

Monday, 10-6

Dear Pa --

The portfolio of prints of Intimate Landscapes arrived last week and is beautiful. The kids have leafed through them about 40 times imperiling their ~~survival~~ survival and showing them off to their friends. Everyone agrees ~~that~~ they're beautiful. Thank you very much.

Family news is sparse. Jack when last heard from was in Florence and sounded as though he was enjoying himself. I think he plans to spend at least part of the winter in Italy with Florence as his home base. About his only complaint was that his pensione is a bit noisy partly because of the high spirits of the other residents and partly because his room looks out on the Duomo and the consequent hordes of tourists. His address is

c/o American Express
Universal Turismo
Via degli Speciali, 7
Firenze 50123

No particular news from E.F. except that he's working (playing) in a symphony orchestra in Providence while attending Brown. He's always very low on funds and we help him as much as we can but the life he lives is penurious, at best. He has a room in the top floor of a large, homely Queen Anne structure owned by David Lattimore (Owan's son) who teaches Chinese. Jonathan may know of him.

Boxie dropped out of Haverford -- temporarily, we hope -- and is enrolled for the year at Washington University in St. Louis. He's been quite depressed and angry with himself and is making occasional visits to an alienist, a strategem which so far has had no apparent good effect on his morale.

Anne, also, is quite blue. She's finished high school and is working as a waitress in a nearby restaurant for the time being, but is clearly unhappy with the lack of direction in her life. She chooses not to confide in me very much so I have no clear picture of her unhappiness, except ~~that~~ that it's real enough.

Alex has left, by his own choice, the boy's pvt. day school he was attending and returned to public high school. The pvt. school ~~was~~ one of these gruff, masculine, athletics-oriented places a bit like the one I went to that practiced a sort of social and intellectual Darwinism. Alex was made miserable by the snobbishness of many of this ~~xx~~ schoolmates and the cruelty with which they sometimes treated the boys they considered their social inferiors. He was even more distressed, I guess, by the apparent indifference of the masters, not realizing that indifference was deliberate, and someone's idea of a healthy approximation of the real world. Most of all, he was unhappy with his own incapacity to adapt to it and rise above it.

Though Alex has some talents -- he's athletic and he writes well -- he's an indifferent scholar. He's also very soft-hearted and the hazing at the place infuriated him. I remember when he was small seeing him burst into tears on realizing that some minnows in a tidal pool would expire when the pool dried up. He tries to cover his compassion with masculine toughness these days, but it's still there.

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How much the kids' unhappiness and lack of motivation has to do with their parents' relationship, I cannot tell, though I'd sure like to know. In that regard, Jane ~~xxxxxxx~~ and I are still married, though for how long I don't know. ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^{Jane} told me over a year ago that she wanted a divorce and asked me to leave the house, which I did and for a year stayed with a friend, Jane North, whom you met in N.Y. I now have a small apartment nearby and see Jane and the kids regularly -- that is, just about every day and all weekends. ~~xxxxx~~ I found, during our year of separation, that I missed her and the children immensely and preferred her company to anyone else's but I'm not sure that sentiment is reciprocated. Jane is not terribly revealing. I don't know what's going to happen.

Give my best to Aline & Pat. I hope her back is better.

b.

P.S. The enclosed check is for a plastic tarp Reynold bought at Joxers

for Doowbster and charged to you.