

Nov. 14, 2011

Dear Suzy,

This is my first letter in a very long time. It will probably take me a while to get used to it again! I keep forgetting to tell you that I got your painting in the mail. I absolutely loved it. I have it on my peg-board of inspiration or a.k.a a cork board full of things I like.

I've been putting this letter off for a while, not because I wasn't psyched about writing letters again, but because I didn't know where to start. I have a hard time opening up to people and this could be a way to change that. Theresa said there's something about me, some hidden, a wall I put up. Maybe these letters can chip away at that. The one thing that helps is literature.

I'm not sure what we'll take about in these letters, but I thought we could start them out with what we're reading now. I'm currently in the middle of Brave New World. If you haven't read it or if it has been a while I'll give a recap. The novel takes place in London, in a future where humans are no longer born but made in factories (the word mother is even considered a curse word). Everyone belongs to everyone else, no one is important or special, they're just another person. A man named Bernard, who is apart of this society, feels different and is outcasted by peers for it. There are still parts of the world that are considered uncivilized, places we would view like how Native American tribes lived. Bernard brings one of the "savages" back with him, a man named John. In the new world no one reads for pleasure. It's seen as a solitary activity and

people are supposed to be interacting all the time. They're not supposed to want to be alone. John's mother was from the new world, but because of an accident wound up in the savage lands.

John learned to read from his mother, from a manual she had and a book of Shakespeare she later found. He was enthralled by written words.

As a writer, how could I not connect with a character like that? Our little creative writing group must have all felt that at some point - Strangers on our own world. I think we've all been entranced by words, the beauty of language.

John as a character awoke the innocent love I have for reading and writing. It brought forth something I haven't felt in a long time. It came in handy finding that beginner's love, especially for my thesis.

In Brave New World there are pills called soma. They make a person feel happy, relaxed. They are in their own paradise. There are no side effects the next day like with alcohol or other drugs, but it does take tiny bits of your life away. Seconds gone each time you pop the smooth white pills. Would you take them? No one in the new world lives into old age. Everyone stops living around sixty, right when the body starts to deteriorate, according to them. Knowing that would you eat soma like pez, like the people in the new world do?

I don't think you would (I'm presuming, of course) but I don't think I would either. We're writers, we don't avert our eyes from misery. We take it face on, eyes taped open for clarity.

Those are my few thoughts on the novel so far. I'd love to know what you've been reading and your thoughts on it. You seem to have a very busy life this semester. This letter won't be that long, but again I'm out of practice and I'm trying to get back into the groove. This one may even read more academically than I'd like it to.

I hope your novel is going good for nanowrimo and I hope your finger heals fast. I hope these letters can be the start of tiny adventures too. (I have a lot of hopes, apparently). I can't wait to read your letter (Theresa spoke very highly of your letter writing abilities :)).

Your friend & fledgling letter writer,

Whitney