

Oct. 31, 1948
Bethesda

Dear Pop,

4-11 p.1/1

This is a simply wonderful Indian Summer day, and the leaves are piling up unimpeded in our garden. We have decided not to fight fate, but to let them accumulate as they will until the last leaf is off the trees in the woods next to us. We are up against too much! The woods are working in one direction, we in the other, but they are bigger than we are.

My poor neighbor's husband had a cerebral hemorrhage last Friday afternoon, and died early Monday morning, so I've been kept busy cooking for them (the widow and daughter). He had had a stroke early in the summer and was very feeble, so perhaps it was better, but it was small consolation for her to think about that, since he was only fifty two. He was an historian, and loaned me several books, including his complete set of the Trollope Barsetshire stories, which I enjoyed tremendously, since I'd never read them before and they are "just my type". They are Unitarians, so I went to his memorial service at the lovely Unitarian church on 16th St., for Leola the "help" was here that afternoon.

We had the pleasure of seeing Piet's brother Walt last Tuesday. He was down here job hunting, for he is now a full-fledged lawyer, and is going to marry the girl of his family's choice (and his too, he confessed shyly)- she is dean of women at Albion College at 24, so I feel she must indeed please her future mother-in-law! Walt is six foot four, beanpole, and as shy as a deer.

Mr. Shantz and Jack MacSweeney dined with us last night, and we spent an interesting evening till one o'clock- when the dishes had to be faced. Jack is on the Russian desk now, and spent the last few years in Moscow and Vladivostok. Mr. Shantz also spent some time in Moscow back in 1934, so between the two of them we got a pretty good picture of how things were and how they now are over there in the Worker's Paradise. Both said they went there open-minded as all get out, and had their minds made up within a week. Mr. Shantz said that he found a good symbol of what he thought of the whole show when he paid a week's visit to Moscow while he was stationed in Helsinki: things were changed and improved considerably since 1934- wide streets, beautiful new apartment houses. He particularly admired a handsome new five-story apartment and store building on the wide new Gorky Street- till he found the fruit in the store windows were of wax, the flowers of paper, and the whole building five stories high and twenty feet deep. Mr. Shantz is as nice and entertaining and natural as ever he was, which is saying something.

Please read the poem by Ogden Nash entitled "There's Nothing Like Instinct, Fortunately" in the Oct. 23 New Yorker, because it reminds me so vividly of my own youthful certainties I'm sure you'll be amused also. All well but busy on the home front, and it's now well past time to rush out for our Saturday shopping.

Love,