

The College Inn
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania
August 27, 1952

Dear Mr. Ferrater Mora,

Perhaps there is some specific and good reason for my having delayed a week in assuring you that I have done the errands, but I can't think of what it is. What I have been doing during this week are these things: (1) I have planned for a visit from my younger sister and her husband who've managed to drive from Texas and get back here and four the entire East Coast in thirteen days; (2) I've reaped the results of the planning; (3) I've carried on involved negotiations with cleaners, salesladies, laundrymen, grocery clerks, hardware store men, all these negotiations being related in one way or another to my desire to be so ready, in a material way, for the fall and winter that I won't have to venture off this campus once the cold weather sets in (I'll except my venturing off to New York, Princeton, Charlottesville, etc.); (4) I've finished reading the last book far removed from Descartes and his preoccupations that I'm allowing myself: George Kennan's Russia Leaves the War; (5) I've made some applesauce from various recipes; (6) I've avoided assiduously, using this typewriter because it has come back from the repair shop with an unsatisfying touch. Only (6) is of all related to my writing--rather, to my not writing--you. And had I sat down to this cantankerous machine earlier, I might have gotten by with the line or two you requested instead of these many lines of vague apology.

On the nineteenth I left Miss Foster of the post office a note asking her to send you no more mail of whatever description. The next day I spoke with her, thanking her as you had asked me to, for her valiant services; she said no more mail would be sent and gave me, moreover, an envelope with the change from your two dollars in it. On the nineteenth, too, I told the library office secretaries that your mail would be accumulating for a couple of weeks or so and that they should leave it in your box or, if that overflowed, put it in your office.

I spoke with your comrade "Tony" whose last name now somehow escapes me (anyway, he is in charge of an Atlantic service station). He remembered you and your car and verified existence of said car in the depths of his garage. He said he'd have it ready without fail XXX by the seventh and that he would also, by that date, have checked the brakes to see if they are now in working order or need something done to them. In the conversation I mentioned your word "relining"; as I pulled off on my bike, he suggested in an amused way that perhaps he could reline my brakes for me.

During June I remained in Bryn Mawr longer than I had intended to for a whole set of reasons, none of them very substantial. Finally, on the twenty-second, bearing a gallon of freshly-picked cologne raspberries in my Scotch Kooler for a friend of mine in South Carolina, I departed; I arrived in Dallas about a week later. In Bryn Mawr, I had managed to begin an overdue spring housecleaning and to adopt a black-and-white stray kitten that you may have seen in Miss Clayton's charge around Yarrow.

At home I inspected my two nephews and my two brand-new nieces, reestablished complicated relationships with members of my family, and witnessed with some relief the discomfort of a friend of mine who is finding that her devotion to the principle of "togetherness" (she'd never use that term in description of her progressive notions about human affairs, but it's an apt one), is perhaps ill-advised. I returned to Bryn Mawr around the first of August and proceeded to be reacquainted with the kitten (now a cat) "Pinder." In this month I have shopped, thrown away things, read all the magazines that came to me last spring, made half-hearted attempts to write some letters, and read two books on the Hiss case and a thesis on de Tocqueville. A good consequence (I suppose it's a consequence) of all this is that I feel fine (even my blood count is up, as I learned when I gave some blood to the Red Cross the other day); the obvious bad consequence is that I've done no work. I shall begin to work, however, about three days from now and by the time you return, though I shall have nothing to show you, I'll at least be caring about Descartes again.

Because my own record is so poor, I have been delighted to learn that you too have taken an intellectual holiday. But, were my record different, I'd be happy to know that you've managed to rest during one summer. After all, it'll merely mean that you published about two fewer books this year, no?

I look forward to seeing the suntanned faces of you, your wife, and Jaime. Please choose a good pilot and avoid hurricanes as you cross the Atlantic.

Sincerely,
Julia Johnston

NO OTHER ENVELOPE SHOULD BE USED