

My dear Reza

Am pretty well

7, Chalcot Square  
Chalk Farm  
London N.W.1  
June 29th

I am sure you will be surprised to receive this letter of mine but never mind, Surprises are good once in a while. The motive of writing this letter to you is to tell you exactly what things you should bring with you. Don't bother to bring any much of cotton clothes, bring all the woolen <sup>things</sup> you have + one nice quilt which you should use only for good occasions, another one if you can afford or never mind, about 3 good woolen trousers, one coat and one jacket if you get for about Rs 35/- to Rs 40/- or leave it you can get here woolen one like I made for Sonnie of leather for about £ 2/- Bring any amount of woolen knitted jumpers & jerseys you have. If your wife knows how to knit ask her to make couple of them for you, or even if you have some girl friends ask them to make for you, this is the time you should exploit your friends. Woolen underweats are very essential in Europe. Bring at least one good blanket if you have. Though the rooms are provided with all good linen including blankets, you need one good blanket or quilt bed linen including blankets, you need one good blanket or quilt whenever you travel by coach. Besides if you go to stay at any of your friends place they will never have a blanket to spare. Even when you come at our place I could only give you one. If you don't have any at home then don't buy in India, you can get better ones here. Don't buy any over coat, if you have a good fabardine rain coat with wool lining then bring, don't buy any you can always get such coats very cheap over here.

When I first came Sonnie was sleeping with 5 blankets and one thick quilt and hot water bag. But since I am here he has done away with hot water bag and 3 blankets, that is because now is summer and it is not so cold. If you are coming via London then bring only pickle little ghee or dalda, maida & a few tins. I'll collect rice, sugar, tea & fat for you even some tins. But if you are going direct to France via Marseilles please take sufficient food stuff, i.e. 10 lbs dalda, some rice, sugar, food tins etc. Food in Paris is very expensive. I was in South of France on my way for about 2 hours and I made a few inquiries about the food ration. They get very little ration, the prices are terribly expensive (vegetables are called greens). 3 of us went to a restaurant at Marseilles and had 3 teas, 3 icecreams and 3 cakes and we were charged 140 francs which is equivalent to Rs 15/- David Pinto from Times of India came over the other day and told us that food is very expensive in Paris. You will get some cheap food in the canteen, as they charge less for the students but still you must be very careful with your money. Don't go on giving tea parties to your friends like last time after your exhibition you will need every pice of your money. Your parties can always be postponed until you go back, perhaps then you will have better occasions to spend your money as Government may give you a good post with fat salary. Now let your friends give you the fare well parties if you want to enjoy them. One cannot simply starve in Europe one feels terribly hungry and one gets sick at meal if one does not eat properly. Don't forget to bring a few things for us which my mine will give. We need one carpet very badly for Sonnie to paint. My sitting on the floor. The landlord does not give me to us of



our room because he is afraid that may soil it - with paint. I have written to Muriel about it, please inform her before you come. If you go direct to France you can take it - you can always say that you are going there for one year on scholarship & you need your carrel. Don't wrap soap if you are coming via London we get it much cheaper here. Bring cigarettes at least 200 from India take my Muriel to pack your trunk she will be able to smuggle them very well so that at the customs they won't be able to see them. You can take only 200 cigarettes without duty & about 50 in your pocket for your use. So these cigarettes you can buy in the ship & keep right on top of in your trunk. They don't usually open the trunk. So you can just declare that you have only 200 cigarettes & a few in your pocket to smoke at the custom or in your way from the custom to your destination. If you get reliable non-smoker friends you give with each one of them 200 cigarettes & you collect them in France or London wherever your friends & you are landing. I brought nearly 800 cigarettes to Somaire, some of them I smuggled & the rest I gave with some friends & collected here in London I had to go at their residence of course.

Now I think I have written too much boring stuff, so I'll give you some news and fill in the limited space! For here it goes. Take a deep breath! A few days ago we had been invited by Oskar Kokoschka for tea. Though he invited us for tea he served us Portuguese red wine for dinner. We were at his place for about 5 hours.

It's wonderful to shake hands, may may hard to be kissed by world's greatest living artist. He is a great man though his present pictures are no good, but all the same he is a great man a great artist. Sonnie showed him some of the photographs of Hussain's paintings, he liked them very much, he also liked your landscape photograph for which you got gold medal but we couldn't understand what he said about it. He murmured something in German. He liked very Sonnie's portrait painted by Hussain. He liked immensely many of Sonnie's paintings present and old ones. He liked his Hunters, bull boys, the photographs of boats which Mr Schlesinger bought, cathedral altar, Harwell's Saints, the Nude dancer in oil which is with Keku Gaudhi. Sonnie was showing him the photographs of his paintings very quickly but it came to the nude dancer he stopped suddenly and said "Wait, wait, this very nice, it-



is very good indeed," he looked at it for quite a long time and when he saw his self portrait in the nude he jumped from his chair and said that he had never seen anything like that before, he expressed something to his wife in German and patted Sonnie at least 3 times on his back and ruffled his hair another half a dozen of times as if he was a school boy. He said that he was very much interested in Sonnie's work, that Sonnie will be a great Modern <sup>Indian</sup> artist in few years time. He asked Sonnie his age & when he told him that he was 26 years old K.K. spread his hands and said "You have a great future before you. He has his classes and he told Sonnie to come whenever he has his classes and models free of charge. He took a great fancy for Sonnie and he told me that I should be very proud of my husband because I have very talented husband. He also liked me in my Indian costume very much. He admired my black and gold Panjabi shoes very much. He not only helped me to put my coat but even pushed my hair up over the coat collar all the back. An old man like him to have ~~have~~ so much presence of mind.

Sonnie has changed very much in his style of painting, it is not correct when he wrote to us in India that 75% of his paintings in India ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> were bad they are very much appreciated by O.K. & others besides what he paints now - quite differently from what he used to paint in India. It is quite obvious that he is in different phase now, this is his second period but not that what he painted in India is not good or what he paints now are better. His old paintings have the same value or perhaps more than his present ones as he has nothing like before so you all must be very careful about his past work even though people are interested in his old work & though Sonnie had written to Keku to sell at any price. All those who have his past work will note that he is changed & not improved. His nude



Dancer should not be sold for less than Rs 1000/-  
Please see that they are properly priced, never mind if he does  
not sell them now but he will get his price one day, many  
Americans are interested in his work they said that when  
they have money they will buy his past & present work.

Sonnie is on holidays now & he is anxiously awaiting  
to meet you. I'll send him to Paris only when you are there  
He is improved a lot in ~~health~~ health other wise he is  
just the same in his habits except that his jokes are more  
classical now..

I got quite a nice job at Piccadilly, my boss  
~~is~~ is a fine Polish lady. Every one at the atelier likes  
me very much but my pay is not quite attractive, they  
pay me at the present moment £6/- a week, but as soon  
as I get my London diploma I'll get good pay then per-  
haps I'll be able to keep Sonnie in Paris for about 6  
months. All Technical Schools are on holidays now. The  
school reopens in Sept. I'll join evening classes & obtain  
diploma within 3 months but at present I have de-  
cided to take a few private orders at home on  
Sat. & Sundays. We work 5 days in a week. Sonnie  
received his commission money & bought a machine  
a cutting table etc for me to work at home on holidays.

At present my feet are troubling me quite a lot  
this seems to be a case with practically every Indian  
but the moment I turn well I'll be able to work even  
late in the evening. We have nice little home our kitchen  
is our pride. I like London immensely though I have  
not seen much of it. I had been under the treatment  
as soon as I came here as I was terribly under weight  
and I use to get palpitations & what not. But now  
I am improved a great lot & feel quite nice & active  
I love to work in London, at last I found a place  
where my work is appreciated. There is definitely a  
great scope & prospect for a good dress maker here. A  
stylist sets £5-12/- but a good cutter with London diploma  
sets as far as £12/- a week. With best regards to self & your  
wife Yours very sincerely Maria.