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Paul to Dario Jun 21, 1945

Paul Sargent

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P to Dario  Jun 21, 1945
Dear Dario,

Your letter did not make any fast time getting here—slightly more than a month. I got it yesterday.

I had begun to think you had become lost over there. Glad to hear that you, apparently, did not get into the rough work. Perhaps, for you boys over there were not more pleased than we were here at home when the good news came of the war’s end with Germany. I have never doubted the outcome of the war in our favor and don’t doubt for the rest of it. I feel that it is our destiny to put these gangster nations in their places. All this industry of big business over the years has not been built up for no purpose; its purpose is being fulfilled by the destruction of the enemies of mankind. It does not mean that we ourselves are blameless, far from it.

Tonight on radio hear something on what troops were going to Pacific so by this time you may know a little about your future. I heard that Gen. Clark's army in Italy would go into Austria and that in his army of which one of my grand nephews is a member. So I suppose he will be glad he isn't headed toward Japan. Censorship was dropped with him as well as with you and he could write of things heretofore forbidden. He said he was glad the censor wasn't reading the letters he wrote to his girls. Said he had had some close calls, told of one. He is a sergeant in command of platoon combat troops, infantry. Said they were on bicycles, he was riding alone some distance ahead. Came around a curve and 75 yds ahead he spotted a machine gunner. Just how things happened he could not just remember but he got off that wheel and tommy gunned the fellow before he could shoot. I guess my nephew profited by his hunting experience. In winter at home he was hunting foxes, he got about six in one winter and take it from me that takes quick work with a gun too. He did not feel very well about having killed a man, but I guess that must be considered a minor worry these days as well.

Another grand nephew is in ferry command, now very busy. A third one, the youngest, has just returned from the Philippines with a wound received on island of Cebu. His wound is not serious he says, and is on the mend. He expects to be home
soon. A boy from our village here is back from Luzon with some machine gun holes in arm and chest. They were moving up on town of Baguo in mountains. He was in patrol of 26 men when ambushed by Japs in more or less open country. Japs on hill 300 yds. away. He was lying flat and raised up. Just then Jap machine gun bullets hit him. Said if he hadn’t raised up would have received bullets in head. He crawled to a rock. This was 9:00 in morning. Lay there until 9:00 P.M. when got word to artillery. They shelled hill of Japs. While shelling was going on one of the boys that were left got out, only a few left.

You probably know dozens of such adventures.

Danny was in Philippines last letter I had from him which was in April, I think. I gathered from his last letters that he expected to be moving toward the rough work somewhere, and since I haven’t heard from him for quite a while that was probably true. I have reason to think he was somewhere near Manila. He sent me a pencil sketch of himself made by a Filipino boy who had been an art student before the war. From that I judged he was located near Manila as other places probably would not have an art school. The sketch was good, likewise and workmanship excellent. Danny paid him equivalent of $1.50 for it—15 minutes work.

My classes at college quit in early “42 I think and haven’t been resumed. I have had no class of my own except last summer. I went about four times to Mattoon to instruct 3 or 4 youngsters. There has been talk of a class but only talk so far. I don’t care, I am busy anyhow, but will instruct if enough want to work.

Sales have been good. That is one usually large matter in an artist’s life that I have not had to worry about for five years or more. About every so often someone comes to studio and buys, or I have a sale somewhere else.

The wheat field picture I sent to New York was turned down. I got it back a short time ago. I”l not spend any more time, energy, and money sending anything to that sort of thing again. The jurors were all from around N.Y. Some I had heard about. I am inclined to think those New York painters don’t think there are any painters west of there. An artist from Shelbyville,
Ill, Chas. Heinz, went to Provincetown, Mass. to study with Hawthorne. He was there the last I heard of him. He said there were no painters of consequence in middle west, and I suspect he stated the general idea of most of them.

I sure hope you get to study art over there now that the war is over. It will be a great chance. I heard before the war began that the modernistic trend was disappearing over there and artists were going back to the conservative, while we here in U.S. were strong for the modern. Well, I don’t know, you can see for yourself. In choosing your school and instructors I would prefer the ones who believe in much study of nature rather than those who cash off their feelings. The “feelings” don’t have a chance to operate unless we have a foundation in reality. It seems that we all have to go through a long period of painting things in detail and real before we can forget all that and paint them with a few well thought out masses and just a little detail in the right places. I think the moderns shirk the drudgery of careful study and are likely to be found wanting in the finish.

Yesterday we had a shower and afterward wonderful clouds—best I have seen within a year. I was in town but when I saw those clouds, I went to the country. My paint outfit was not with me, so I made pencil sketches and wrote in the colors. Today I started on oil sketch from the pencil. Will try that way. A color sketch no matter how brief is better than anything else. Plenty room for your imagination in working from a small one.

I think that before long linen canvas for painting on will take a back seat. I think we will be using aluminum. A portrait painter in N.Y. had an article in last December’s American Artist magazine about his experiments with aluminum. It has to be especially prepared, among others subjected to an electrolytic bath.

I thank you for the nice words about my painting.

Was about to forget the weather and it is very unforgettable just now and has been for three months. Very much rain. Today was fine warm and sunny and no rain. We have an over supply of wet for about three months—never knew it to last so long. Corn will be a half crop or less because could not get it planted. River has been high most of time and four times I know of was up to
the beginning of arch on the concrete bridge and yesterday only 3 feet below it. It will break records for many years I am sure.

We have had wet Springs but none I can remember lasting three months. Nearly 3 inches in one rain of a few hours.

Summer school has about 250 students.

Well, Dario, when you have answered all those letters from your girls I would like to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Paul

p.s. I still have your book. Will take good care of it.

sold a $200 painting awhile back. It was one of an old house that I had left at Liebers Art store in Indianapolis several years ago. Did not sell there. Had some pictures at a dealer in Chicago. Could not sell so he sent one back. Last spring I sold it from studio for $100. So Dario when you get started painting, a turn down one place may mean a sale somewhere else. It could be worse. The ups and downs of art.