

September 23, 1941. Lisbon

Dear People,

I thought I would give you a treat and let you see the official stationery. Anyway, today is one of the days when I have little or nothing to tell you. We have been leading a rather dull life, avoiding excesses, and wondering most of the time what was going to happen. We did not go out on Walter's boat last Sunday out of pure laziness, and it turned out to have been a very clever thing, because there was a heavy downpour around noon and Walter did not take his boat out of the little harbor at Cascais. There is something radically wrong with the spacing on this typewriter. It refuses to single space, and has to be adjusted all the time. Not that that has anything to do with how we spent our week.

I have been forced to change typewriters.

Yes, the weather has turned quite cold for the first time in months, and it has rained twice a day for a week. For some perverse reason we find it quite homelike. It certainly is a change after months of no change in temperature whatsoever. They say it is like that all winter here, and that one never becomes really dry from December to June. All I know is that I have a cold, and in that way it is annoying. The terrace at the Pensão has only an awning for a roof, and there are holes in that, so that when it rains they are forced to put out pails under strategic spots, and we are forced to move in to less exposed areas of the dining room. Nonetheless we enjoy our meals, perhaps only too well, because we make good company. The Cramers are still among us, and even hope to stay a day or two longer than their original leave specified, before wending their way to Tunis. William Krieg has not gotten any orders as yet, so the five of us all sit at the same table in the Pensão.

We went to the reopening of one of the few jernts in this town a few days ago, Saturday to be exact, and there we met several of our little friends. Philinda danced, but of course not with that old codger Jones, who is a little too decrepit for that sort of thing. Sunday we slept late and called on a sick vice-consul, Mr. Cordell, who had nothing more romantic than a boil. We stayed there all afternoon and I had to be polite and drink half a glass of beer, which I detest. But he is a good sort of type, so I enjoyed everything except the beer. He was at the Foreign Service School at the same time that our pal Krieg was, and was sent out to Warsaw when Krieg went to Stuttgart. Sunday evening I read For Whom the Bell Tolls, which I am afraid does not come up to the best of Hemingway. In my brazen opinion that idea of his of saying thee and thou carried our young friend Mr. Hemingway quite away with it. Granted that the only translation of tu is thou, it's still silly to say thou when what the people mean is you over there. The idea is not bad and the story is quite thrilling, but when modern Spanish people come out with things like "Nay, what the summer may only come!" it sort of takes away the feeling. Where is the Hemingway of his youth, tra la tra la. Anyway, it is a pleasure to be reading something at all in this lonely desert spot.

Jones had a confidential talk with L'Heureux, who said he would help Jones as much as possible in the exam field, and give him some more experience around the consulate. He said it might be a good thing to resign before taking the exams so that if Jones did not pass the exams he might have a good chance at another job in the State Department, or for that matter in the Foreign Service, which might very possible start out at eighteen hundred a year instead of continuing at the present rate. Anyway, Heaven only knows what is going to happen. All I know is that the situation will probably change about sixteen times before the great moment arrives.

I feel sort of coldish, and I think I shall retire to an early dinner and an early bed.

Goodbye

LPJ

P. S. Jones told me to tell you that the above is a little incoherent and that what he really wants to do is to go back to the States about six months before the exams next September so that he may go to school in Washington. If he resigns we get our passages paid back to the states whereas if he doesn't we will be faced with the problem of raking up about five hundred dollars which will be sorely needed during the lean unemployed months ahead. Also, all employees sent out from the State Department start at 1800 a year, plus rent allowance and post allowance; all in all amounting to about 2700 a year.

P.P.S. All the remarks against the typewriter don't go because I had Jones re-copy the whole business.

Goodbye,

LPS