

Cape Porpoise, Maine,
August 22nd '50

Laurie Dear:

At last an evening all alone, in which to write you. Not that I haven't enjoyed our guests - but that there just never has been time to sit down without interruption & just write.

For all I know, you & Betsey may well be far afield in Navaho country now, hard at work getting material for the new book. But ~~at~~ it's me own fault, I know, that I am in the dark as to your whereabouts. Wherever you are, I do so hope that wretched foot hasn't given you any more trouble, & that you're fit as a fiddle. Such an inflammation must have been unbearably painful: I remember reading once of a backwoodsman who got an ingrowing toenail, & the pain of that was so maddening that in desperation, he took his axe & chopped the whole toe off! (Hope you didn't!)

Did you manage to finish the "La Conquistadora," & did you send it to "Life"? I do so hope they, or some other publication with a wide circulation, appreciate the historic importance of the story, as well as your pictures, which must be very beautiful indeed. I've seen almost none of your color work, excepting those one or two exquisite flower-studies.

They must be a terrific & exquisitely delicate job to handle just sight.

No one in the world admires your grit and stick-to-it-iveness more than I do. And with it goes a sort of despairing remorse that it is getting more & more difficult for me to continue at my own job with any zest whatever.

Sculpture — at least the kind of sculpture I can do — seems to have bogged down into a morass of meaninglessness.

It was wonderful to find Eva still enthralled by it, even though discouraged over her own output. By the way, she and Veril have both turned Roman Catholic! I can't fathom it, though I'm not terribly surprised over Eva, as she's been tending toward it for many a year, and indeed has been trying to convert me (of all people!). The Edinburgh Festival, if that's what you mean by "Craft Show", was just about to start when she wrote me the end of July.

I did write you, didn't I, that I had a glimpse of Lilly-Pilly in London, & that she was delightful as ever; eager & whimsical, despite a bad knee & a cane, & comfortably settled in a nice hotel near Hyde Park & Kensington gardens.

I had a horrid June in New York, trying to help run a joint outdoor sculpture exhibition, sponsored by the Academy, & the Nat'l Sculpture Society. We just couldn't interest the public in it; one thing to have the Sculptors' Guild put on a show, down in Greenwich Village, of fantastic & mirth-provoking "modern" stuff — the critics & public alike love that sort of thing, & they had big, curious crowds — but quite

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another to get people to come up to East 8th & 9th St (a deserted part of town, especially in summer, with almost no passersby) - to see an ~~am~~ staid exhibition of conservative stuff. I got d-d sick of looking at it, myself, after the first week, but stuck it out for six, until I finally shoved the responsibility onto other shoulders, & came up here to keep Dad company. He was particularly lonely, as all the rest of the family, except Desmond, were first in Washington, & now out at Laguna Beach with Eliot.

Shirley writes me that you saw E on his way out, & made some portraits of him. Am keen to see them!

Am hoping the bracing air out there, combined with new friends, gay picnic parties, etc. will do our Junie a world of good. Poor kid - in & out of bed all winter with that rheumatic-fever heart, & then coming down with a bad attack of measels, just as she seemed to be getting stronger!

I feel an awful loafer, staying here doing nothing for two months - but it seems only fair to Dad. He has no cronies here (or anywhere), and the least I can do is to play about in the boats with him, take walks, ride the English bike (of which I'm still terrified), eat with him, & become a base-ball fan every Saturday & Sunday. When the local "Collegiates" tackle teams from other parts of Maine.

Shall be leaving here about Sept 6th, stopping at Hancock, N.H., to see my old friend & modeling-

teacher, Mary Moore. Joan Hartley & Mayorie Munroe also beg me to come to their little old farm in the northwest corner of Massachusetts, but I doubt if I can linger that long, as letters from Washington indicate that the Gov't is at long last ready to carve those plaques in marble, & want some changes made in the backgrounds of the reliefs. Mine, darn it, are already in plaster, & it means a bit of work.

There's just one thing I'd like to tackle in sculpture - & that is a diver I saw in the harbor at Seith, sitting on the deck of an old scow, & being accounted for his plunge into the murky waters. He looked like a mediaval knight, with shining breastplate and helmet, & a great dagger hung from his waist. Don't know how I'll manage to get his bigness, dignity, & immobility as his henchmen worked over him! But I want to try. Then back to bone-drawings, I guess, as there seems to be nothing else on the horizon, particularly with this ghastly Korean business focussing everyone's attention.

How is "Rio Grande"? Still selling well? I do hope you're getting nice fat royalties by now. By the way, it just occurs to me that the Liturgical Arts Society in N. Y. might be tremendously interested in "La Conquistadora". Shall I send you their address when I get home, or can you locate a N. Y. phone book at Santa Fe's public library. A Mr Lavanoux is Director, if I remember right. They sponsored that competition, some years ago, for the statue

of "Christ, the Light of the World".
Dearie, I must be bed.
I hope you'll forgive me for not writing sooner.
Love from Bessie