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Paul Turner Sargent

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Paul to Dario March 21, 1944

Paul Sargent

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P to Dario March 21, 1944

Dear Dario,

Since I received your letter I have been on a visit to Chicago—the first for about 4 years. I have been threatening to invade that town for quite awhile, you know.

Many things are much the same as when I first saw it—in 1893, the World's Fair. My second sight was in fall of 1906 when I started at art school. I don't remember a great sight about that first time in '93; my clearest memory is the lake; it was the biggest thing I saw, although just inside the bldg. by the lake was the record big cheese. I remember spending some time along the lake, along side a large bldg. that must have stretched $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. It was the month of May and the bldg. was still in process of construction. I remember a workman eating lunch there by the lake offered me some. I had reached the advanced age and experience of 13 whole years. No, I was 12 then. I have some hazy memories of hearing music inside a bldg. and seeing some pictures, but nothing definite..

We stayed out south of Chicago in what is now Harvey. One day I did not go to the fair; I was fed up I guess. I walked north up the R.R. tracks $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to a small river and watched a fellow fishing with a dip net. Some boys about my age came along on the other side of the creek from me and the side of the fisherman. They were a rough bunch, out looking for trouble. They had been teasing a tramp according to their own stories before they came. After awhile they began saying things to me on the other side of the creek from them; I don't remember just what, but rough talk. Coming along the tracks I had picked up an iron tap about 2 inches square and threatened to throw it at them. In going by on the train since, I have located the spot, and the place where we stayed in temporary bldgs. is now occupied by the Bradley Plow works. Queer how one will remember all this stuff at the creek and forget what I saw at the Fair (51 years ago this Spring).

Very good picture you sent; resembled you somewhat. You seem in it to have acquired tonnage, or is it ballast. Anyhow you appear larger. I am glad to have it. I guess the boys in service do fill out the ?????—so I have learned.

Today I received a letter of some importance in a painter's life. It is from the Swope Art Gallery of Terre Haute, asking if I would condescend to accept a mere paltry sum of \$250 for a picture I left there before Christmas to be in the Hoosier exhibit--one Hoosier ex. not the regular one. The picture was priced at \$300 and an individual could not buy it for less but a gallery is different. This is the first time a gallery has wanted one of mine, so I will part with my largest snow picture. You have seen it in studio, a 30X40, sunlight on snow in woods, a creek with dark patches of water. A snow picture is easy to down dirt and any slight changes in the paint are noticeable; likewise clouds.

Spring isn't far around the corner, although Sunday we had a sleet and snow storm which is mostly gone now. The robins are here in force, the grass is decidedly greener, and some Jonquils were in large bud before I went to Chicago.

Picture sales still look promising. I have some pictures with a gift shop man in Chicago. He thinks sales will keep up for awhile. Says he can't keep the cheaper pictures long. People are buying good and bad. He tells me of a friend of mine who went to Art Inst. who has slipped to "Buckeye" pictures but he can do better than that. Guess you know the buckeyes? Dozens and hundreds of them just alike. An artist of any ideals you know does not make two alike, unless it is a large one from a sketch.

I shall be glad to read the book and take care of it. I was given for Christmas a book on the technical side of art by Tanbes, entitled "Studio Secrets." One needs such books, should read all of them, then do as you think best. This one has some methods of making picture framed I can use. I have seen reproductions of Taubes work; he leans toward modernism.

There is an exhibition on at school by Misses McKinney and Whiting, and Mr. Hoover. Miss McK. has the best work to my mind, some figures. Miss McK. landscapes and mountains need a few spots of sunlight. They are so lugubrious in cold grays. Tell me why in an exhibit of pictures of the modernistic about 99% of them use cold color entirely? Just as amateurs do--when left alone. To me the cold, dead grays are a sign of incompetence--anyone can get cold muddy colors without effort. As some artist told a student not worry about grays, "the grays will come."

Won't be long now till I'll be making my first spring sketch.

I told you of the difficulty of getting canvas. In Chicago I found a roll of good canvas at \$30 that I used to get for \$12. At another store I found a roll for \$15, but I fear it will be found to be adulterated with burlap or something when it arrives. In Chicago I discovered what is being done with the masonite boards. They are going into the making of P.T. boats. I suppose the sheets are glued together to make the body or hull of ship. I know an artist who gets the scraps from such work. He is acquainted with a head man in a firm that does the work. An ad I saw said such scraps can be bought and will hear before long where and what cost. Plenty, plenty, no doubt.

This artist told me that there is a ceiling price on linen canvas of best grade, but there was nothing to prevent manufacturers making a cheaper grade and selling it at the top price.

If you were in Italy now, you could see Vesuvius erupt—according to reports greatest since 79 A.D. when the two towns Pompei and Herculaneum were covered.

Guess I better desist.

Paul

p.s Wish you were here to paint with me. Too bad to see things to paint out there and can't. But as I said in another letter, one can store things in the mind to paint later, many an artist and writer had done that—it is easier for a writer.