

Hawthorn Hill
Oakwood
Dayton . . Ohio

Friday morning [June 19, 1925]

Dear Harry:

There isn't any letter from you this morning but I'll have to write anyway. I won't try to tell you what is going on inside of me. I can't.

I was awake in the night last night and it came over me what perfect confidence I had in you. I never once doubted your loving me when you said you did. It upset me so I haven't been in my right mind since but I knew it was so or you wouldn't have said it. You don't know how I do trust you about everything.

Don't you ever get into a state where you don't know yourself how you feel? If you don't you won't sympathize with my confusion and what I can only call paralysis. Oh, Harry, you can't know how my conscience fights with my feelings—since I have become clearer as to what my feelings really are. I'm sure almost everyone would think it right for me to leave Orv but I know it isn't. There is so much between us that no one knows but ourselves. He hasn't been just a brother to me, in the way most people think of brothers and sisters.

On the other hand I am afraid it is wrong to write to you as I am writing, telling you that I find something in my heart that I can't put down as either affection or love, except that I begin to see it is apt to flame up as love, and then I don't know what I'll do. I do love you, dear. All these years you have had a special place in my heart but you see the thought of what you want now never entered into the relation. Won't you be gentle and patient with me? (Of course, you are.) I wouldn't do anything wrong for you, not for the world.

For many years I have wondered how any one has the courage to enter into marriage. In our case, if we had everything else out of the way, I would be afraid for you, afraid that you'd have a disillusionment that you don't deserve. I have long been sure that you are idealizing me. I thought it was just because in our dear long friendship you saw only the best in me, probably partly because I haven't shown you my worst side. You do show your best side to those who evidently like you and enjoy you. But if there has been this other thing in the background, there is even more reason why you haven't seen me as I am, though I feel free of any idea of trying to deceive you!

How could we ever go on as before, now? I couldn't write you the kind of letters I used to write. I'd be guarded all the time and self-conscious, even if my feeling toward you was as it used to be ages ago (two weeks or less!) which it isn't. You are a different person to me now. That curious sense of unreality about you was one of the most paralyzing things. When I got back home and looked at your picture, I could have

shouted for joy. There you were just as you had been to me for years and I love the expression on your face. Out of the confusion suddenly I found a certain amount of clearness and peace. But I would have a hard time now going back to the “friendship” days. I am afraid I couldn’t be satisfied with that now, though two weeks ago I was. I am a silly person, am I not?

I have thought of Henry as well as of Orv. It is different with him, of course. He is young and will be marrying some one himself. But I would understand Henry and sympathize with him if he didn’t like me and thought I had been scheming all these years. I can just imagine his thoughts and I can imagine what other people would say. That doesn’t make any difference, not any important difference, when we know what we know. You have been such a good man, dear. I honor you with all my heart. I trust you as I trust Orv. I couldn’t ask for anything better than to have you trust me as I trust you. And, dear, you can confide in me always, as I said before I knew how things were with you. I’ll never intentionally do a wrong thing with you. I wish I could be free but at least you don’t need ever be afraid of me.

What am I saying? I’m trying so hard to love you and be a friend at the same time!!! Please love me for a little while anyway and tell me so. I want it so much. I’m ashamed to be so selfish. It nearly broke my heart to have you “thank” me for my “goodness through it all.” Oh, what an idea!

I’m a little like Lavinia myself! I have moments of wanting nothing more than the privilege of doing things for your personal comfort, some humble little thing like getting you a good breakfast and sending you off in the morning happy and contented. Do you suppose it is a reversion to type? And I want to cry now that I have said that. Please tell me if it makes it worse for you when I give up to my feelings. It mustn’t be that I add to your disquiet. Can’t I comfort you and make you quiet and satisfied and able to work, without disturbance, by loving you now even if I can’t see ahead? It does distress me so to make it hard for you to do your regular work. I am so ambitious for you and I have honestly been trying to help make you better able to do what is in you to do. Where is all that peaceful and splendid future I was trying to hold out to you? And what about your not being “young and romantic” anymore? I think myself that you are acting very much like a boy! Or at least you were. I have a terrible fear in my heart now that you won’t feel as you did, after my crazy letters, for which I was hardly responsible. I mustn’t write any more. I wish I could tell you how I love you and want you to love me! That isn’t wrong, is it?

Lovingly,

Katharine

P.S. If you could tell me honestly that you aren’t worse off for my giving up to my feelings now and then! If it is more disturbing than giving up all thought of what you wanted but didn’t much hope for, tell me. K.