

Pleasantville, 16 September 1946

Mary darling,

As anybody ought to be able to tell from the enclosed check, I went into the big, big city for a couple of hours this afternoon and then hurried back here to do myself a nice quick-warm-up dinner of leek soup, baked beans, salad and some kind of pudding--originally made, I suspect, for four-year-old Cathy Kober this past weekend--I found in the ice box, all of which I've just finished eating with Salud snoring at my feet.

New York's a strange town these days. The truck drivers have been on strike for long enough to at least partially empty most grocery stores--some of the big chains have shut up entirely--and the newspapers can't get enough paper for more than very skimpy issues, with no space for advertising. The businesses that haven't been hit by the truck drivers have been smacked by sailors' and longshoremen's strikes, and today all the barbers from 34th Street to 59th--the heart of the town--were supposed to walk out. My Civil Rights Congress has a fund to supply bail money for strikers who are arrested--one of the new gadgets in breaking a strike is to arrest as many picketers as possible in an attempt to make the unions use all their money for bail--and the chances are we'll have plenty of business in the weeks to come, unless, of course, the Maritime Union should settle its difficulties. I'm now also on the National Board of Directors of the Independent Citizens' Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions--it was at one of our meetings that Henry Wallace made the speech there was, and still is, so much fuss about--which ought to mean that I'll be busy as a skinny white-haired bee putting in my two cents' worth here and there through the coming elections. Also I've promised to work a little at trying to get one Hulan Jack re-elected to something or other. (Maybe that's why it's nice being up here all alone--no servants, no nothing this week--where nobody'll know if I just pay no attention to the telephone when it rings.)

Yesterday I went fishing for the first time in Christ knows how long and caught enough pickerel for this morning's breakfast, and a very nice breakfast pickerel makes. Maybe I'll make a stab at some sunfish tomorrow: they're nice breakfast eating too. Pretty soon it'll be time to unpack the shotguns and start poking around for such birds and beasties as pheasant, grouse, quail, squirrel and rabbit, with ducks coming along later. There's always something to look forward to...if you don't ask too much.

My recent reading hasn't been too hot: a piece of junk called "Sea Change," by a woman called Hunt and Cross's "The Other Passenger," which has a couple of good ideas in it but is pretty wretchedly written and "The Innocents of Paris," by Cesbron, which has some kind of cute child stuff in it but doesn't hold up any too well and a dullish novel called "The Magnate" by a man named Harriman who should go back to stock brokering or whatever it was he did before he started writing. I may never finish this one, though I'm not expecting a whole lot from the next one on my list, Charles Jackson's "The Fall of Valor." He wrote "The Lost Weekend," you perhaps remember, and this one, which is about a dope who doesn't find out he's a homo till he's in his forties, is generally supposed to be more or less autobiographical too. Sherwood Anderson's short story "Hands" is the only piece of fiction about homos that I remember ever thinking any good.

That, I reckon, brings us pretty well up to date, and now I've got to do some telephoning and such before I settle down with either a book or a woodworking tool for the rest of the evening, so...

Much love, baby...

Papa

