

Shanghai. Sept. 11, 1929

My dearest Florence:

I have your letter of August 1st. You seem to regard physical suffering, such as operations and having babies, as of such little concern that you pass them by for other things.

I do hope you are well now and that your health has improved. But do not have another baby. You have enough. And "Agnes" is no name to wish on any child. My life is nothing to ask a child to emulate.

Yes, I perhaps made a very bad job of you in my book. I did of many people. Chatto also. But to me in those days you were a breath of loveliness and I knew nothing else. I remember your hair and your gentle hands. Of your beastly struggle I knew little. Now I remember your family

but you remember I got only a glimpse,
and I knew nothing of their tyrannies.
Do you recall your own mental mix-up
in those days? And do you recall how
ego-centric I was — until I hardly
thought of anything but my own struggles,
mental conflicts, and political struggles. I
had so little time to understand you. It
was you who tried to understand and
help me. I was very selfish. You took
me in and I let it go at that.
You are the only one who remained close
to me through all this time. The ideas
of others have remained. You are the
only person apart from revolutionary
ideas, — a sort of steady, certain point
in my existence. I think about the
only one anywhere — except Bakar in
India. He is trying to come here. He
is doing labour research work for the
Indian National Congress and it has

Xu Zhimo

to meet whom I understood no more than I understood you in the past. But we are going to travel together considerable, and are planning a trip this autumn. I'm spending a few days this week - and at his old parental home south of Shanghai a few hours. The heat of the summer has prostrated me and I'm no good. So I shall go to his home at times - where his old father and mother hold sway. I'm going down with his father in a few days. When the leaves begin to turn he and I will take a house-boat and go for a week long one of the many canals in a province south of here. And during the winter holidays (he is a professor ^{H. Seng} also) we are going far inland to tramp through villages and see what can be done

about model villages.

I've written many short stories for my newspaper and I see by advertisements that some have been read over the radio.

Europe and America seem so far away:

I often wonder what the future holds for me. Out here life itself is a gamble.

But I've no intention of returning to Europe or America. I like the Chinese too much.

Europeans & Americans boycott me rather

severely. I live with a young American woman and she seems to suffer under the boycott. She's fresh from America.

But I am glad of the boycott. It spares me much boredom. Out here most foreigners are 100% Boobs and all are

150% imperialists. So I get myself Chinese friends and get along grand! I suppose

I'll go down with Asia or rise with it. I certainly feel at home here.

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How different our interests and lives are -
yours and mine! You seem to be so
securely anchored to natural, fundamental
things - babies, a home, and also
intellectual interests. Are you happy,
truly? I am not. Do anyone, do you
suppose? Is happiness the most
important thing in life - or are there
other values of more importance? I've
chosen my way and for me there is
no other! I only hope I am shot
while I am comparatively young. A
woman of my kind is impossible when
old. There is no place for us.
There is always a place for you.

My love to you, dear Florence.

Ayahoo -

You tell me to write
poetry to my Chinese friends myself! Why, Mrs.,
Becker! Just imagine me as a poetess