

1926  
Berlin. The 3rd April.

Darling Florence:

The letter from you and Bakar arrived a few minutes ago. I arise from bed to answer it. I am so glad you were together in Paris, and I am glad that you liked him. I think it must be rather hard to say that definitely when you saw each other such a short time. Yet you say it. He has rather prepossessing ways and you are not such a slouch yourself. I don't know what Sam is like. Anyway, here is ~~the~~ the way Bakar began his letter to me:

"Your friend Florence is sweet and is at present eating an orange. . . . I was leaving tonight for London but missed the train. I am not sorry for it, though. I like her husband very much. . . . etc., etc."

"Sweet" he says. That is a habit of his, when searching for a word that sums up all he has to say. Or, "an awfully decent chap."

Well, now you have met. I know you found him rather young. So he is. That is the point that disturbs me. I don't know why it should, yet it seems the conventional thing to regard it so. It is like judging a man because he is tall or short, wears a beard or a moustache, is big or little. Yet it tortures me. . . for my doctor tells me it is the neurotic thing I am doing. Good. I am not master of my insides. I wish I were.

Now am I well these days. I went to my doctor two days ago to see if I could not get into the analysis at once. Perhaps after this week I shall. . . with a man physician. We talked for two hours and the things she said sent me roaming the streets for hours, ready to give up the ghost if I gained the courage. Not having the courage I came home and have been sick ever since. That is the easier way I suppose. And perhaps the more cowardly.

So you see I am doing nothing. Most of the time watching a spot on my ceiling, and wondering what in the hell this life is about anyway.

It would have been so fine to be with you in Paris for a short time. July is a long, long time. Yet it must be so. You are right in going to the south before it becomes very hot. But why these old conventional routes? Why don't you go down to Turkey instead and over to Greece and up here? I don't know why I have no calling to go to Italy. Perhaps because of the macarroul. I think Turkey, at the beginning of its renaissance, must be most interesting now.

For heavens sake don't give Sam an idea that he's going to meet some remarkable person when he sees me. I hate to have to live up to reputations. When he comes I'll try to be brilliant or interesting and I don't feel either. So don't deceive the poor chap. You may tell him that I expect nothing of him, although you have written me loads. I wish to be surprised. So I expect to find a rather slouchy, bald-headed, uninteresting chap who plays sentimental tunes on the pianna. The extent to which he rises above these expectations will be the extent of my pleasure in meeting him. But tell him that I expect nothing and would be pleased if he would do the same.

Hoping you are the same, as Hashimuri Togo says,

My dear love,

*A. J. Baker*