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Archives of American Art

Diaries: Esther McCoy's Diary, 1926

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April 7.

Today I took a job as waitress at a restaurant on eighth street. Serve a week meals, and tips - two meals a day. She, the manager, didn't ask much about my experience, because she said I looked as if I could learn it easily. Christ. I went all the way home thinking about it. How delicious. Yes, I may learn it. And today, also I heard from Isabel that Dreiser had a new mistress, a Mrs. Miller. That means nothing, but it brings back to me both a pity for him and for myself. For him because he is grasping frantically for someone to cohabit with, that his remaining strength won't be lost. How sad it is, and will he never be able to live on be satisfied until he can meet ~~[[strikethrough]]~~ on ~~[[?]]~~ ~~[[strikethrough]]~~ on sexual bases everyone woman in whom he is interested. I am bilqued ~~[[sic]]~~ perhaps that he dropped me yet I know the uselessness of trying to turn sex into an attraction which uses anything but that. What nice times we had together. ~~[[strikethrough]]~~ until ~~[[strikethrough]]~~ Why can't he accept a relationship without sex.

I can't believe in friendship anymore. Even with John. No, I do believe in it when I think of him. He is the exception to most everything. But all the others, all of them, are journeying Rome - ward, and they are always just a stone's throw from their destination.

Isabel and I ate lunch next door. The editor of Adventure came to our table and talked to us. We exchanged a few experiences in New York. Mine fresh in my mind being so recent, and his half remembered.

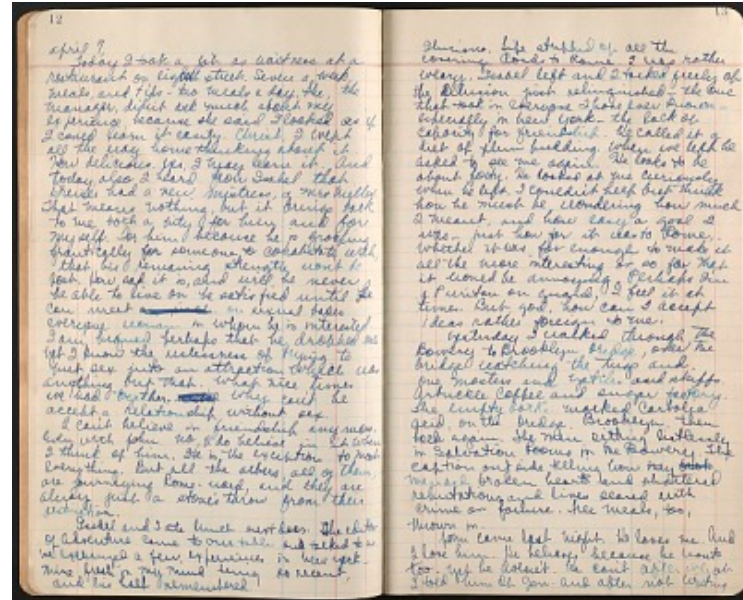
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Illusions ~~[[sic]]~~. Life stubbed of all the coverings. Roads to Rome. I was rather weary. Isabel left and I talked freely of the Illusion just relinquished - the one that took in everyone I have ever known - especially in New York - the lack of capacity for friendship. He called it a diet of plum pudding. When we left he asked to see me again. He looks to be about forty. He looked at me curiously when he left. I couldn't help but think how he must be wondering how much I meant, and how easy a goal I was - just how far it was to Rome. Whether it was far enough to make it all the more interesting or so for that it would be annoying. Perhaps I'm a Puritan on guard, I feel it at times. But, god, how can I accept ideas rather foreign to me.

Yesterday I walked through the Bowery to Brooklyn bridge, over the bridge watching the tugs and one masters and yatches ~~[[sic]]~~ and skiffs. Arbuckle Coffee and sugar factory. The empty Rotke worked Carbolic acid, on the bridge. Brooklyn, then back again. The men sitting listlessly in Salvation Rooms in the Bowery. The caption out side telling how they ~~[[strikethrough]]~~ brok ~~[[strikethrough]]~~ mended broken hearts and shattered reputations and lives seared with crime or failure. Free Meals, too, thrown in.

John came last night. He loves me. And I love him. He believes because he wants too. Yet he doesn't. He can't after what I told him ~~[[Oh?]]~~ Jan.



And after not writing

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