

**Excerpt from Fifth Volume of Poetry
pages 117-133**

(Poem 570)

After reading the second letter:

My darling Student,

I have raised the same question a thousand times in the debate in my mind. My heart and feelings have already committed themselves to you for my life. That's how it feels. But the question of sin puzzles me. I believe it is a sin to go through the motions of a marriage when heart and mind are not together about it. My center self is not always together on the issue. But when it is, it seems certain that divorce is the answer. Last night, for example, Joy and I went to see some people at my former church. On the way home I felt greatly distressed about the issue - I had already resolved that divorce was the answer, giving freedom to myself as well as to Joy and bring what seemed to be a most loving solution for all concerned. But after the visit in Mechanicsburg, I felt a great tension within me. I was pulled again to remain in the marriage as unhappy and lonely as I would be without you. I would rather live alone than without you, Student. I love you. I feel that remaining in the marriage would lead to playacting in a much more self-destructive way than before, but my satellite self that likes to look good in the eyes of others got hooked. Deep within me was the fear: what will friends think of me if I divorce? I have always had the greatest respect for them. I am not human to them - I am almost J.C. incarnate. I stopped the car and took a walk in the rain. I got in touch with God and my center self again and raised the issues. Yes, divorce is the answer to the problem. I would be less than whole remaining in the marriage, loving someone other than my wife so fully and deeply. I felt fine until early this morning when the same issue came to me again.

I wonder if I had already sensed your second letter, about giving me up, and that is why I have had such thoughts and been torn so much by the questions and issues. All day yesterday since I prayed for you and about you at 8:30 AM, I

have felt distant from you, yet close to you, and debating in my mind the issues and the questions.

My gifts and my creativity are somehow tied up with you. In meeting you, a part of myself was empowered as though giving myself to you unlocked some barriers to my center self and my soul's creativity. I will always feel this closeness to you. How I want to implement my feelings! How I want to share with you myself and yourself and be supportive and loving and loved in return. I know that God approves and is encouraging our togetherness, but human perspective - which we are also cursed with, you and I Student, as we look at ourselves and our human situation we can easily see sin where there is no sin. The original sin was judgment and a sense that "I can tell" who is or what is or is not sin. And then we visit our judgments upon other people and the judgments of other people upon ourselves. And our center self raises the issue: What is right? How can I know what is right ultimately? And we can play God with ourselves and with other people, but it forgets to take into account that we are sinners and cannot escape self doubt about our actions and decisions, if we are at all wanting to do God's work and right. But God does not ask us to be perfect, but to be ourselves. And God forgives us our sins as we forgive each other and ourselves.

I may be writing blindly. For there is a sense of emptiness within me that only God can fill through myself. But Oh the vision I have is that we fill each other's emptiness because God is working through each of us for the other.

I have cried and struggled and wrestled with myself and I know that only when a thing is wrong with my center self in some way, is a decision so hard to make: And that is a decision to remain in the marriage. A part of me will die if I do - and with it will be my power and creativity as a child of God. I will go about my life listlessly and without any sense of personal investment in anything but a few moments each day, here and there where I will be challenged by outside forces to produce. But the internal drive will be short-circuited.

You may not feel this, Student, being at this time much more together than I. I feel whole though, really whole in relation to God and myself when I related to you, to Bible Study,

preaching, and a few other odds and ends. And at those times, I feel very much the power of being in relation to you. I cannot explain it. All I can say is

I love you,
my darling,
my sister in Christ,
I miss you.

And a part of me says what about Joy? And I am right back where I started, without any explanations.

By the way, when Joy and I discussed divorce, I will keep my son if that ever happens.

Love,
Paul

Poem 571
August 17, 1977
6:25 PM

Dear Student,

I just said, "Okay Joy, I'll stay married to you." Now I reap the whirlwind, for in the back of my mind was - I can always change my mind.

And I am so tired of this being caught in the middle of a muddle that just happened. I suppose if I were a less spontaneous person, I would never have told you what and how I feel about you. And we could go on feeling something unnamed between us, our secret hearts aching to speak, as we work side by side just in collegueship on a marriage enrichment program.

But I am glad I met you. I have been looking for you all my life, since I was eight yours old. Then I thought your name was Karen and you were six and you had green eyes and brown hair. I have seen you in a thousand faces I have never had the time to

get to know. But always in my dream, your personhood and my total response to you was vibrant and waiting for the time I met you. You are a surprise; I didn't know you would be blonde and my same age. Just when I had given up hope for fulfillment in my marriage and was open to relationships with anyone, tall or short, thin or fat, black or brown pink or yellow, black hair, etc. etc, I met you, and SURPRISE! you are YOU. My whole self is open to you. My love and life are overflowing with beauty and power and peace in relation to you. But long ago out of loneliness and the need for physical relief, I convinced myself that Joy was you, or rather, that I would never meet you in my whole life so at 22, I settle on a substitute. I married her, fought with her, cared for her, hated her, loved her and died in relation to her - but not in relation to you, though I had not met you yet.

Now, in the box of relationships I built around myself, I am morally bound by this world's standards to say "goodbye, Student" as my only love who fills my whole being with present awareness and retain all the structure of the box I live in. I will survive, but I wonder, will I live? Will not a part of me die if I am not in touch with you? and touched by you?

I am not weeping yet. I may just leave it all behind and live alone. But even then I am morally bound to care for those who depend upon me fulfilling all the roles that tie me to my box.

I envy you, Student, at this point, for maybe there is someone else who can touch your life and being as I have and you shall be whole in relation and not just by yourself. And I will instead discover what power I have to grow without you, if possible. I realize that my thoughts may be highly romantic and that reality can be dealt with in many ways. You are realistic, while I may be projecting a fantasy. Who can say? The reality I feel is that you have touched a part of my soul never touched before by any human. With you is abundant life in relation to God, without you is something less than life, an existence of tolerance and resignation, with some present moments of satisfaction.

(Here is another one of my poems within a letter.)

(Poem 572)

**I shall wait patiently
for peace of mind
I shall strive purposefully
without excitement
to complete my tasks
In some measure my cup
shall be full
only because all I can
have is half a cup
In life and in death
and in all things and thoughts
I shall be in touch with you
because God is a part of my life,
And we share him as
spiritual mates.**

Peace and Love and Hope,

Paul

**Poem 573
August 17, 1977
9:30 PM**

Dear Student,

Being consistent is not one of my strong points. I have and do have a lot of power and potential just within myself. As I reflect upon our relationship, I am aware that both of us dream and dreams are good. They keep us childlike and awed by special kinds of happenings. Such as you and I.

Being open to the present experience of life is the best that we can do. I love you, a part of me will always love you. But my love is not all of me, even though it comes and is blessed by my

center self and God.

I never see so clearly that I know myself completely - its part of the mystery - the creative depths of my being. I do not know yet what the future holds, but I will live and enjoy all the moments that are mine. Whatever the future brings, I want to be and remain your brother. I care about you and what you do and the excitement of your calling I enjoy to share with you.

A sadness now touches me. a cricket chirps in my basement hideaway. Joy is washing dishes. Nic is visiting cousins in Battle Creek. My Bible study is recently over. I go tomorrow to learn about myself. Joy and I to a counselor. Later we will go to another one. She is working on her call, envious of you and me and all persons who have in some measure found their calling and are implementing it.

(Here is another one of my poems within a letter.)

(Poem 574)

**Peace is mine with sadness.
A sense of living out my life
for others - not myself-
lies lightly on my mind
Power within my being
enfolds our moment together
of male and female lying
gently curled and touching
sleeping;
dreamily hoping, seeing
growing on united by our wills
and now separated
by time and distance
Yet always in union with one another
by our spirits as “twins?”**

The thought is there of you, Student, Grow well, live long,

I'll want to see you and be with you again and again and again.

But maybe not as before. A table between, just to be in the same room and smile is all.

I am now feeling really sad and tired. I shut my eyes to the sight and sound and sleep to have peace of mind.

I hope my dreams will not be troubled but fun and frolic. I am rambling.

(Here is another one of my poems within a letter.)

(Poem 575)

**The grief is catching me now.
I miss you, the touch of you.
O God the pain I will feel
if I would never see you again
I need strength to persevere
to grow**

I love your mind, your person, your independent spirit; I give my heart to you freely

(Here is another one of my poems within a letter.)

(Poem 576)

**All I want to do right now
is be with you for a moment
just to look at you
and see you looking back**

Can I bear this? I will.

Your brother,

Paul

**Poem 577
August 19, 1977
Late AM or early PM
(I may not have mailed this.)**

I want to die. Not since I was twenty have I felt so alone and worthless. I know it is just a feeling that I am worthy. But still I want to die. My writing is meaningless. My job is meaningless. My material possessions are meaningless. I do not care. I am dead within me - empty - only my head continues to work. I have had visions of cutting off my fingers one at a time - cutting off my left hand.

I am aware that Student's letter about casting off the left hand is what troubled me. She leaves it up to me. I want a life with her. Why - I wish I knew. Joy is such a nice warm, loving person. I have no reason for leaving her alone - and being with Student. I just want to make a home with Student whatever the consequences. Can I own that? I love Student almost more than life.

(I think there were times when I exaggerated, or refused to face the truth. Joy was rarely a warm and loving person; most of the time she was demanding and selfish and hateful. I know, because I left Mechanicsburg because she insisted. I came to the church in Jackson, Ohio, because she insisted that I accept the appointment to that church. I was married to her and continued to make excuses for her behavior, because I wanted to believe that Joy could meet my deepest needs for love. I have always liked happy endings.)

Poem 578
August 19, 1977
11:20 PM
(I mailed this.)

Dear Student,

My feelings for you are so deep and so much a part of my being that to say goodbye would leave an emptiness never to be filled.

In reading *The Intimate Marriage* was this statement:
“Whether the lonely person responds by losing his identity in the anonymous herd, clinging frighteningly to others, or deadens the inner ache with drugs, overeating or compulsive work, the price he pays is the increasing loneliness of superficial relationships. The loneliness cycle tends to become self-perpetuating, separating the person more and more from the major resource for coping with existential loneliness - a depth relationship with at least on other human being?”

Somehow or other, it seems to me that we respond to some mysterious and powerful depths within us that leads us to feel that in relation to each other is the possibility of a deeper relationship than we have ever known with another human being, and may never know with another human being. I rejoice in this happening: How do you feel? Do you agree with me or do you see another interpretation? And then what shall we do with this situation? I will not deny myself the closeness that I feel with you. I will pursue it until you say: “Stay away from me.” I am willing to sublimate our relationship from all its potential into a close and deep friendship if that would be most comfortable to you. But above all, I want to grow closer to you and get to know the very depths of your being, if you will share yourself with me as I will share myself with you. Moments of this nature happen so rarely to me that I cherish them and nurture them.

To say "I love you" is only the beginnings of my feelings that have grown in relation to you up to this point. To use one of your phrases: "I love you in the ultimate sense," also, Student, I want you to be happy and have a meaningful life. If I can contribute to that end, I want to do so. I will do all in my power to do just that.

Have a good vacation. And may you accomplish all that you wish in this time.

With Peace and Love,

Paul

Poem 579
August 22, 1977
10:15 PM
(I mailed this.)

Dear Student,

Last night when you called, it was hard to get in touch with my feelings because you were so distant and didactic about our relationship. But today, after feeling grief and hurt, I wonder: Did you call me from Washington because you knew you would be safe from me and your feelings? If you were closer - I would have come to see you. I like to say goodbye in person - not by telephone or letter. Did you call in order to isolate yourself and your mind from your feelings? Another question I raise is: Why didn't you tell me you were impatient when I was with you? I do not own you, though I love you. Our relationship seems to be one of good timing for me but not soon enough for you. Even this is an over simplification.

At this point also, I wonder which of us will hurt the most and for how long? I am feeling cast aside, or disregarded from something close to instant gratification. Yet I know this is unfair

to you because I love you and want you to be happy - even if I am not.

Dear Student, forgive my temper, I am feeling frustrated. Your letters are: "Yes," "No," "Yes," "No;" and my own feelings are: "Yes" "Yes" "Yes", but I want not to infringe upon you and your personal decisions.

My feelings for you have not changed, and if you were with me now I would want to touch you to be sure that you were real. I'd like to sleep beside you and listen to you breathe and know you are alive and loving and loveable. I miss you already.

To be fair to my marriage, I am counseling to see if it is possible to have a rebirth or birth of feelings never present before. If there were a divorce for me, I would have custody of my son - Joy and I have already worked that out. But divorce is not necessary - except in that I would not be need-satisfied within it. But people have lived on less than perfect love.

You, Student, you gave me much that I never received in my marriage, I felt and feel a sense of spiritual and physical unity with you I have never experienced before and may never experience again. I will miss you.

Love,

Paul

Poem 580

August 22, 1977

8:00 PM

(I mailed this with the letter above.)

The pain I feel is so deep
it cuts me to the soul.

Poem 581

**“It was just a brief affair,”
Said the old man
or was it an old woman.**

**“We felt so close, the two of us
as though we were born
to be together.
We were spiritual twins -
But it was just a brief affair.”**

**“I remember how it felt to hold
her in my arms. It was as
though I was at home
after a lonely journey of years -
But it was just a brief affair.”**

**“He was such a fine and loving man
When he touched me I felt
his love within my soul
His hands made me whole -
But it was just a brief affair.”**

**There were tears in the eyes
flowing from pools of memory,
of pain and sorrow mingling together.**

**“We will never know what life
would be like if we had joined
physically as we were one
spiritually. Time moves on so slowly -**

And, it was just a brief affair.”

(finis: August 23, 1977)