

Nov? 1943

Edmund

"The Invention"

Old Woman on Stairs
with negro boy

Dear Stu,

I don't have much to relate to you in this letter
except perhaps some etching news and a few
other uninteresting topics and plans.

This week I have been working on two etchings
simultaneously and I can honestly say that with
etching I am completely, physically and mentally
exhausted. I need a rest and this coming vacation
will give me just that. I still have hundreds of
ideas for fine prints and am anxious to do them
but if I keep up at this rate I'll lose my respect
for the medium. I am not tired artistically. I haven't
even begun to feel my oats yet, but I must rest for a
while. This printmaking business is a compulsion
with me and if it were possible I think I would
work 24 hours a day. I eat and sleep and breathe in a
world of etching. It is the only thing that interests me
as much as music. These very close relatives.

About the two I'm working on. One is the stairs
at Trudeau with an old woman sitting on them
and a child standing on the bottom step. It's dark
and gloomy with bright, tragic sunlight hitting on
the wall. The composition is very daring and original.
I'm having enormous difficulties with it and when I'm
finished with this letter I'm going to work on it
scraping areas out and adding new ones. It is a very
difficult challenge, as most of it is out of my head.

The other one has the makings of a masterpiece
and that is the one of the negro boy in that good pose
leaning on the banister of the stairs at the Bull Weevil
Cafe. So far it is coming beautifully along. But it still
cries out for lots of work. I don't just scratch a plate
and dunk it in the acid like I did at Dulane. I slave
on it until I get what I want. I am satisfied with
nothing less than the ideal I set out to objectionalize

I had hoped that I ~~we~~ could have done one more but I'm quitting after these two. My drawing and painting have been sorely neglected and I must get back to them.

Last week Mr. Blackburn told me after seeing one of my prints that I would "make a name" for myself with my prints and today he told me how I had already become famous among the students. I was surprised. He said that a lot of them have talked to him about me and had remarked on my abilities. HA! I haven't even begun yet, I'm not groping in the dark for goals like I sometimes do in painting. I have a definite ideal that I am aiming for and I have found no prints that express my feeling for the print. And I will work unceasingly until I do pick that blue flower. Prints are my medium and I have little doubts that I can become the finest etcher since Rembrandt. That perhaps is a horrendous assertion of my egotism. So it sounds, ^{but} I am still the same person I always was and my small fame has not swelled my head an iota. I feel that that is easily within my vision and already I'm ~~considered~~ considered a good student etcher. Well, a good artist etcher and I've only begun what I know is a long and rich journey in etching. I have much work ahead of me.

I would appreciate it if you could maybe write me a little more as I receive very little mail which has a bad effect on my spirits. Tell me ~~if~~ where we shall go on our trip. I want to do some drawings for some new etchings and perhaps if we have time, a watercolor or two.

I'm going to try to set up my own etching studio at home. Puss and all. It will cost plenty of money but I can afford it. I'm now matting my prints so you will see them at their finest! I think your in for a couple of real treats.

P.S. Mother told me she paid for my frames with ~~my~~ money. She could have gotten it only from the gas money I gave you. Tell me the truth in your next letter. You were real hush hush about it on the phone. I am not mad at you about it. I know our financial situation. It was my duty to pay for them. Just ~~please~~ tell me if you

big. The way it was very hard but you're not taking the last two etchings the woods as a fine print but you ones standards, perhaps it was not too impressive, but it has some very good qualities in it. I want that question answered in your next letter. If you didn't order the gun then I'm not going to get it.

So I can know if I have.