Paul to Sam June 11, unknown year

Paul Sargent
P to S June 11, ???

Dear Sam,

Got your letter a few days ago.

Gosh all Wheelock! The heat! Warming up this morning as has been for some weeks with a few cool breaks. Hottest other day was 102 or so. Not so hot today. Have had rains all around in streaks but only a couple of showers here. But we are not so bad off. The corn is not hurt yet and the garden stuff shows growth. Got musk melons beginning to vine and coming fast. A man coming from Colo. saw no good wheat until got to Coles Co. so maybe we are the lucky ones. Was down around Darwin two days ago, saw of field of corn 3 ft. high, which is much better than our 1 ft. kind here. Wheat looks good around Paris.

I think you made a good move in getting help from an artist of consequence. Women (with exceptions) are not strong as artists and I would always be suspicious of an artist who does much lecturing as this woman did—the two don’t go together. The real artist has too much love of his work to waste his life by much lecturing. It seems to me I have heard of McCoy, but maybe not. Since he paints the kind of picture you like he will keep you on the right track. You need to study the Carlson book from beginning to end, over and over, as the information necessary to paint is there. Try to memorize such things as the gradations of sky colors from the near ones to the distant ones. Then with that much in mind when you go out to paint, you will be able to see those differences and get them on canvas. And above all realize that seeing with understanding is the first prerequisite of painting a successful picture. Do a lot of thinking about the thing you are studying before you put it down. Geo. Inness when in his prime had a studio in N.Y. City. When he got stumped he would not go to the studio but loafed around his house in New Jersey. He would sit around in the fields, not painting but just observing, getting things into his system. Then he would go back to the studio and paint from memory.

Since your woman teacher was not first class it was worse than a waste of time and money—the worst was that you were learning bad habits of work that might stay for life. It is just as easy to learn good habits of work as bad ones, and they will get
you somewhere. You need to do all you can to increase your power to draw quickly and correctly. Whenever you have time practice with pencil drawing, draw anything that is handy, tables, chairs, corner of room, just to get the habit of seeing correctly and putting it down.

I would like to see your sketches so send them along as soon as you can. For sketching purposes I have been thinking of ways and means of carrying large numbers of them without too much bulk. In art stores I have seen a special pad for oil painting made of sheets of oiled paper made rough. As each one is painted on can be peeled off like a drawing pad. Also they have a canvas pad made the same way—sheets of canvas fastened together and pulled off. These when dry could be carried without taking much space. I have been thinking I could make my own canvas pads. Art stores that stretch canvas for artists have scraps left over that could be used in a pad. They could be stuck together with rubber cement along edges and held solid in a press until dry and flat, then the edges trimmed square and straight by a lever paper cutter such as photographers use, or printers use. A cardboard back might help to keep them flat. For rather small pictures (10X12 or so) need to use a rather fine grained canvas. You might find scraps to use yourself out there. Rubber cement (at the stores for artists’ use) will stick things together well enough but can be peeled loose without tearing anything, and it never buckles or wrinkles even thin paper.

You will need to concentrate on your new work at the office. It won’t pay to neglect an opportunity to make good while the boss is away. In that way they learn if you can be relied upon so they know where to find a reliable person when a new job turns up.

I worked yesterday on a portrait of a young girl, 7 or 8. It sure is painting moving pictures. It will be a hard job, because she won’t be still long enough to let me really study. Think I will take the camera over and get some pictures in the face and use those here at home part of time. I can find children’s pictures to do, but how difficult they are—would be tough enough if they could be still.
Since I wrote the last have had visitors. One was a boy named Emrick, related to Emricks here at Casey who has been studying art at Yale this last year. He is from Ventura, Cal. and says he is acquainted with Ballin. He read the clipping you sent of the trick Ballin played on the art writer—that was a good one. They need a lot of that.

We had a sprinkle of rain, went around us again. Still very hot.

Guess I better ring off.

Yours truly,

Paul