

Mi amigo,

I have been trying to think of something mean and nasty to write to you as an introduction. Your first paragraph almost kept me from reading your letter. You know how my neuroses are, and you have the cruelty to write me something as insulting and degrading as that first paragraph anyway. I just want you to know that I was deeply offended by such callous remarks coming from one whom I thought was so kind and sensitive. Now, do you feel bad? I was so insulted, I couldn't bring myself to write for all this time. (How's that for an excuse for not writing sooner?)

Back in a serious vein, I have been quite busy. As usual, doing nothing creative. But I have sold a house, listed a lot, and moved to a new apartment. I can't figure out whether the five hundred clams I'll get for the sale of the house, or the new apt. is the best. The lot is probably worthless, because it isn't very saleable. The apt. is lovely because it is in Studio Arms. No, not the wild one, one of the old buildings. Honestly, it's quiet as a tomb, and very nice and lavish. Of course, the rent is eating me alive, but..... you may as well do while you're young. And I'm working on some other people who may buy houses, so maybe I'll be able to stay here a while. Now, how's that for some stuff you did not know?

Of course, the writing is at an extremely low ebb. I did some writing a week or so ago, and I think it was not too bad. I say I think, because I'm afraid to go back and read it. If I find out it is lousy, I may not ever take pen in hand again. And to deprive the world of the marvelous, penetrating, illuminating novel that I know is within me would be a crime. (I'm capable, among friends, of some of the most unabashed confessions you can imagine). The trouble is, like you say, the stories are in my head, but I can't connect them, nor can I figure out how to get them on paper. I'm reading Thomas Hardy (whom I've always liked) to try to get some feeling of what it is to get a good, smooth plot, one that moves evenly and surely toward a climax and a conclusion. I always want to jump right to the strong parts of any story I think up, rather than developing a stream of events.

I.

In response to your lecture on writing, I was quite glad to say that I am doing just what you said I should do, which means that I have thrown the old man story out, and am writing something at least partly autobiographical. As for your remarks on your writing, I've never been able to figure out whether you are filled with false modesty, or with true, but unwarranted modesty. In either case, I don't believe that any of your writing is half as bad as you seem to think. You are, to twist an old cliché, your own worst judge. I am my own worst judge also, although you are my best judge. I suddenly realize that that is not such a compliment as it was intended to be, because I don't have any other judges. I am beginning to see, and firmly agree with, your remark that feeling may interfere with a good story. It's certainly been my experience.

I'm tickled to death to hear that you are painting. (Forgive the lousy typing--proof of my long absence from the ~~typewriter~~ typewriter) I'd love to see some of your work, if the scene of the confederate soldiers you were doing is any indication of what you can do. But, if you think that I am going to let you quit writing because you show some ability to paint, you're crazy. I don't care if you can paint, you can also write. Hah, at last I'm lecturing you. But I know that you are subject to the same feelings of despair in your writings that I am subject to. The difference is that you have less reason to despair than I do. In fact the only reason that you have is that there is so much work to learning to construct a good story. End of lecture.

Your remarks about Ann naturally made me feel quite good. I hope you didn't write them just because you knew that that is just how I feel about her. But I know you better than to think that you would do that. The only thing is, I think I'd better keep you two apart, because she thought you were a "fascinating individual", which, coming from her, is quite a compliment. She doesn't say much unless she doesn't like someone. But she seemed to like you more than any of my other friends she met in New Orleans. The children question. . . . I wonder just how serious either one of us are on that. She has strong maternal feelings, only channeled toward things like pets and other people's children.

Which reminds me, I bought her something that she has wanted for a long time. A Baby Skunk. Desented of course. The damn little thing is just as cute as it can be. It has a slight smell but not much, not enough to be offensive. And it's the most affectionate pet you can imagine. Anyway, th~~is~~ reveals a lot about how both of us feel on the question of children. I think that even though neither one of us care for children at the present, things may change when we are around 27 or 28.

If you're accepted to Texas Law School, tell Tulane to cram it up the ol' xxziq. Tulane is undoubt~~ad~~ly one of the snottist schools I've ever heard of. If that's the mark of a good school, I don't know if I particularly like going to one. Anyway, even if you do go to Texas, save up some money and come down some weekend. Trans-Texas has a good flight that is not very expensive. They offer a student card that allows you to fly haof-fare, which pays you ev~~3~~n if you only fly onee. And you can stay with me, sweetie. I have plenty of room. You should do this before school starts.

I Must sign off. As you can probably tell, this typewriter is having mechanical d~~iff~~iculties, and so is the typist. Write me when you get a chance, but don't hurry it. You'd make me feel bad if you did. Tell Scott hello for meTell him when his paintings get over five thousand, I'll consider buying a few.

David

P.S. Excuse the horrible typing, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, indentation, and sentence construction. You know, I'm only an English major.

