Shakespeare: The Winter's Tale.

Robert Louis Stevenson. Life & Selected Letters ed. Colvin
not a modern edition; brought to mind by your
planned trip. Stevenson & friend took canoe trip,
Belgium into N. France. He wrote book An Inland Voyage
his first published book, a little too self-conscious.

The Making of an American
Audubon A Biography by Richard Rhodes, publ. 2005

part re-read in conjunction with collection of

poems loaned to me: Commonwealth of Wings: An Ornithol
Biography: Based on the life of John James Audubon
by Pamela Alexander. 58 pages. 1991.

I also read very carefully children's books sent to Alice & her son, and I have even written suggestions to her that she should practice reading aloud certain stories when she is alone. Her recent response suggests that she is now reading aloud to him & sometimes he reads to her - my efforts are bearing fruit! It is in connection with one of those stories that I will send the little card of the bird (rooster?) on the back of the dog; it is in the atmosphere of the Lion & the Mouse by Aesop.

Thank you for your letter about your trip to the Va beach - and for your careful selection of cards & photographs recently received. I like looking at them, even those I don't want to use myself for greetings. By the way, I like the Friends Schl. card but wouldn't use it formally.

I am also reading a few of the letters that my sister brings to me, a few items from a closely packed box mostly my father's letters to Mother. Very difficult to read because of ~~hand~~ handwriting. I think they cover about 2 years, some written daily. They cannot be summarized. Much to think about.

Love Margaret

2/26/08

Dear Ellie Kirby,

I asked Margrit to send me some cards. I don't get out much to stores, and she often has cards that I like, especially ones of yours.

"Susie In The Garden" is charming! Have you any more available, now or soon? I also especially liked "Spring Walk" I have plenty of those; and the series of the apple tree in Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter. The most beautiful seems to me the last one, although right now I'm getting tired of snow.

Would the "Susie" card be saleable to a store selling seed, garden supplies? I guess it is difficult to market such special products.

No need to reply. I'll keep after Margrit to let me know what is available.

Regards.

Margaret Meyer

8/22/08

Rewritten

2/28/08

Dear Nancy (Garon)

This note is sent only 3 days after the last of your present of daffodils finally dropped. The pussywillows of course are still here on my kitchen window sill a reminder of spring and your visit. Keeping a cool house

~~The daffodils~~ makes the flowers tend and perhaps has other health benefits. And the daffodils opened windows of imagination, giving me for letting me look further into spring and other places.

When I looked through my ^{In my} ~~stat~~ ^{stat} ~~file~~ of cards I found this. Might that you might also appreciate its beauty. All these pretty ladies venturing out water at their feet, rain from above.

Monday March 3, 2008

Janet reminds me that March 5 is our mother's birthday.
She was born 1895, died 1989. Janet's house damaged
pipes run under roof between indoors & outdoors. They
froze & leaked.

Toilet 3¹⁵

3³⁰ Verizon called. She will call back Friday:

She wants to speak with "person in charge of
of business accounts."

Note made on 3/3/08 at 8:58 pm: unless I
keep track exactly of what I do eat, drink, exercise
at particular times, I lose track, forget. Either
I have a strict schedule - or no schedule. Start over.

From Jan 1-16 Jochen was here in Belmont

Jan 17 - Jan 26 (or 27?) Jochen was away 9 or 10 days

Jochen was here in Belmont 11 days through Feb 7th

Jochen was ~~away~~ Friday Feb 8th - 15th one week (7 days)

Jochen was here Feb 16 - Feb 24 9 days

Jochen away Feb 25 - March 5th 10 ^{1/2} days

Jochen plans to be at home
March 6 - 20 or 21st at ^{abt} 14 days

He might ~~come home~~ be away March 21-31
That would be 10 days. Good Friday

3-10-08

Dear Miriam,

I apologize for offering you something else to read, but when I had problems with Attardal of Dist, I decided to read something else by Evelyn Waugh. I understood that he is regarded as an excellent writer of accounts of foreign travel, so I decided to take a (netter) trip with him.

In a volume found in our library I ~~found~~^{read} "The First Time I went To The North". It is included in The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh edited by Denis Gallagher. Little Brown 1984

828.912. It offered me the escape I needed.

In case it will be useful to you, I enclose two copies. After rather a breezy start, it gets down to the particulars of the trip, ^{which begins} on a minute, very clean little Steamer. Evelyn Waugh's comments on the response of the workers in isolated communities to the intrusion of visitors are very interesting; his description of the little birds, arctic terns, protecting ~~from~~ their nests.

Vivid and Sympathetic. The unanticipated perils of the trip, underlined by the footnote p. 144 make it clear that there was no love lost between Evelyn Waugh - Sir Andrew Glegg, leader of the trip. Having survived -

that trip I think I have a better understanding of Tony Last. The reason that John Andrews' death was a release for Brenda from her marriage, and the tragedy of this perfect marriage.

Another footnote: Somewhere I read this about Evelyn Waugh's participation in World War II. He had trouble getting into the fighting forces, because he did not meet all the physical conditions, but he used influence with Sir Randolph Churchill. He was such an unpleasant leader, so abrasive in his behavior to men under his command, that it was said that if ^{he} should be shot, it might well be a bullet from a man ⁱⁿ his own army, not the "enemy".

I look forward to our discussion on Friday. With thanks for your patience.

Margaret Meyer

Thursday March 13, 2008

Dear Alice,

It should be easy to write you a letter about a package of books that I hope to get to the post office tomorrow. I have been to the library rarely during the past few weeks because Jordan has been away and the weather has been too cold, windy and generally unfavorable for such an old lady (84 years at my next birthday) to venture out without an escort, a caretaker. So I have had this collection of books around for weeks, which has given me a chance to reread them, even to read bits aloud to myself or to show them to friends who might come into my kitchen. You will be happy with my choices if you like some of them with only an echo of my enthusiasm.

I say "echo" consciously because love for a book is passed from one person to another in a special way that is a little like an echo. Perhaps you can find another metaphor that might be more appropriate.

Now I'll go on to be more specific:

To Al. & Fred 3-14-08 (2)

There is one item in the package that is not a book, but rather a picture that goes with a book sent several weeks ago. The ^(photograph) picture cut from a calendar shows you the flower called Indian Paintbrush. Do you remember the story of the young Indian boy who did not go out hunting with the other boys in his tribe? Here, in the left foreground of the photograph, is the brilliant red flower about which Tomi DePaola wrote his story. You cannot find this flower in the east, only in the far western high mountains. In this photograph the blue and white columbines and the space bring out the drama of the flower's appearance.

In the book package are three books that take you to three different (actually four) environments. There is the Sonora desert, the book describes it as "a hot sea." I have never been there except in the way that this book takes me there.

From the heat of the desert, you travel to the South Pole, Antarctica, the National Geographic books calls it the coldest place on earth. Or you can go to

To Fred and Alice 3.14.08 ③
the other extreme on the globe, our earth,
and visit the polar bears of the Arctic.
I've never been to either of these places
and don't expect to get there except
in one of these books.

Then there is a very thin book by
Peter S. called An Ocean World. I've never
been very close to a whale, but I've
been on and in the ocean enough to
enjoy this imaginary trip. This gives me
a wonderful "feel" of the vastness of the
ocean and its tremendous depths. But
of course, I shall not talk about the
book but let you "read" it. Although there
are few words, there is much to experience.

Finally, we come to Ragweed by Avi. This
is definitely a "read-aloud book." I haven't time to
read all of it, but wherever I open it, I find
parts that make me smile and wonderful
illustrations that take you into Ragweed's
world. Please tell me what you think of
it!

Love to you both.

Aunt Margaret

Margaret: Personal Notes
Letters + Letter Draft
Oct 2007