

Dear Betty,

When I heard about Andy I wanted to sit down immediately and write ^{to} you but then I thought I would let things settle a little and besides my feelings about this sad event were complex and I wanted to sort them out in a way I could communicate them to you.

The last time I saw and talked with Andy face to face was in March 1964, forty five years ago and yet I remember that day very clearly. I was a student at the Pennsylvania Academy and John McCay was one of my teachers. Our watercolor class met every Thursday that day of the week ^{with uncanny regularity} nature chose to dump a variety of precipitation on our heads forcing us indoors usually to John's Studio where we talked about art.

I remember one of those days when we went To Frank's
Diner in the midst of a terrific blizzard, I mean high
winds no visibility and snow so heavy you could walk on
out of all things, thunder and lightning
it. I was in a corner of the place (standing room only) talking
with John, ^{and a couple of other student} when Andy came in bringing a woosh of snow
with him. He was in what looked like a wolf parka esquimo-
like ^{an} with expression, I remember, of an almost grim
seriousness. It was one of those magic, dramatic
moments old N.C. would have loved. His face lit up
when he saw John and he came over and engaged him
in some small talk — probably about the weather. John
did not introduce us and the conversation was short before
Andy left. I remember ^{watching} him skid on the snow
in his big black Lincoln as he sped away into the gloom.

The whole thing had seemed like an apparition

but that was the first time I saw Andy and though but
a moment, it was memorable. At that time I asked John
if I could meet with Andy for a criticism of my work.

He told me that the best way to approach Andy was to
write him and that he would put in a good word for me.

I did and very shortly ^{afterwards} received a letter ^{from Charles Ford} with a phone
number. I called and got Andy and we set a time on
a Thursday when our watercolor class would be meeting at
nearly in Fennae, Pa. I thought because of the weather curse
we'd probably be much closer - in John's studio, but wouldn't
you know it, that day was one of those dreamy perfect
late winter Pennsylvania days full of that kind of palpable
sunlight you can almost hear and it was warm. I
was consumed with guilt because if that day was perfect
for me it was also perfect for Mr. Wyeth, and what made

it worse was that this was the first good weather we had had in weeks.

I had painted a watercolor that day that I was pleased with and had actually finished it, an 18" x 24" of an old sled propped up in a doorway trimmed in that pretty blue-green color I had loved from Louisiana.

After the class John drove me to Chadds Ford, to the small school house at the foot of the hill, where I was met by Jamie who greeted ^{me} cordially, took up my portfolio and carried it around the house to the kitchen door. I remember thinking that that was the best looking kid I ever saw - Movie star good looks. I was getting scared. John had left me alone there saying he'd be back to pick me up.

As I feared Andy wasn't there. The day was ^{just} too good to miss. But Willard Snowden was and a number of other young men

including an actor, Ze Kinsolving, whom I recognized.

An Amish boy named Fester who was posing for Jamie at the time was there too, but it was Willard who cornered me on an old couch in the kitchen. I remember his cultured soft spoken manner and the kind of vague profundity of his sentiments, for the most part unintelligible but growing less so as he poured me a jelly jar full of cheap red wine. By the second one I knew I was in a fix when not only was Willard making sense but I heard someone say, "Andy's coming". I navigated my way out the kitchen door and saw Andy coming down the hill in another of those dramatic entrances. As he came up to me he laid his green corduroy coat on the grass and topped it with the large ^{red} Reguabee sketch book he'd been carrying in his other hand. I thought what a good still life that was.

Willard's Dutch Courage was wearing off just in time.

We shook hands - very gently, I remember, and I noticed that his hand looked frail like that of a much older person.

His kind and open manner put me at ease and there in kitchen by a wall I opened my portfolio. The first thing he noticed was the watercolor I had done that day. He kept saying 'outstanding, outstanding' and asked me where I had painted it. I told him, and apologized if I had taken him away from something. It was a Thursday and I was sure the weather would be lousy. He knew all about the vicissitudes of John's watercolor class and we chatted about the irony of that beautiful day and he apologized to me for ^{his} showing up late. We went through the portfolio quickly. His comments were mostly short and to the point and not all casual praise. He pointed out things I needed to

work on and I remember looking at the ^{sphere} sense of focus
on his face as he "read" my work - very quickly and commenting
almost in short hand sentences on this and that.

I asked him only one question ^{that day}, and that was how could
I improve my color and his answer was simply that color
was too personal a thing to comment much about, and that
experiments and experience would show me how to find
my own way. I thought I would ask since I ^{had} presumed
upon his time. The truth is I had used the whole criticism
thing just to meet him and I wasn't at all worried about my
color sense. He particularly liked the etchings I had been doing
that year and I think he asked me for one. My memory is
a little hazy on this, but it is not so about one other incident.

As I was waiting for Turky I wandered a bit around

around that small house. A narrow hallway led from the kitchen at one end of the house to a large, rather dark room at the other where I saw an easel and other painting equipment set up near a large window at its far end.

There was a good size Canvas on the easel, and Jamie who had been showing me around was in the room when I committed an unpardonable breach of painterly etiquette by walking around and looking at the picture on it. This was of the Amish boy I had met earlier, seen from the back sitting on a low stool, full figure. The work was almost finished and beautifully done. Jamie clearly was not pleased by this, but he said nothing being a perfect gentleman about it, and I for once had the good sense not to say anything either. I think I could tell though that

he was curious about my opinion. Still, I said nothing.

I was three months into my twenty second year and a bit of a risk taker. Ordinarily I would never have done that.

I don't remember how I got home to West Collingwood New Jersey that evening, ^{but} Ronald Thomason probably drove me in his "old zoomer" a big hunk of a car I called the time bomb because you never knew when something was going to blow up on it. A week or so later I read in Time Magazine that Andy had broken his foot on a purple white hot riding on a red motor scooter that same evening of the day I met him so at least I knew I'd remember that day. Ten years would pass before another contact was made, the result of a wild idea my brother Stuart and I had by surprising Andy right

out of the blue with a gift of four beautiful 15th century
gentlemen's jackets and a late 15th century over dress for
Betsey. A week or so later our telephone rang — but that's
another story.