

Pensione Isola,
Via de' Serragli, 109,
Firenze -
March 23rd

Laurie, dear girl.

Your letter today, at my place when I came back from the studio to lunch. Glad I was to get it, as you well know, but sorry to hear you discouraged with your work, dissatisfied with yourself, and struggling with the text for the Mesa Book. That last is somehow a surprise to me, for I'd got it into my head that Aileen Nesbarn was to do that part of it. Was it that the first idea, or am I all wrong? I am sorry you have to do that end of it, as well as everything else, for I think it takes too much out of you - working along lines you've never really been trained in. It takes as much study to write well as it does to photograph well. I don't see how you can be expected to do

both, as well as handle all the typography, binding, broadcasting, and selling of the book! Did Mrs. N. back down on doing it, or did you not ask her? (Perhaps I'm thinking of the Art & Archaeology article, after all). Well, maybe you can do it best - but it's awfully hard work, and I hate to have it sidetrack you from your real job.

Yes - you see I am answering your question - and answering it in the affirmative. Your response will undoubtedly be that there was no one else who could do it just right, to fit in with pictures, etc. How about Beta? She has a fine knack. She must be helping you, surely, and I know it will come out all right.

You speak of going up to Denver - is that for the movie try-out with Dr. Waring's children? I've been to hear how that turns out.

Still no proof from you - are you a baddy, or shall I blame the mails? I'll heap a few coals by these latest snaps at the studio. I can't for the life of me remember whether

or not I've yet sent you the ones of
Eva's head of me. Seems as though
I must have, though I may have
run out of them, last time I wrote.
I only wish they did it justice. It
is a stunning piece of work, and
my joy is great over the fact that
Mother likes it so well she's buying
a second bronze from Eva to give
to Dad! Naturally E. & I are both
pleased as Punch. The first cast,
after many trials & tribulations at
foundry, casters, shippers, etc, has
finally been sent to London for the
Royal Academy. I do hope it gets
in - can't be much doubt about
it, I think. The bronze is a dark
rich greenish (with nice variegated
tones of purple, red & yellow in it) &
the base a block of black polished
wood.

The Bauer is really much further
along than it was when this picture
was taken. I just thought it might
amuse you at this stage. What I've

been working at mostly, though, has
been the F.R. I have thought that
out, long & carefully, trying to eliminate
the faults in the other one. I've got
a round backed stone "throne-for-one".
(not wide like the early attempt), a
longer & heavier cloak making
massive decorative lines on either
side & filling all the holes; I've
got him much limper & more
^{easy & relaxed}
~~limp~~ in posture, & the angle of
the neck is no longer painful.

Aside from the face, it is mostly
a matter of folds of drapery, and
that takes all my time & ingenuity,
for as you know, I never was one
to do decent drapery. But I'm
learning - slowly. Will send you
some drawings as soon as it is fit
to take.

This afternoon I had a grand time
playing about in Alivari's, getting
a few prints for your birthday.
They are to be mailed tomorrow, so
ought to reach you in plenty of time.

The group of kneeling angels is a detail from Ghiberti's pinnacles in the Riccardi (Medici) Chapel. Lovely - aren't they? I think all the others are 7th century -

I do hope you'll like my choice of things. The Angelica Annunciation I'm sure of, but I'm sending the other just because I think you'll like them because I do. See? No need for you to keep all - or any. I rather had it in the back of my mind that your Dad could make frames for one or two, gilding & patterning with red & green or whatever - and they might make nice gifts for some friends you want to give something special to. You may not care for the Botticelli - I do like the composition, & especially the drawing of the angel at the right. I tried hard for some Francescos, but Alinari's were very poor, and only black & white, & so I shall wait until I can find some better ones. I asked them to tuck in with the others the photo of the lovely lady at the Bardini, and the Bronze Charioteer, which we both love.

May your birthday be a truly happy one,
dear, & filled with a realization of
past accomplishment and future
achievement. "Down" as I know you've
been at times, you can't have been
"downer" than I when I've measured
up my own work against the "sculptural"
qualities of these big men over here.

They've got something old, something
new, something of all time, and
unless I can get it into my own
work, I'll stick where I am all
my life, doing pretty babies, &
appealing garden trucks, and near-
good portraits. Well — here's
where my big news comes in, Laurie.
I've pretty definitely decided to
stay over here another year (going
up to France in July & August to
escape the heat), studying at the
School with all the hundreds of
youngsters under Andreotti, but
keeping my own studio also, to
do other work in. I think a winter
of such work would strengthen,

~~you~~ simplify & crystalize my technique
and help me to get my bearings as
nothing else could. I'll be damned
lonely, for Eva & Veryl will be gone,
and Mother probably back in the U.S.
But I'm discovering how to live in this
place, & with increasing familiarity
with the language, I ought to be able
to get on all right. And if I keep
on selling occasional back-number
bronzes in the U.S. I shall have enough
to live on in this place, where board
& lodging are \$10 a week, and studio
rent \$10 a month!

Now tell me what you think? Can
I stick it out, and shall I? If I
could have the hope that you might
possibly come over & join me in the
Spring or summer, ^{of next year}, it would make
it lots easier, of course, but I won't
urge it, as I know how many ties
there are that bind.

And now to give you our latest
news: - a cablegram from Dad
"Sale of factory concluded but

every evening their kind invitations. Must be off to the station to mail some such letter to Eva, & will take this along. All love - all dear - Brenda

requires Eliot's attendance until autumn.
I am sailing May 21st -

Did you even?! Shirley & Eliot free at last to build their own lives - possibly come over to France next winter so Eliot can study painting in Paris! Isn't it great? However, as we have no details as yet, I'll ask you not to speak of it, or to write them, as they've been keeping the whole matter of the sale quiet, and may not want it broadcast yet a while.

And Dad has said all winter that he couldn't possibly afford to come over, & couldn't come on Government funds as he's already sending three other men. Yet here he is - coming!

I'll write more when we hear more, probably in a week or ten days.

Mother is back here for several weeks. She had flu in Taormina & took the long trip up here before it was over, so has been pretty limp. But she's better now, thank goodness. She has a room at the hotel Grande Bretagne on the Lungarno, & seems fairly content. Goes off again with Mrs. Perkins before long. There are hosts of relatives & friends in town, & I spend much time &