

Dear Harriet,¹

What possessed you to send a letter? Before I respond – and of course I remember the lake in July – I do have to wonder if your/our situation can be that urgent, and if my forthcoming response, which you now have in your hands, can be of much importance to you when your letter has taken, from the postmark, 3 days to reach me. Your number has changed, I phoned a construction site. You do realise, as you read this, that my letter will take another 3 days or even 4 with a Sunday before you will have had the opportunity to do what you're doing now. I'm writing as fast as I can to catch the last post. I have no envelope or stamps. Fact: I use email/text/Twitter, etc. I'm not being sarcastic. Fact: I send an email, within minutes I get a reply, not from a desk but from people in transit, a moving car, a colleague crossing the street, along with additional responses from people they copied in, which often contain the crucial questions. Loaves and fishes, real-time communication. (See? I can't delete what I wrote after 'sarcastic,' and I'm not starting now. So I apologise. [*Happy/quizzical face*]) I will now have to find (how many ~~fucking~~ tenses can there be in the English language??) [*happy face*] an envelope – tried many, many shops and some damn fool thought it was a joke and the queue started yelling. And a stamp? Where do you get a stamp? I may miss the last post and have to sleep on this news tonight. [*Sad face*]. In any case, I've thought about the question you've asked me, so here goes.

P.T.O.²

in, which often contain the crucial questions - Leaves and fishes, real-time communication. (See? I can't debate what I wrote after 'sarcastic,' and I'm not starting again. So I apologise 😊) I will now have to find (how many ~~fucking~~ tenses can there be in the English language?!) (.-.-) an envelope - tried many, many shops and some damn fool thought it was a joke and the queue started yelling. And a stamp? Where do you get a stamp? I may miss the last post and have to sleep on this news tonight. 😞 In any case, I've thought about the question you've asked me, so here goes.

¹This letter, which we take to be a work of fiction, was unsigned. Further investigations suggest that it was written and sent by Gerard Donovan, an Irish writer currently living in the state of New York. His most recent publication was the excellent short story collection, *Country of The Grand*.

²The reverse side of this letter was blank.