

356 West 22nd St
New York "
March 30th '51

At last, Laurie, a lovely, free, rainy evening in which to write you.

And first off, to belatedly acknowledge the copy of "New Mexico Quarterly" with the article about you by John Collier. I read it when it came, & have just re-read it.

Interesting that he insists on comparing you with Brady & Jackson^{skies} - yet at the same time deplores your lack of "social consciousness"! Why compare at all, then? I don't think it's fair. Your goal has been so completely different, & completely your own. Should we deplore Wagner and Chopin 'cause they worked for different results than we get from Palestrina & Buxtehude? It is, indeed a very serious and well-written article, and he certainly couldn't be more appreciative when he writes of your labor with the books - and your marvelous & unique approach to landscape.

But I got mad again when he suggested that you'd missed out on the Texas end of Rio Grande - & ~~the~~ its effect on the people. Yes, you've condensed it, but seems to me you've given it enough. Your concern was with the river, not with tooting the Texans themselves. (They do enough of that).

He seems to be a man rather obsessed with social consciousness. Probably a result of keeping in touch with, & writing about, sociological developments & problems in magazines that specialize in such matters. But to me, one of the grandest things about your work is

its timelessness. Shifting populations, admixture of the cultures of different nationalities, new methods of developing resources, & the attendant rush of the greedy to some new spot where they figure they can make a fortune over night — these things shift about. In another fifty years there may be tremendous changes in the human picture, but what you've given us is the River that is, was, & ever shall be, despite the depredations of man.

Thanks ever so for sending me the article though, & I'm glad it has been written, & written with serious thought and appreciation.

I bet in the Navaho book he won't have any complaints that you have neglected the people — bless the poor things!

Shirley recently sent me your rather frantic little note, describing hectic days here, there & everywhere at once. I don't see how you can keep going at such a pace! Hope it doesn't last too long.

I have to confess to a very marked slowing down in practically everything. It may be just laziness, but I'm inclined to think it is both more & less than that. And truth to tell, I'm at present so drunk with the prospect of getting out of this blasted city, of living in the country simply & quietly with no more "keeping up with the Joneses", either in sculpture or socially (not that I've ever managed to shine in that field) — but doing the things I love to do: digging in the dirt; clearing out dead wood & piling burnable fagots into nice piles ready for fireplace; wandering

cross-country up & down hills, through fields; down along brooks; watching insects & small ^{creatures} ~~insects~~ in a pond; — in fact sloughing off all the pressure & strain of a big city & living simply.

And Laurie, it is coming TRUE! I can hardly believe it. It just happened, after I'd pretty much given up hope of getting anything I could afford at the spot that I wanted — I ran into a former pupil. Her mother — a violinist — lives in Wilton and has considerable land she isn't going to use! Result, I am now the proud possessor of one acre of pasture land running down to a ~~wood~~ small brook that spills out of a pond. It is near enough the village center so I can walk to station or stores; it is secluded (off the road), but with nice neighbors within call. It has lovely old stone walls, & cedars. There are oak woods a few steps away, on a knoll that will be cool in summer. One couldn't ask for anything more utterly charming & pure New England! And a local builder is actually starting to build me a wee 36' x 24' bungalow, with cellar, fireplace, oil burner heat, living-room, bedroom, studio, bath & kitchen. Alas, I shall have to say goodbye to my 51 year old baby Steinway — there simply won't be room for it. But its sounding-board is cracked beyond repair — & I'm ^{upright} exchanging it for a re-built Hardmann, that has a nice tone & ^{probably} will be quite enough for my needs. Marie, lives less than a mile away & she & Florence Kodjbanoff & I have already played trios in Florence's big music ~~for~~ room just up the road.

I have been commuting out there two

I think he does realize that I simply can't take it any more. Unfortunately, Wilton is not at all the sort of place he'd care for, or even want to live in. But he says he's all for it - for me. I love from good night, dear, sorry to have scolded so much about myself

and three times a week getting deeds, contracts, etc settled. They have been building me a road in, & have started digging my cellar! The excitement is almost too much for little old B. P. And side by side with the elation is the panic at the thought of adapting to such a radically different sort of life - I wouldn't dare put it off any longer, lest I get so set in my way of life I won't be able to adjust!

Everyone is so nice & friendly & helpful up there, it is amazing. And maybe it's because they & I are just plain New Englanders & we click. And I'm a sort of old hermit, anyway. I love living alone. Every time I have to go out among 'em", as Edie would say, I breathe a sigh of relief at getting back home again! As my lawyer says "you'll be so busy just living, you won't have time to be lonely."

I'll have a studio & do some work, probably, but only what I want to do - not these ghastly commissions in which everything goes wrong! Those Washington plaques were absolutely the last straw in futile agony & frustration. Someday I'll tell you the story.

Have dug out a little head of Junie that I made when she was a baby, in Switzerland, & which had been smashed almost beyond repair. Have made a new cast of it, & want to give it to Shirley when it is finished.

Meantime I go through spasmodic spells of trying to clean out this place preparatory to moving. Lord, what one accumulates in 24 years & more! Even if the house ~~isn't~~ finished by the middle of June, I probably shan't move until late August, as Dad will want me at Cape Porpoise in July. He is being wonderful about this whole project - seeing as how he's always been so proud of my "career".