

Sunday

Dear Stu,

Thank you for the excellent letter - the narrative of the storm was very well written and if you could learn to write short stories with the same tone of conversation you would have something even though a work of art has to be tempered ~~art~~ artistically.

I agree with you that you should get a letter for everyone you send to me and I am more than willing to cooperate with you - in fact I thought that you were the one that was delinquent and not me, but when I thought about it I saw that we both have been pretty good about it - only our timing has been off. From now on I will send you a letter for everyone I receive as soon as I receive it. How would that be?

You sound as if the storm was quite an experience. If every thing you said was true than certainly was. I got all the weather reports up here and I knew you'd be excited about it and I wanted to fly down there and see it too, but alas I'm held down here.

I wish I could say I'd been hard at work but the truth is that I've only worked at a few school studies of portraits which aren't very good possibly because there is no feeling in them or no urge behind them. It's like running up and down the scales on the piano - just physical manipulation. I realize that this practice is good for me but I can't feel that any progress will come from it. I cannot work on anything that doesn't in

some little way have meaning for me. As coming
as the word "inspiration" is it does have something
to do with the way I feel.

Last Friday I printed my first etching of
the season and it was a miserable failure, so
bad that I couldn't believe I had done it. So I
have decided that I'm not going to do any more for
a while - perhaps a year or so and let my ideas
formulate more. If I do get inspired I may
do one or two this year. I do have a big plate
ready for an idea that depends on if I can get
these two negroes at school to pose for me.

Otherwise though I'm going to let things ride. I
haven't given up my ideals at all so don't worry
it's just that I lack the drive, possibly, because
an almost total lethargy has set in. I'm not
depressed like you think, I'm just bored as hell,
all the more when I think of how little this place
offers and how much there is to be done at home
and in Louisiana, especially there in Louisiana and
the pity of it is that I have enough skill to begin my work
there and I'm just wasting time and money and emotion
up here because I'm afraid to make the break that
literally will put me on my own. The Army is worth
risking and even enduring - anything that will put
me on a road to progress. ~~But~~ I do not have words to
describe my disgust of the Academy and especially
Philadelphia. I can never work in an atmosphere of
either art or artists - it's nauseating and kills all ambition in
me. I don't know whether or not that makes me not
an artist. I'm not even sure if my ideals could be called
art and frankly I don't give a damn. I just want to get back
to the places that I want to paint and say to hell with
art and all that shit.

2

I hope you can see what I'm talking about. I'm not despondent, just eager to get to work and get moving. I hate to stand still! even for a second and up here I feel crushed by the weight of my lack of interest in anything.

So my brother, as soon as this legal mess with the old man is cleared up I'm going to take steps to get out of the Academy and perhaps enroll in night classes at T.C.U. and paint during the day. It's quite a step but one that I not only feel is right but absolutely urgent.

Besides I don't particularly want to go to Europe at this time. The amount of work that I'd have to do in order to compete for the scholarship is prohibitive and ain't worth it. Besides they frown on water colors here. So let me know what you think I ought to do.

As for news here there isn't much except that last week I went out to "Mill Grove" and found it everything I thought it would be. The setting of the house is extremely poetic and though the rooms in the house are small - they're interestingly shaped and well furnished. The house was built in 1761 and added to in 1765. The house called "Fatland Ford" was built in 1841 and the sight of Lucy's old house. Inside Mill Grove there are lots of Audubon's prints but none of his Originals. The house has an over all quaint pennsylvania dutch feeling and the barns on the grounds are very interestingly shaped.

Last Friday I heard Sen. Humphrey speak at 15th and Chestnut street and was impressed by the atmosphere of speeches confetti and the like even though most of the politicians looked like grotesque ~~small~~ caricatures and were somewhat sickening to watch. Humphrey looked red faced and jolly and was in a jovial mood despite a few hecklers here and there.

The Academy opened a big regional show exhibit in which I expected Wyeth to show but he didn't and ~~most of~~ ^{the} paintings there were sickening ~~to~~ beyond belief. Only John McCay's painting seemed like a breath of fresh air in a stifled stinking atmosphere.

At night I come home and practise on my harpsichord which always has a healthful effect on me. I'm learning to play it correctly now and have begun some serious study of Bach pieces. Simple but a beginning.

Shirley Holmes sent me a beautiful book on the Mayas which I'll send to you this week. It has many good and interesting pictures and is a very detailed book. The newness of it looks like it will have much new information also I'm returning you photographs. And that's all for now.

Sweet