

And see if you don't think it a wonderful piece of sculpture.
my new book, & see it; about Santa Fe & Aztec.

I've just peeped into
Will write
again soon
dearest, but
this will
have to do
for now.
All my
love -
Brendie

Pensione Isola,
Via dei Serragli, 109,
Firenze
October 18th, '27

My darling Laurie:

Both your much-travelled letter of July 29th and my lovely book-present arrived yesterday. I haven't had a moment to peep into the latter, but I know I shall enjoy it hugely. However, grateful as I am, I don't think you ought to be sending me presents. Please, dear. Save those precious pennies. The book will go the rounds of my friends here, after I've devoured it. New novels are hard to get, though over here we have the fine Tauchnitz editions of most of the good English ones, and so very cheap they are.

Don't say that letter is hardly worth forwarding! It tells me more about your actual work than many others have, and I'm so keen to know every detail. Am delighted that the Mesa book is going well, & also that you got such a fine notice in the Times. That is splendid. What else did it say besides that first enthusiastic sentence?

Now I shall be all agog to hear how the photographs go. Keep me posted, won't you? Just which prints are they?

I couldn't forbear writing Mrs. K. about London putting your fostered tree in the Natural History section! It was so funny. Yes, the poor dear does sound very old & helpless. I ought to write her oftener than I do, but you've no idea how letter-writing piles up when all one's family & friends are "over there". I seem to do nothing but write, in every spare minute, yet I never get caught up. One has to write a real letter - not just "a line", when it has so far to travel.

Just now I'm snatching a hungry breathing-space between school and lunch - the one closing at 12 & the other not coming until 1. I seem to be forever eating these days. One does get so hungry, concentrating so hard for three hours & a half at a stretch.

I have been at the school now for just a week, and it has been a very exhilarating experience. I felt rather lost & panicky the first day or two - the only female in such a mob of young boys. But now I feel like an old-timer, & can

I'm going to send you a photograph of one of his reliefs - a figure of a boy carrying - one of two upholding his Pietà. It looks so remarkably like you.

now gone to Washington, to be with Dad, & also to be as much as possible with poor dear Margaret McCaffey (you remember her at our Christmas party?) who is losing her fight against the dreadful diabetes, and who is now desperately ill in a hospital there. I ache for her, and can only hope for a speedy release. Wish I were there! O, it is awful, being so far away from dear ones. If I didn't firmly believe my whole future hung on this winter's work, I'd come home like a shot. And believe me, I wouldn't stay long in the East. You'd have to find room to put me up, for I'd be out in Colorado Springs a few weeks after landing! O, well, what's a few months? When the wisteria & violet bloom again in the studio garden, I'll either be planning the homeward journey, or looking forward to your coming to me. Which will it be, I wonder? I sometimes get so fed up with foreign ways & people, & so tired of forever wrestling with the problem of language all day long, I am ready to give up. The hardest thing just now is that Andreotti speaks only French or Italian, & it's so impossible to talk to him as I'd like - in the subtler art terms. I can't get "in touch" with him at all yet. Maybe I never will. In a few days

What I can't quite understand is how I got my copy of the Mesa book safely, & yet missed out on your letter, which you ^{said} ~~say~~ you were sending at the same time! I think I got the book before I went to Belgium. Well - no accounting for mails. But I've learnt my lesson about care in forwarding! Letters are now dribbling back to me from all sorts of places & people. Only one really lost, as far as I have discovered.

Shirley continues to send cheering news of little Nancy. She now weighs 6.9 lbs. At 3 months! But she's now going strong & has a yell like a steam Caliope! Desmond sounds perfectly adorable. Have I written you his latest? He has now learned to button, as well as unbutton, his sweater. It takes him a good five minutes of breathless concentration to work the top button into the bottom button-hole, and when he's finally accomplished the feat he says, gravely and politely "Thank oo, Demmon!"

Mother had a very happy month at Aunt Carol's seeing Shirley & the children almost daily. She's

have begun another similar relief. Andreotti
hasn't seen this new start yet, but Innocenti,
the Assistant constructor, says it's a much better
start than the first, so I'm hoping. Ah, Laurie,
if I can only climb out of those bad habits, I
may be a real sculptor some day.

Later. And on my return this evening I
find still another letter from you — begun
July 4th & finished the 16th. You dear! How
you must have wondered at my apparent
ignoring of all your news! This one puts
me more "au fait" with the Harvey & other
railroad possibilities of the Book. Of course
they're bound to order cautious at first, I
suppose, but you'll surely get a re-order very
soon, if you haven't already. How fine & plucky
of you to be tackling all these business
problems. Don't I know how you hate 'em —
don't I just! And so glad Fran was a help
in that way. It must have been fine getting
into close touch with him this summer. You'll
never "lose" each other after this, I feel sure.

bear any amount of their stares with perfect equanimity.

Andreotti's welcome was hardly what you'd call cordial, for he doesn't really like having girls in the class, but that's all the better, for it puts me on my mettle to prove to him that girls can & do work just as seriously as boys, & are worth just as much attention. In fact, I work harder than any of them, for they dawdle & gossip away their time the moment the professor's back is turned. Of course, they have years ahead of them to learn what I must learn in eight short months, and besides - boys will be boys. They throw pellets of clay at each other & whistle & shuffle their feet à la Charleston just as our own youngsters would.

Have had two criticisms from the master on a Jacopo della Quercia relief which I copied last week. He put his finger right on my weaknesses, you may be sure. It "lacked force", it was too "pretty", there was "too much detail", it wasn't "simple enough", I worked "too fast & too superficially". Right O! I agreed with him perfectly, so I chucked it into the clay-bin &

he put himself out to look after a lone girl working in the corner? Last year, there was a fairly good assistant instructor, but this year he's been transferred to the wood carving department, & his place taken by a very young one, a pupil who graduated last year. He's not much use to me, I confess, for though I like some of his work fairly well, he's so young & inexperienced, he really can't tell me much I don't know already. In fact, I could tell him a thing or two, if he wanted me to!

I've so far made two copies of Della Guercia reliefs. The first was rather thin & tight. The masses were not big enough or simple enough.

André's criticism of it was very just, & I clunked it back into the clay bin, & began another. This one is better, & André was most encouraging (even enthusiastic) over my start. But Good Lord!

I began it ten days ago, & now it's absolutely finished, & I'm stuck, & can't get hold of the waste for another crit. You see, the boys work so slowly (or rather, they work $\frac{1}{2}$ hour each morning, & dawdle, gossip, & fool away the other three hours each morning), that I suppose he feels once he's set

the one of "André's" that reminds me so of you. Do you see it, too? I just tucked in the
other as afterthought. Ramballi is the sculptor whose studio Eva & I visited in
Florence on our way to Ravenna. Dear love, Laurie - Brenda

as a stunt it's no use coming near us until about
three weeks have passed! But I can't work that
way, & I'll just have to arouse his interest some
way, or my winter will be wasted. I think tomorrow
I'll ask permission to start a bust of one of the
smaller boys of the class. He has a curious &
fascinating head, & I know I'll be able to say
more, & learn more, doing him, than copying
reliefs. A copy is almost sure to get tight &
hard, & that's just what I want to get away
from. Please pray for me. The baby at the
studio is coming along slowly, though I haven't
had much time for him lately. One or two
compositions - abstractions - designs - are flitting
through my brain, & I hope to get at them soon,
for only through them, I feel sure, can I really
work out the new ideas I've been pondering.

Dearest girl - how I do run on about myself!
I must stop. Just had a letter from the Herweg-
ill in bed with another of his bad bronchial colds.
He has far too many of these. He sends me a
couple of sonnets on Chantres Cathedral. Really
fine. Will copy them off for you one of these days.
There's no time tonight. I must write to Shirley. And it
is already 10.30. I hope you got the pictures all right. I mean,



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