

Dearest Nazareen,

By the time you read this, I shall be on a train bound from Toronto to the easternmost coast of Canada, doubtlessly lying awake in only relative warmth in my cabin, staring out at the frozen landscape trundling past, some twenty degrees below, and thinking of you.

It will be the second leg of a busy tour of Canada and the US, with my destination so remote that I cannot be assured further communication will be possible until I have made my way to Boston, by boat if the winter allows a crossing, or by train through the snowy hills of Vermont if not.

Furthermore, Canada appears to be in the grip of a fell winter, and I fear my fingers may soon be too cold to type.

That is why I am writing to you now, before it is too late, to profess my love for your advertised position, which calls to me like none before. It is true, I already have an employment — proofreading and copyediting for a mathematical publisher in Berkeley, California, for some two years now (verily, a far cry from my beginnings in the world of finance!!) — and though I do not wish to seem ungrateful, for the work is remote and has given me the opportunity to travel wherever my fancy takes me — Isla de Lobos, Copenhagen, Peru, Tipperary — it can be somewhat stifling. I yearn for something new and exciting. Something akin to what you promise.

Writing has always been dear to my heart, but lost out on field of study to pecuniary ambition. The pen has always found a way, though, and I have written more than many graduates of Literature.

Please find enclosed two sample missives, as requested. One, the log of my first and only travels in Asia to date — my first true experience of travel; for though I had lived in France and Germany, Asia was something quite different. This was an open communiqué to the members of the chess club at the university, whom it was my duty to entertain and inform for many years, with details of weekly goings-on at the club. Most of them never came to our meetings of course, though I cherished the many kind words spoken of my electronic mailings. This version has been slightly abridged for your eyes, though the heart of it is the same as it always was. Please bear in mind, I was younger then, displaying a foolishness characteristic of that age, and resented anything that dragged me away from my doctoral studies. Now, of course, I know better, but I like to keep this memento to remind myself of, well, life, and how travel can change a person.

Who knows, perhaps the cynical view of travel therein may provide you a welcome change from the customary twee recollections!

Incidentally, the friend I go now to visit in the Canadian wilderness is the lady from this tome for whom I travelled to Hong Kong and then the Phillipines all those years ago, though we have not met in many years, save for a brief encounter in London last spring.

And from the old to the new, the second document contains my latest scribbles — two very brief chapters, both unsurprising but very different scions of my years as editor-in-chief of a small monthly publication in my alma mater, where our small team worked to produce a newsletter that would spark in apathetic students an interest in the wonders of mathematics. One begins a mathematical adventure novel for children (a work in eternal progress), the other is to be part of a collection of short stories decidedly more adult yet equally mathematical in nature. If you are caught for time, I would advocate this second document for some light entertainment — the writing in the travel log was an unrefined exercise in quantity.

After reading these words from my heart, I hope you will agree that I can be the only man for you, and though I shall spend some time after Canada thawing out on a small island off the coast of Africa, I will most surely return home should you deign to meet me.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to send a pigeon.

Eternally yours,

Fintan