

Friday, November 6
Happy Surf-Fawkes Day

Dear Rob,

It is now 3:45 and John hasn't come up. To say he's ready to go home is a bit - I have washed the board and even my desk, watered the plants, gathered my things, talked to Tom - and the only things I can do are work (but if I start either John will come and I'll have to stop in the middle or he won't come and I'll have to continue and I don't feel like doing work) or write a letter to my little brother or just sit.

Buckley won. Thank goodness we still have Janits. Goodell and Ottinger together received more votes, and doubtless if only one of them had been nominated he would have been elected - or if we required a run off when no one received at least 50% of the vote. It's all your fault for not voting!

Later - he came up at that point.

Dad is reading Hattlingly's Armada. He hasn't said anything - he rarely does except sometimes when he has finished a book - but he seems to be enjoying it. Can you think of any other of your books that he might like? I found Looking for Dilemma on the library's new book shelf (that's the one about the archaeological discovery of an ancient civilization - in the Middle East, I believe) - I think it is one he might enjoy (I loved, too, but I don't dare start it).

I did put the opening of the Back Magnificent on as the World Lit ^{kids} came in - and they liked it. It was fun watching some of them trying to read the label on the record as they walked past the player.

Saturday evening.

Dad has been working very hard - especially the last couple of days, when he has been scraping, scrubbing, painting, and putting up storm windows. I feel guilty sitting inside

marking pages and reading The Old Man and the Sea. They are the work I have to do, and the marking is nothing but work and dreary, loathsome work and that - but it doesn't look as if I were working. However, now Dad is reading for enjoyment, and I'll be going back to work again after this - so mine is longer. I wish I had Dad's energy - he really is well and sometimes too energetic (windows rattle when he closes the kitchen door - and sometimes he seems to be in and out, in and out dozens of times a day).

Mama is getting ready for some sewing projects for both of us, so she must be feeling pretty well, too. I think a letter - or even just a postcard or two - from her son would make her feel absolutely marvellous. Please try.

I baked a fat round loaf of cheese bread today. I just tried an end piece - it tastes good, though it seems to be a little solid. Do you think I'll kill anyone with it? Kneading yeast dough is marvellous therapy - I must do it more often.

I was thinking of Basil and how you said he liked the Lewis trilogy and gave the books to his father to read when he had finished. Now that they are in Paperback, would you like to give him the Narnia Chronicles? Till the Dark Falls? Also - how about asking him to visit when you are home? Did you ever call him?

Mama said you told her that one of the worst things was boredom - not being able to read because you're supposed to be on duty of some kind but not having enough to think about. Would you like us to send you a set of those vocabulary cards for German like the ones you had for French? Or anything else like that? You might be able to carry a few or at least to go over things mentally.

and then be brilliantly prepared when you have to go back and take your test. Or would you rather have them for Latin? I really think you could teach yourself quite a bit of Latin since the classical stuff is quite regular (despite or because of the declensions and involved conjugations). At any rate, the vocabulary would not be too difficult because of French and English. Think about it - AND SEND SOME KIND OF ANSWER.

Wednesday I asked one of my seniors to come in to see me after school. I've had him since 10th grade and like him very much - he's bright without any conceit, sensitive, and blessed with a sense of humor. Last year he evidently picked up some hippyish friends, and his mother was quite concerned about him when she came up for Open House (she wasn't up this year - Matt forgot to tell her about it). She didn't say much specifically to me except that she and her husband as well as Matt were glad he had me again because I was one person from whom he did not resent correction and discipline. Helen Lewington had him for history last year, and the mother was evidently more frank with her that night about how Matt worried them - but Helen has never been more specific than that to me, and none of this is reflected in his guidance folder at all. I've been quite concerned this year because he looks pale, thin, and ill and has been late (I have him 1st period - for the 3rd year) and absent even more than usual and he hardly says anything in class. He clearly does all his work, however, and there is a good example of the ambiguity of ~~me~~ Matt. I didn't know if the whole thing would backfire - but it didn't. Not only did he not resent being called in; he thanked me for it. I'm not sure how much I accomplished - he said he is simply totally bored with school - would even quit except that he knows he would regret it later. All his friends are out of school and he

can't feel any relationships or interest with those in his classes. I tried to persuade him to manufacture some show of interest - because that should in turn involve him enough to create real interest - but he isn't convinced that that wouldn't be hypocritical. I resorted to the perhaps unfair tactic of asking him to do it for my sake - since I know he does care for me. I asked him about his plans for next year - He doesn't want to go to college yet - too much like continuing high school. Actually, some of his reasons are quite good, but no one evidently has tried to make him see that things aren't as one-sided as he believes - he doesn't want to go to college to learn any trade or job but just to learn for the pleasure of learning - and the poor kid seemed to think this wasn't an accepted reason! Anyway, he intends to travel - to California in the summer to see friends and to Europe after that. But that's about all he knows about it. Everything is very vague and nebulous or else almost totally negative. Finally I had what is either a brilliant idea or a totally crackbrained one - I suggested that he apply to schools in Britain or Ireland - then he would be in Europe and able to travel easily (long vacations + cheap student rates) and would have some kind of purpose and focus - but among different people and places. The idea took but what will result, I don't know. He'll have to do something definite about information applications, etc. if he wants to do this - What his parents will think, I don't know, but he was planning to travel anyway, and this should, I hope, seem more settled and purposeful - I told him to look up information in the public library, talk to John, and go in to the city to the British and Irish information services. Of course, everything could peter out from inertia - but he did seem more alive

the last two days. I've been afraid of drugs in his case - especially the way he's been looking and acting this year. Of course I didn't expect him to say anything, but after talking to him I feel that it isn't likely that he's using any hard drugs. Considering his freedom and "sophistication," as well as the very little I can gather about his friends, I realize that marijuana is a definite possibility. Gondres knows I deplore any of them, but marijuana certainly isn't the same as the others. It's scary to be a teacher today. I've talked to John about Matt - especially since I told him to talk to John, but mostly because John is my comforter and sounding-board and I know he'll be honest with ~~me~~ me about something in school - and he feels I've done the right things. In fact, when I said perhaps I ought to call Mrs. Inyles and explain what I had said to Matt and why, he said he thought I shouldn't - that I could help Matt better if he felt I were speaking just to him and just as myself. I'm still not sure - but I suppose she'll call me if she's upset or interested. Actually, I enjoyed much of our talk, even though it was frustrating. At least he was honest enough not to promise to do things he isn't sure he can - like trying to be interested - and he also blames no one for his boredom. I tried to appeal to him and give him an angle of interest by pointing out to him that he has a quirkish mind that delights in a sense of play - and that his talent or bent or whatever you want to call it is for the ludicrous, the exaggerated, the ironic, the unusual - rather than the orderly and logical things. I wish he could know you and have you to talk to - I think you would be far better for him than I am; you would understand his boredom with school

letter (I was pretty accepting and understanding in high school especially - and he able to find more to draw him out and appeal to his mind.

Good grief! I really went on and on there - but I was trying to think of something more than tiny paragraphs - and this matter has been much in my mind this week and much connected with thoughts of you - and it does make the letter look wonderfully long.

Report cards will be due a week from this Thursday - so I'm likely to stop writing letters for a while. Be understanding.

John seems to like working together on plans for IIR - he was the one who suggested continuing. He gives more than I can - but I can type dittoes faster. It has really helped me the past week - he knows far better how to teach the slower groups. He's still driving me to school, too - I've freed him it isn't necessary if it is not convenient, but he likes it and really wants it - and so do I. Sometimes we talk non-stop - and other times we are silent, and both are fine. I think we sustain each other.

Be good. WRITE. Eat well. WRITE. Take care of yourself. WRITE. Have fun. WRITE. Think lovely thoughts. WRITE. Be kind, even to sergeants and second-lieutenants. WRITE.

Love,
Doris