

Jan 16, 1968

Dear John,

And tomorrow I will be thirty. My goodness, you will say, life is short. Nasty, brutish, and short, as Hobbes would say. I am going back to strife-rent USA Friday on the Queen Eliz. and dock on 24 Jan if LBJ hasn't declared an embargo or head tax on all goods coming into the country. Or mined the harbor. I can hear him: "In the innerests of peace, yore presdint has mined New York harbor, Gallipoli, the Dardannalles, and the Atlantic generally." I'll be staying with a Harvard friend, Don Wilcox, as per address on the obverse of the letter. Depression and a desire to go home and fight Johnson (see you in jail) combine to send me back. Thank you for the worm eaten card; one of the chief residues of my middle-class background is my feeling, whenever I handle anything from India, that I am about to catch a rare disease. If your card gives me scurvy, I shall sue. Oh yes, I plan to live in Boston or Cambridge. I sent your book back; my decision to go was so precipitate that I didn't have the chance to visit your mother again, but I tendered my stuffy apologies. And I'm still sorry we didn't have more time together this fall; I plan things badly. But all this is but the silver dust sprinkled on the Bhoona Ghosht of life. To discourse further would be to carry coals to Assam. Tomorrow I'll be in London, and Thurs if it isn't raining I'll go peer at Canterbury, and see if the hooly blisful martir is there. That hem hath holpen when that they were weke. I wish I had a chance to discuss England at length with you. I am alternately infuriated and charmed by the place, and in between depressed. One epigram, coined by me, comes laboriously to mind. If America is becoming a moral slum, then Britid n is becoming a mental and emotional one. Nannies, don't-touch-me parents, the public school, the Old Boy syndrome, all prepare one for a life of frustration. I can understand your anger at your upbringing, though God knows you got out of it as a whole person, and a damn good one. But the whole thing is starting to disintegrate, and no one knows what to do. The second best's a glad goodnight and quickly turn away. Bless you and Rani and Sandhya and tiny whatsisname.

yours in fog,

