

27 Nov 75

Dearest J,

Judging from your silence that you are well occupied, I am content. Let it not be that you were sick or depressed about Boulder.

I'm writing to say goodbye for awhile, I have a chance to go down to my mangrove swamp for some R&R and with luck won't be back til end of March. Leaving 15 Dec.

I wish you kept copies of your letters so you could see what I mean when I say, Yes, how enlightening. Do you recall the male frosh virgin being excited at having breasts? Absolutely marvellous. As you say, simply weird. There is no worse weirdness than the person who cannot ---CANNOT--- see there is any other point of view, and keeps intolerably trying to adjust to you without adjusting that.

I hope I'm not like that, but who can tell.

By the way, I recurrently bring up the sexist issue in idle letters here and there and that reaction about force and violence is I think typical of a certain male response. I get it all the time. In effect it is, They can't win. We're stronger.

Now it depends whether the guy is really other-directed and desirous of "equality" which tone of voice he says it in. Some say it flatly. Some say it troubledly, like, it would be nice if they could make it but they positively can't. Some are genuinely anguished, Jesus, the beautiful ideal, it's all gonna be wrecked because "we"---those other shitty males---will take it away.

I think I'm in that class, in my remarks to you about the deer park. Very conscious of "their" potential for violence. But whatever else it shows, it shows the orientation toward confrontation and "winning." I think a lot of male supporters of womens lib are hung up on this point. Some woman probably has addressed herself to this point. I'd like to read her.

I've heard a woman say bitterly, "It takes two to make a slave----but when my children are threatened I cave in."

Obviously a male-type concern with a movement ---thinking in the old analogs of class or race struggle---has to be concerned with the simple "Can they physically make it" question. I read in Ms about liberated women berating themselves for bringing their boy kids up macho, torn between their boy's peer survival and his later effect on their sex.

How does one foresee a world in which the lion does lie down with the lamb and both get up again? Is this my "apocalyptic" or distasteful thinking at work? Is there really no problem? Anyway I thought I'd say all that because it was so common in my mail and it may explain one type of reaction you get.

I've bought Brownmiller's book on rape to take with me; don't dare start it now if I'm to get cleaned up & out of here. Also I'm afraid it will hurt me.

I am saving all your letters in a notebook and will do my best to see they end up in Bowling Green. But are you sure you don't want Xeroxes?



10 Nov 57

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When I was a child, I was often told that I was a "good boy". I was always obedient and did what I was told. I was never in trouble and was always a "good boy".

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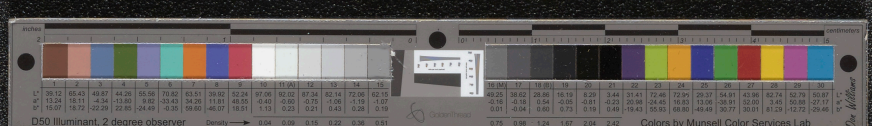
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Yeah, to revert to your letter, I don't think you're different from me except in the specific experience-effects. Of course, I'm used to being pretty privately warped by experience myself, I approach almost everyone as aliens. Basically I am very interested in exactly what it is like to be you, to look through your eyes. (Someone said that is the only gift a friend can give another.) I absorb, absorb, partly by indirection, through your letters. Through offering ideas or at least words, and finding whether you laugh, snarl, agree, slap.

I think you "stand" being a woman exactly as I stand being me, what is oneself that one "stands" but a peculiar cloudy fiery lens, an invisible intersection of fluxes of experience, a nothing that is everything and everywhere?

Getting back to Scoles, whom you have doubtless forgotten, if you receive him as domineering I will simply have to trust your judgement. As one paranoid to another, I trust those hunches.

I wish Cogswell had printed my letter about the Ms "art" and about accusations of "shrillness." He said the blue didn't copy.

Of course I have it easy, Joanna, because at my age and solitude it doesn't mean rethinking actual on-going roles. I don't have to change or be threatened, and I do my own dishes anyway. I wish I had a daughter. (Probably be scared sick for her, have to go to a shrink to get straightened out. Preferably a shrink with your orientation.) (I have no children.)

Disturbing query: Am I looking in the womens' movement for my missing daughter, or sister? Hm'mm. Have to think that over. If I am, is that all bad? Can we ever be free of some sort of infra-motive anyway?

I don't go all gooey, though. Except about prose styles. There I do melt.

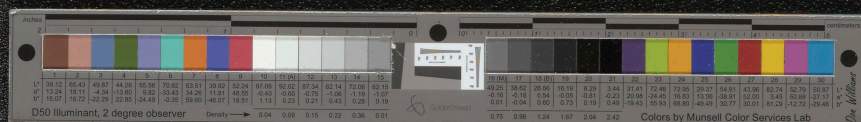
Now I've got to use the rest of this holiday desk-time to tackle a dismal IRS form. Let me hear how you are before I go, would you? Could you?

By the way, Heller's SOMETHING HAPPENED is worth a look. I've been reading him and that fake Indian Wm Eastlake (DANCERS IN THE SCALP HOUSE). W.E. was a great admiration of mine when I'd only read short pieces. He must be queer for Indians. Or something. I wrote Craig warning him to read him and check the style Eastlake is so busy getting almost-right. Dreadful if Eastlake has crapped all over Red humour before the real Reds can use it. ...I wish I had been able, independently, to judge he wasn't Indian; I almost did but looked at the end-paper too soon. Shortly it became, I think, evident....Niggling thought, is he some kind of Indian joking he's a non-Indian? If you like Craig's style, look at Eastlake for a puzzle. Some of his older pointless pieces, just Najajos leaning on windy corners, were very convincing.

I like Heller's taste in waiting to do something so different. Jesus, the first chapters burned. Terrible painful. A part of my life I hated to see.

Also I read Lessings BRIEFING FOR A DESCENT INTO HELL, not near as good as the GOLDEN NOTEBOOK.

Take care of Joanna, may the good fræ friendly feel of Boulder last,



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