

12 Hollis Hall
Howard College
Cambridge, Mass.
December 1, 1949

Dear Miss Loving,

Surprise – Surprise – True, it's a letter from Joe Rothrock. I refuse to make my excuses as to the tardiness of this letter, but I will say that you are the first person, outside my parents, relatives, and high school friends, that I have written. – Of course, I won't know just what to say to the rest in this first and toughest paragraph – but it'll undoubtedly be something along the same line.

I imagine that the United Civics Classes have held their first semester elections, no doubt with as much the influence of the “Best Bits” – and that would be hard to achieve. And the Honor Society – how is that coming - George Gerber president? What do you think about George as a future Harvard man? I'm really looking forward to the Christmas party – the one time I'll get a chance to really see every body – I doubt if I'll make it to the Alumni Affair.

Well – don't you think I've stalled long enough. Don't spread it around but frankly, I'm not doing so well at Harvard. Perhaps my biggest trouble comes from the fact that I find myself suddenly at the bottom of the stack. Quite a change from high school (I am frank, as you see) I received four C+s this first half term and they threaten to drop – even with the addition of studying. Procrastination took a heavy toll on me that first few weeks – and I suppose that I'll never fully recover from my folly until next June.

But, other than the marks I'm receiving – I love the work. It may sound funny – to say that I love the work when I am scoring so poorly, but I feel that I'm getting more out of the courses than the majority of the people – who take the time to systematically learn a volume of facts and who – in the beginning – knew at lot more than I. Honestly – I am beginning to wonder about the choice of curriculum I took in high school.

I can't say in words how the presence of so many guys that know so much and can write and carry on good conversations easily has effected me – you'll have to decide that for yourself.

My courses, as I mentioned, are fine, and it's a good thing they are, for (and this will probably please you) I was cut from the Freshman basketball, (one of the last five guys however) and I have no other activity and this means that life can be pretty boresome unless you are truly able to enjoy the studying. I don't believe that I will ever be a rich person, but I so no that I've got a chance to gain and learn to appreciate the really good things – and most of the boys up here have already reached the point were they are mature in their thinking – and they enjoy only the best. Harvard does have more to it traditionally along this line than I imagined. The atmosphere isn't exactly congenial, but it can be if one wants it that way.

This point of having reached a certain amount of maturity, or having definitely formulated some real individual views on life makes everyone up here as an individual. It is very easy to analyze the social background of the men up here, and just what their primary interest are, Along this line I've been quite disturbed, for they are at best I would estimate, 75% agnostic or nearly so. – my room-mate for instance. It has made me wonder too, but I'm beginning to gain

a fuller understanding of just how much religion did and should stay in my life – at times I’ve been in several hot arguments – one of which will undoubtedly be discussed on a higher level Saturday night here in Cambridge/ Clara Booth Luce and others. It’ll only cost 60 C[ents] – listen – and may be I’ll ask a question (if they broad cast it down that fun) – The topic is – “Can Christianity and Capitalism be Compatible -etc”

Well – I’m afraid this letter has turned into something more like an essay than news about myself. I’ve no job as yet - but am hope-ful of a board job after Christmas. I’ll see you Christmas,

Love to a favorite (and I’m not trying for a high mark in civics –

Joe Rothrock