

I fight for a small world of humanity and tenderness just as Jacobson fights the illnesses that are brought to him. He cannot do more.

Last night: while Hugo was bending over his engraving in the quiet of the New School, Gonzalo was bending over me and kissing me with the gratitude he feels after his pleasure. Henry I cannot see or imagine. He is in a place I do not know. This brings us up to date. In the public library around the corner people are reading my *Winter of Artifice*.

NOVEMBER 2, 1942

When Hugo told me again how he loves me I asked: "Why do you love me?"

"Well, for twenty years you have kept me interested."

After twenty years he loves me like a lover: ardent, eager, enthralled. When he saw me healthy last week (I reached a pinnacle of perfect health, never reached before and which intoxicated me—alas! I cannot sustain it) he begged me to retain this. He said he could not bear it, the expression I have sometimes. "You look...you look..." He searched for a strong enough word... "You look crucified."

NOVEMBER 3, 1942

Letter from Henry:

Just got your letter about resuming the role of analyst. Well. That sounds better. Yes, I do think you could do that well. [...]

You know, when it comes down to bedrock, I don't think it's so much a question of "caring for the sick," as you put it, as it is one of our getting results. You can see the results of creation, dealing with your neurotics, and that's pleasurable. It also puts you out of the competitive world, which is so abhorrent. You may remember, I said it to you more than once—that if you feel you must minister to the weak and ailing, then you should do it with all your heart and soul. You can't play at analysis any more than you can at art. Remember this, that you will profit more from it, in the end, than your patients. Because there is something defective in the analyst which drives him to this work—it is like the relation between master and slave—so I firmly believe. Don't fool yourself by thinking that you are doing good, that you are alleviating misery, and so on. No, you will be treating yourself, that's what I think. In this way, and maybe in only this way, you can complete your own analysis—and then see beyond it. This is not to deter you—on the contrary. I think it will be excellent. And don't tie it up, your work, with the idea that it is a solution of my economic ills. Do it for its own sake, purely. Enjoy it!

I want you to put an end to your anguish about my physical comfort. I want you to get like a rock and not worry whether I sink or swim. There's undoubtedly something wrong with me, or I would have solved this primitive question long ago. Better let me face it. You're absolutely right that it is not your place to be humbling yourself before these idiots. Maybe I'd get on to another tack too if I had to take a good dose of that medicine. (Though it seems to me I have. Somehow I get inured to it. I think I am less

easily deceived than you, by people. I don't expect too much of them. But that, it seems, only leads to expecting everything of you, and that's wrong.) But I don't want you to think that I would ever get the idea that you failed me. No matter what you did, you couldn't fail me. I hold myself responsible for whatever happens to me. You, having greater wisdom, probably have more fear of what may happen than I in my blindness.

The last three days have been marvelous. Such perfect weather! Almost as good as Greece. I've been in bliss—and feel two hundred percent better. Solitude does that to me. I feel enriched. One doesn't need people, theatres, bars, etc. Just to step outdoors, see the light on the hills, the stars at night—that's enough. People in the East think this is a bizarre place, because it's Hollywood. I have almost nothing to do with Hollywood. I might be a thousand miles away, for all it matters. It drives me nuts, sometimes, to think that one can't live where one wants, especially when the place is not on the moon, not at the Antarctic. Places are important, just as important as food or other things.

I'm going to return, but I tell you, as long as the war is on, I am going to make an effort to convert you to my way of thinking. In some ways, you know, you're a fatalist. Generally you accuse me of being too soft and yielding. Generally you're right, but about this thing, living in the right place, the right climate, nothing on earth can convince me that I'm wrong. I look to New York with loathing. Two days, such as these last two, wipe out years of living in New York. You must realize that I'm not crazy when I say this. And I say it, living an incomplete life. I haven't had a taste of sex since I'm out here. And oddly enough, it doesn't bother me. It's wonderful to live alone like this, but it would be more wonderful not to live alone. But it's like choosing between the concentration camp and going to war. I'd choose the concentration camp.

Anyway, what I'm trying to tell you is this, that the West is utterly different from the East. I wanted you to see this country—you have seen hardly anything of America, you know. I am at the point where, failing to know the people I'd like to associate with, I can get along with anybody. It's enough for me now to exchange a few words with the grocer, or with Honest John, the Greek who runs a hash joint up the canyon. People stop and talk—they always do, you know. But I don't care whether they do or not. I get to the point of complete enjoyment of life, and then bango! The old question—how do you make a living? I'm not a bit sorry that I didn't land a job in the studios, callous though that sounds. I've had a rich, wonderful time of it, these four months. And please don't hold that against me. What gripes me is that I had it at your expense. Margaret and Gilbert Neiman were wonderful to me. And, if I did drain them a bit, I repaid them in other ways. It's something to know that people do recognize more than one way of being repaid.

You know, I meet more people who know Frieda Lawrence than you can shake a stick at. They all tell me what a wonderful life she leads up there in San Cristobal, New Mexico. Somehow Frieda has solved her problems—in a very humble way. She must be a grand person, quite different than we think from reading Lawrence. I begin to suspect that she was the bigger of the two, when it comes to life.

And that's what I'm getting at all the time...to arrange things so that one can live simply and easily, very humbly perhaps.

You seem to get frightened, whenever I mention this. I don't know what it is, whether you need the cultural elements more than I or what. All I can tell you is that I have grown to appreciate the life of the country these last few years. I don't need the cities anymore. You can always have music and books, even in the most remote places. And sometimes it's good not to have even these, but rather to be thrown completely on your own.

Well, I'm going to stop. Maybe you'll be able to give me a job as secretary or something. Better not ask me to do analysis—I might drive the patients away. Somehow sick people infuriate me. And God knows what I'd want to adapt them to.

NOVEMBER 17, 1942

Henry: Your letter this morning made me very angry. You repeat the same thing, just as if we didn't write countless letters about it. You're completely blind about one thing, and always will be. I'm responsible for that blindness. You start all over again to exult in the life you lead—and then you dare to say to me: "When I speak of this life, this humble life, you get frightened—you seem to need the cultural background, etc." as if it were a choice for me, a simple choice. What is this humble life of yours? You admit it's possible because of the Neimans and me. Then it isn't a humble life—it has a basis on dependence. Then you go on converting me to it. What a clever woman Frieda is! Yes of course. What do you expect me to do? I am tired of repeating that I do not choose to print, choose to analyze, choose to stay in N.Y. I do not choose to struggle.

You put me in the place by your attitude. I again bowed my head and accepted this attitude—which means always for me to be and continue to be what I am. The trouble is you're unbalanced and can't see that. You think I can take your attitude. At whose expense? If I can only get my liberation by staying at somebody's house and letting someone struggle for me I don't want it. For a long time I have been fully aware of our separation. My saying it first only happens because I always see first. The last straw was your thoroughly irresponsible remark about sex. "It's fine to have it but I can do without it." It isn't in anger that I say this, but now *I don't want you to return*. You told the (John) Cages you were never returning to N.Y. I should long ago have given you the ultimate liberation. The time has come. I do not want you to return. I don't want to bring you back to any place you loathe. You do not and never have made your life around me, by the climate of my presence. You are now complete, by yourself. I say this without pain or anger. You have prepared me for this. I only regret that you have failed to complete yourself in one simple truth: *two* people can't take your attitude—or they sink into ignominy. *One* can, and the other must struggle. Your passivity has created my struggle. When I met you I stayed in Louveciennes doing nothing—and I like the easy life just as much as you do. I began to struggle because your debacle at the time proved what happened to you whenever someone didn't protect you.

You have always refused to see the necessity of this. You have blamed me as if it were a temperamental defect.

Your passivity increased in proportion to my creative and protective activity. Ironically, you never recognized that my struggle was at the basis of your magnificent renunciations and independences. You mocked the people who struggled. You said: "Look, look how I do it." And it was all utterly crazy and inhuman. I can't bring myself to let you down and show you. You think your way of life is wisdom—but it isn't. It's the way of life permitted to those who are protected by someone else's struggle. That's all. There is no triumph and no conquest in it. It's a crystallization of the ego—that's all. I repeat it, Henry: I do not want you back. There is no need of it. I shall continue to help you. I have always wanted you fulfilled. I have my own plans and it won't be Hollywood. This is not a surprise or a shock. You mustn't be concerned. This separation has been going on since you went to Greece. I have been fully aware of it. Your letters have effectively detached me from you. They are more revealing than you know. Believe me when I say I feel completely detached and you are free—to live as you please. Only I do not want any more letters on this subject. I shall be grateful not to hear any more about the foolishness of my struggles, my love of the city, my refusal to lead an enchanted life at the cost of begging. That I shall be thankful for.

I didn't want a separation to come out of a quarrel—but that is how it happens. One suddenly discovers after ten years that one is fundamentally misunderstood, which means not loved, and there you are. I'm very definite about this however—and it is not anger which makes me do it but complete disillusion—and that can't be altered. Sooner or later you were going to be alone, for your efforts were never towards union but *towards aloneness*. The time has come.

Second letter to Henry:

I'm no longer angry—just very sad at being misunderstood—but I kept my first letter for a day, and read it again. I still feel the same way, but I understand what makes you write me such irritating and unjust things. I understand and feel for you too. You mustn't be hurt by my use of the word "child." You are a man, and more than all other men, as creator, as lover, as everything in fact, but in relation to money you're helpless. This helplessness is so intolerable to you that you can't acknowledge it, and so you also find intolerable the awareness of what I have to do for you—so between guilt and pain you simply refuse to realize the rightness and necessity of what I do. You would feel much happier if I became a child like you, joined you and repeated your life with June, for I repeat to you, I'm as helpless as you in regard to money, and it is Hugo (another unbearable idea) who has guarded us both. What you want me to do is destructive—to join you and become blind with you. As you can't solve this, you ran away. You ran away to Greece. At that time your trip was a break from me and your unsolvable problem. We broke physically and emotionally. You found you could live without me—physically and emotionally. I did too. It became clearer and clearer that

the only bond left was a mother and child one: you demanding, capricious, unwilling to make sacrifices, and running away again. Your last demand was the biggest. You really want to stay where you are, you still need my protection, and there you are. You're too honest to pretend anything in order to keep this protection. You have always been honest—your letters are very honest about the fact that you feel fine, alone. You are furthest away from your own guilt. In fact the best deliverance would be utter destruction of the bond, because you would be back at the place before you met me, starving but free of guilt. Alas—it's tragic that we won't escape that, though I struggled to free you. Now if we are both honest, I will say that I will overlook all your foolish, nonsensical statements about your independence and humble life and need of nothing, and I will not let you starve—if only you stop writing me destructive, cruel, thoughtless letters. You, who are so honest, can't face a simple truth like this. It is unnecessary for you to return. We are not bound as man and woman anymore. If we had been, you wouldn't have put so many small things in the way of your return, a city, a climate, your personal gratifications, your well-being. It is unworthy of us to be so deceptive. Now your problem is clearing, isn't it? You have all you want—the impossible always—at any cost. There it is. May you enjoy your peace, your solitude, your choice of life. Do not destroy my peace and the strength I need by constantly being critical of my attitude. I shall respect the kind of bond which makes it impossible for me to leave you without protection, no matter how often you have denied and denigrated the way I achieved it.

NOVEMBER 19, 1942

Henry has definitely chosen his life—escape and delusion. He has surrendered only to himself—to his self-gratification. What he wants of me is destructive, and I will not do it.

NOVEMBER 20, 1942

Before getting my break letter, Henry writes me:

Just got your letter with the postal check—yes, I did get the other, didn't I say so? You will not get the ms. for a few days yet, I fear—it went by ordinary mail...

Each time I open a letter from you I expect another somersault now. You are really veering around like a weather-vane, do you know it? I have no doubt it's all due to the terrible financial anguish you're going through. I'm determined to take a job when I get back: we'll see if that will steady you. I feel excellent—morally, mentally, physically, spiritually.

I have to smile the way you polish off Greece in your enthusiasm for Morocco. How do you know it's so much better? Better than here, by a thousand times, that's certain. What are you doing, working on Hugo now to put him in the consular service?

This morning I was rereading the last volume of my *Rosy Crucifixion*, and do you know, I was delighted with it. Wondered if it was really me who did it. That's the truth—and this leads me to say that I am sure I can both work for a living and do my writing too. So many men and women have done it. And done it well.

Thank you for your interest in this Ohio University Press title.

This book is available for purchase [online at our website](#) or through other ebooks vendors.

