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I. [1]

Caption: 1934 February [to] Mabel Dodge Luhan

Image ID: 1368947

Feb 1934

And the "more very soon", became a telegram or two, and constant longing for you, and an interval of barbarous discomfort with frozen pipes and flooded rooms and no baths and electric light cut off, and all the disabilities of my particular temperament and the ~~####~~ costly inefficiencies with which I pay for my arrogant disregard of facts; it is really tiresome of me, but one cannot have things both ways. In addition to ~~####~~ these circumstances, that darling Martin Benson has been gravely and mortally ill with an appendicitis which turned into peritonitis, and as he was recovering from that, he was stricken a second time with a pulmonary embolism, which is a clot of blood on the lung, and is very ill again, with no-one quite daring to say whether he will get well or not. He is the person, you will remember, who wants to raise goats and corn and babies and lead a good life, so I suppose he must die. He lies there like a crusader, hands holding an invisible sword, and now and again saying he will get well and rise and shine. There is a Russian fable of a knight who became a gardener, and went through life with a flower-pot in one hand and a sword in the other, and he is that fable. I spend many hours at the hospital, and it has taken up a good deal of my emotional energy. Christmas and New Year's were really enjoyable, in spite of plumbing disasters, and I saw many people with whom I talked long and lovingly of you and Taos - Ralph Flint and Henry McBride and Carlota, and of course dozens who wanted to hear all about you and Tony and the Indians and New Mexico and life and love there. Then came the announcement of Smudge's engagement, all very happy and grand, and the RETURN OF THE MSS FROM Harpers', and other events which seemed to absolutely stop me from writing anything to anyone. I got the glasses at Bloomingdale's & this letter is becoming as "non sequitor" as Brett's, and charged them to Mary Badger, as I was broke and had no account there: you remember the woman whom you are forcing into a marriage with a Turk? The bill I enclose, and she would be thrilled to receive a word from you when you feel disposed to send her a check for \$8.16. ~~Woolworth's~~ I could have gotten them cheaper for you at Woolworth's, but they would not have been so good, and also, I would have had to hire someone to pack and ship, which Woolworth's don't do; in the end this would have been as much as the \$8.16. Hope they are right. Have wired you they are on their way, and that this letter will soon follow. Perhaps I better send it today - no, there is too much more to say. I have loved your letters, though grieved at the burning of the Taos hotel. I have not seen Brett yet. Glad La Posta is to be lived in at last - and so felicitously. Marina and Andrew and de Loaches came up from Philadelphia for New Year's - and oh, dear there's lots more to mention, if not to write about where is that Moises?.

Love -

Howard.

It is now February - and you have received the glasses they are O. K. & you are right in being cross with me about not writing - but this dreadful suspense about Martin and about the MSS is sending me crazy - how

I. [1]

Caption: 1934 [to] Mabel Dodge Luhan

Image ID: 1368948

Draper

1934

IT IS SPRING. It became so with that sudden and dramatic violence so characteristic of American climate, and which banishes the memory of bitter cold in one swift hour of hot sun. I am preparing to plant tulip bulbs in the garden, but don't mention it to Paul, if he is still in your vicinity. (By the way, don't let him worry about the eviction incident: these things have happened before and may again, and can always be handled; I thought it might stir him to write a postcard, or would not have mentioned it. Also, the last thing I desire at present is to have him return here, if there is possible work for him elsewhere, as I am doing some more work on the book, and can do it so much better when I am alone in the house, much as I like to have him and Smudge in it too.) The blizzards and American opera premieres have died down, and darling Carlota can settle down to his diets and photographs once more. Smudge's wedding date has been fixed for the ninth of June, which is a nice date, don't you think, and I will be departing these shores soon after, book or no book. I have come to the conclusion that it is a very inconvenient book to read, and am modifying - or diluting - some of it, where I can, though much of it is out of my hands, if you know what I mean. I am waiting to hear from ~~#####~~ Knopf's now, but have a feeling in my bones that they won't take it either. I think none of the well-known publishers will want to handle it, it is so un-Muriel-Draper-author-of-Music-at-Midnight, and it will probably make its way into the reading public's attention by the most obscure route, and perhaps under another name. I will keep you informed.

I don't seem to get to the movies ~~as~~ much as I want to! No one can believe that I really want to go when I say I do, as my Taos conversion was so geographically remote. I haven't even seen Garbo in Queen Christina yet: you will probably see it down there before I get to it here. Max would be shocked! He is troubled by a collapsing mother and insanely vigorous grandmother at present, and is imprisoned in Pioneer with no immediate hope of escape. He writes that Gertrude's words and lines from FOUR SAINTS are repeated and hummed all over Wisconsin by telephone-operators, cleaning-women and the like, which is very surprising to me: I guess they like the sound of the words, quite simply.

Gurgel is planning to descend once more upon our shores, as soon as we can raise sufficient money to pay his passage: if you feel like contributing anything, however small a sum, it would be very helpful, though you may feel we are better off with him on the other side.

What Balanchine has done with his American material in these four months is phenomenal. The school has made a decent start with about forty pupils and it looks fairly hopeful for the future, though there will be no professional performances of any magnitude for some time to come. He is now rehearsing them in MOZARTIANA, a ballet he composed for the Ballet Russes and performed by them in the latter years - in fact, just last year in Paris. It is marvellous to see how quickly the average American young person can learn to use his and hers dancing body - really the most encouraging thing I have seen since my return.

Must get to work, darling Mabel. Am very well, and though troubled by the difficulties I seem to have produced for myself in the book, am serene in spirit. Love to Tony and yourself.

J. Muriel

Munday