

Dec. 16, 2011

Dear Suzy,

I like your idea of biography, book, then letters. I think it is the best way to understand Kerouac or any other writer for that matter. I'm sure sometime in the next week I'll head up to the little used bookstore we have in town called the Bookshelf II (although I have no idea where Bookshelf I is located ;)

This semester was crazy & time was a problem for me too. I took on more classes than I ever have before, so that I could graduate. I felt like I'd been at B.G. long enough. I love it there, I just think I need a taste of "the real world": I don't know how you survived this semester! You're the most motivated person I know and I'm not sure how you don't just fall over dead asleep sometimes.

I aim for perfection too in my life. I never reach it either. But we still keep trying, don't we? If I didn't always aim for it, I think I would be lying to myself. So I continue to pursue something I know I can never obtain.

It's funny, up until recently I didn't give much thought about my hands. But as the years pass, I've realized how valuable they are. I don't know what I'd do without them. I can remember when I was about nine or ten, my grandma taking my hands and looking them over. She said, "look smooth young skin, not like mine." I didn't understand, I'd always admired my grandmother's hands. She worked in a factory her whole life. Her hands were rough, course, and the skin was thin showing thick blue veins. But that's what I loved about them. You could tell she was a worker. She'd produced something. You can tell a lot by people's hands.

I'm not sure how much reading & writing I'll be able to get done in the next few weeks. My sister is coming home for holidays & since I don't get to see her that often, we usually do all the things she wants to do. (which unfortunately doesn't

include sitting quietly while I read :) I think God has a sense of humor, I don't know if he could have made two more different sisters than us. Do you feel that way about your siblings?

Nano was great, although I didn't know until November 1st that I would be doing it! It pushed me as a writer, making me sit down every day to write. It has been one of the best assignments I've ever had. Some of my characters did surprise me. I didn't realize in the beginning how sick Webber was, his mental health was very shaky. I also didn't realize how tenacious Lily was; how far she was willing to go for Webber. One character too who I didn't think would make as big of a character as he did was Dr. Jack Donovan. He shows up almost right after the piece I had workshopped. Did you have any characters that became more important than you thought they would? Did Charlotte ever surprise you?

I don't think I've ever made a list of my favorite books, which is odd because I make lists of things all the time & I love books. Maybe I haven't b/c I can't narrow it down. I'll name some of my favorites, but the order doesn't really place one above another.

1. The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Díaz
2. The Road by Cormac McCarthy
3. To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
4. Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen
5. The Dark Tower Series by Stephen King
6. As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner
7. Love in the Time of Cholera by Gabriel García Márquez
8. The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien
9. I Hate to See that Evening Sun Go Down by William Gay
10. Foe by J.M. Coetzee. (This isn't one of my favorites but I would recommend it. It was a good read & helped me to

understand the unreliable narrator a lot more. Those would be my recommendations, although I have a feeling you've probably read quite a few of them already. What would be some you recommend?

I love books but I also am a movie buff. What are your favorite movies? What are your favorite holiday movies? My top three holiday movies would have to be 1) Mixed Nuts, 2) Elf, 3) Love Actually. They all have to be watched around Christmas. It's a tradition. Do you and your family have any holiday traditions?

Thanks for saying you thought my reading was good. I wasn't nervous until I heard Dionne say, "this is my last poem." I wanted to yell out "keep reading!!" But by the second page, I calmed down and just read. Faulkner was a big role in my thesis and I'm glad you picked up on his influence. I guess we both like to burn down other characters property in our stories ☺

I hope this letter reaches you before you go home for break. Have a great holiday Suzy and I hope to hear from you soon!

Whitney

P.S. Let me know when your BFA reading is & I'll be there.

P.S.S. Love the doodles ☺