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175 T.K. Martin
528 Y.27772
HQ, JRC, SOS,
APO 750 c/o FM,
New York City.

Mr. James Baldwin,
c/o Round
335 West 11th St.
New York City, N.Y.
Dear Jim: This is lunch hour but not like our lunch hour back home wherein one madly devours a few bites of food and then madly returns to some mad thing which is exigencies of the time force upon us. Now the French have an entirely different attitude to the affair. They believe that such things as eating are best accomplished with fineness and the fullest leisure. And so we have a lunch hour of two full hours in which to eat and at least half-digest our food before returning to work. But after a lifetime geared to the speed-life of our country, instead of lying back and snoozing as the French are wont to do, I fill in the time with things closest to the heart.

Result: this letter.

I have been out of the hospital over two weeks now and feel completely restored. Now, for the first week after my return the weakness brought on by the dysentery was still with me but now that has all disappeared, thank goodness.

While in the hospital a very unfair thing happened to me. The majority were from Florrie of course, and everyone else we know was well represented, and I have had a difficult time getting around to answering them all. You see, mail does not come into the hospital in the normal manner as it does from day to day with the outfit, but only came when it was brought by my CO on his weekly visits. I say unfair, because one cannot properly appreciate or give the proper attentions when so many letters come into one's hands at once. It is just like walking into a room full of people and endeavouring to understand and appreciate each one completely whilst all of them are shouting in your ears at the same time. Though it may sound strange I had much rather receive my letters spaced over an appropriate length of time so that each one received full attention and appreciation. Like conversations, hardly anything real comes out of any when there are more than two people involved. Have you ever observed that? The great difference between a friend when you are alone with him then when his and your attentions are divided between two or more other persons. Shelley said that when there were three people in a room the Devil was there too. I hardly think it to be the Devil present but one of his lesser emissaries, most certainly. For the same reason I dislike going to Art Galleries or Museums except alone. For how can one really perceive but so? We are all so susceptible to vanity. And of late I have only begun to appreciate the diversity and subtile of that thing called 'vanity'. Of course that consciousness is born of my recent and continued reading of the Old Testament. It is really amazing how much one can forget of what one once sure one knew beyond all the peels of forgetting, and how much one did not perceive, when once one believed all was perceived. There too was vanity and a striving after wind.

I have been recalling my last letter to mind quite often of late after it was mailed I sadly realized how inappropriate it was in some respects. My tirade against the modern pseudo-novels was invoked by the dreary reading material available in that hospital, and in no way concerned your written attempts with that medium. In a way, I slyly believe it was more directed and addressed toward my own heart, for I too, am engaged with what I fondly hope will grow up to be a novel one fine day. I have a bad habit of whipping myself. Usually this is done privately but I suspect that I was more than usually unconsciously 'unconscious' in that letter. By now you must realize that the sad Irishman is attempting to apologise and beg forgiveness for any misconduct in writing that letter may have aroused. So forgive me, my good James. I am not a bad boy often, but oh! what frailities mine heart doth own!

Florrie has gotten me engaged in another mad situation. She sent me what was supposed to be Exile's new address, one for Los Angeles, California. I, of course, being the usual idiot noted that the street address and number of the old address of New Orleans was strangely identical with the new one of Los Angeles. But of course mine spouse is one that must be 'all-trusted' and I went blithely ahead writing three long letters to Exile before the correction of the honor came though from Florrie. So now poor Exile's letters are wandering about the American continent and I am distraught over their plight. When you next write to him,intercede for me, won't you? From many developments I am calling this my 'Idiocy year'. It is very interesting as you may well imagine, but it plays havoc with my heart's loves. Explain to our friends my new affliction, so they too will understand as I know you do so fondly.

As you will note, this letter comes to you by Air-mail. Service by Air-Mail between here and the States is very fine. Usually, I understand, taking no more than 10 days. But most of the letters from the states (nearly all)
Page Two

when sent Air-Mail, only travel via Air-Mail within the continental limits of the States. They are usually put aboard one of those terrifyingly swift Liberty Ships at and East Coast Port and get here in three or four weeks. V-Mail, though entailing much tedious addressing is the swiftest service of all. Letters mailed in New York City invariably arrive here in five to eight days. This, you realize by now, is my subtle way of imploring you to use the aforementioned service. It is really much better. The time lapse between answers and questions via Air-Mail comes to nearly six weeks, whereas with the V-Mail is sometimes only two or two and a half. Six weeks is, of course, much too long for any real correspondence.

Well, yesterday's lunch hour was not long enough. This is now Thursday, a different day and a different typewriter. That I should be writing with a typewriter is one of the proofs that you and Irish friends is slowly growing up. I've had a prejudice against typewriters for many, many years. Am still not able to really write with them. Somehow, I suspect that I have not really accepted this mechanical world we live in. The inhumanity of all our machines is a difficult thing to take. Every time that I find myself using one of these typewriters I get a feeling that that horrible day is not far off when they will start our children on typewriters in the Kindergarten and man will not be able to communicate with man without the presence of a typewriter. Spencerians will be a subject of Antiquarians, and our children will laugh at those quaint fools who once scribbled with pen and ink. Orthography and all the opportunities it offers of analysis and synthesis will have been forgotten and our beautiful humanity will have sunk one degree lower into the miasma of mechanization.

You would be quite ashamed of me these days if you were here. Working and practically living with the French, although offering tremendous opportunity of understanding and knowing a foreign race of people, has brought about some radical changes in me. You see, the French are the most handshaking people I have ever seen in my life. With every 'Bonjour' there is the obligation of a handshake. Not like our American handshake which exhibits but little more than a test and exhibition of mere animal strength, the French handshake is a thing of great delicacy and finesse, executed by a light touch of the fingers, hardly ever and then only by the cross-gouled, involving anything of a palm to palm affair. And so, upon arrival to the morning I say 'Bonjour' to about 20 people and with each the inevitable handshake, and then the departure for lunch brings about the 'Au revoir!' and 'Bon appetit!' and again the handshakes right down the line. And then, on my heart, the return from 'Manger du midi' and the long line of the Apocalypse of The Handshake faces one the same as the morning, and the evening of course, the 'Bonsoir' and all that goes with it. And so, my dear James, that reticent fellow, so shy and introverted has died, and some strange being, who runs about shaking hands, like a Tammay Hall ward-boss, has been born. Oh the horrors of it all. And sometimes (I say this to you alone) this new born thing (Who would call it a personality?) even finds some joy in its heart at all this handshaking and 'Bonjour' this and that. Ah, what falling off is here! Break! break! my heart! all is vanity and a striving after wind. (Non som quisque erat bonus, sub regno Cynarae.)

For a while upon arrival over here on the sun-scorched shores of North Africa I kept a little journal where I conscientiously recorded the dispatch of letters, cables, and postcards to all my friends and relatives. But that I decided made all letter writing something of a gross affair of mere exchange, so that journal is no moxer has been, - believe, dead for nearly two months already. But somewhere in my tepid memory the thought is still warm that a letter had been despatched toward you about three weeks ago and should as soon have earned an answer. So mine weather eye is cocked and mine heart hungereth for a missel of thine. (New Sublety)

The gentleman who belongs to this typewriter, (All such possessions as these involve a condition of slave-hood by the possessor) is crying in my ear for its immediate return so I shall end here and come back to you (the dark lover of my life) another time. Don't wait for letters to be exchanged in the meantime, Jim. Normality and all its curses is not for such fellows as we. Write when the spirit is so moved. Any regularity in such affairs is a lessening anyway. For a little while then, So long, sincerely, your friend,

Tous (Pardon the spelling and all else that might be wrong)
Dear Tim,

Received my first letter from Florrie since I arrived in Italy yesterday, and in it she mentions your visiting her and saying that you will write me soon. But that does not bring much happiness to this lonely heart of mine. For that word "soon" can be made of elastic so far as days are concerned.

We flew in here from Athens a few weeks ago, and though it wasn't my first long trip by air since I am over here, I am a great advocate of travel by air. At least so far as the Army goes there is nothing which can beat it. The difference of traveling like cattle on one of those famous Army Troop Transport Ships which you probably read of occasionally in the newspapers, and the comfort of an airplane is the difference of hell and heaven. And the comparison of one of those Army Transports to Hell is no far fetched one. Unless you ever get on one, which at this stage of the game I doubt very much shall ever happen, it is hard to believe that so many human beings can be crammed into such a small space. By comparison, the old emigrants who came over to the states in holds and what nots, traveled in high class comfort.

Each bunk on a transport is about 24” wide and six feet long, and twenty inches between each bunk. They are usually arranged in tiers of four to eight wide, the lowest a few inches above the floor, and the highest right up next to the ceiling. Coming over I spent twenty-two
21 days in a hold of a ship rigged up like that with over 500 other fellows. - I had a bottom bunks right above the floor, which swished very uncomfortably with coffee grounds and sea-water on alternate days. - According to how high the seas were running, more than anything else, it was really hell, especially at night when the dreams, stories and pornographic conversations all mixed together in the semi-darkness of the hold, and the bunks all crept and surged with the motion of the ship. - Those days I shall never forget. - Especially the night of the 16th or 17th day when the announcement came over the radio in the evening news that another transport had been sunk North west of England and over 500 soldiers had been lost at sea. - To lie in the darkness that night after 'light out' and listen and feel the tension screaming through the hearts of all those men. - That is one night that will take me a long time to forget. - There is no fear like collective, hysterical fear. - No night like those where you sit and seem to wait for a sudden unseen death.

And as I said, there is nothing like traveling by air. - To pass over half a continent, an ocean, and land on another continent nearly eleven hundred miles away, in a matter of a few hours is a happy experience. - We passed over Sicily at about 7,000 feet altitude, and it truly looked like the dream lands of fairy tales. - Tiny towns situated atop mountains, fields of green and yellow growing things, and rivers winding their way between high sloping hills. - You have no sense of speed at that altitude. - The earth seems to creep along below you, and it is only...
the occasional cloud or very high mountain that betrays the speed you are traveling. I know that I was very surprised once to peer out of the window and see the crags of a mountain not too distant hours in and the peak of it towering above us. You hardly believe that you are flying then. It is something eerie-like and really too swift in reality, of leaving a land of mosquitos, turbid, reined women, and an eternal sense of dampness, and in a few hours later finding yourself in a land of cool moistness, where the trees all look like those at home, and the earth is brown and damp with the rain showers. You may arrive in a few hours, but it really takes weeks to know that you are there. That may sound slightly mad, but the whole thing is believable.

With all this moving around, settling and resettling, I have been unable to do anything toward those things which I am really interested in, and of which I love. But somehow I do not believe these Army days will not be too many more, and I am not concerned, like Isadie Cooper used to say, "when you are ready, you will do it." You remember good old Isadie, I hope, don’t you?

My brother Pete has been present in an LST all through out the Normandy operation and is safe still. He is fine, and asked after your welfare in his last letter. I’m sure you can drop him a line, his address is: "Peter A. Rogers, S 2/c, U.S.S. LST #388 96th Fleet P.M., N.Y.C."

Italy is a much pleasanter and somehow
more humbly worn place than this. Tried, things are not going too well as yet, but they aren’t too bad. It is not an easy thing to set up a government and achieve any too great a success in the short time the present gout has been in power. Following twenty years of Fascism and the unalterable fact of a war still being fought on the peninsula creates heavy dos problems. The Communists seem to have a great popularity here. Everywhere you go you see the old hammer + sickle, and the “Viva Stalin’s” on the walls. And most every town has its C.P. office right on the main street. Time magazine says that Italy will be the next country to go Communist after Russia, here in Europe. But any statement of that type would be held suspect. I look for an under-cover Red under the Armistice on the happy shores of our Nation. There are still plenty of Dicks + H.K. Smiths in the political wood-pile.

I should really be very happy to receive a good long letter of conditions in the state and particularly N.Y.C., as you see them. Both literary + political, and only the former if you don’t care for the latter. I should also like a long letter on J. Baldwin if you feel up to it. Only don’t preface your letter with a two-page apology for the delay in writing. You know I was twenty once, too!

Give my best to all our friends.

Sincerely, Jr. Friend Toy
1944 September 2

T/5 T.K. Martin
3289 2772
SIGNAL DET. C. SIGNAL S.E.C.
ADRIATIC DEPOT
APO 388 4:00 PM, N.Y.C.

Mr. James Baldwin
C/o Mr. B. DeLaney
181 Greene Street, 530 W.
New York City, N.Y.

S. Gerry King
1944 October 30 : [Christmas card, outside]
"Only within shines clear light"
Mr H. Godwin

I migliori Auguri di Natale e Capo d'Anno

Toni
1944 October 30

[Christmas card, envelope]

T/K T.K. Marsch. 3289 2772
AD, APO 388 1/6 PM, NYC

Mr. James Baldworth
c/o Deputy
189 Greene Street
New York City, N.Y.
Dear Jimmy:

Your letter reached me today, this afternoon, to be accurate, so I sit myself down and answer it. Today has been a very poor day so far as work is concerned. I spent most of the morning answering a letter I received from Florrie which demanded an immediate answer, and this afternoon comes your letter which I would answer immediately anyway, and with the volume of questions you toss at me, I am left no choice but to answer it immediately. Otherwise I should go around muttering to myself for days. And we both know that it doesn’t look nice for people to be walking around muttering to themselves. My father talks to himself all the time, and after the experience of living and sleeping in the same bed with my father for many years I came to realize that such an anti-social habit irritates people. Now, I love my fellow human beings a little more than to adopt some habit which might irritate any portion of their number, so I have always told myself that talking to oneself...
It was something to be avoided. Consequently I have avoided it, I believe, and I have also noticed a decided improvement in my relations with my fellow humans.

Whether or not I can claim virtue on that account I ungenerously leave for posterity to judge. Personally, I doubt it.

My relationship with my father was a very interesting one, you know. I probably never told you about it for it is one of the deeper secrets of my personality, and were you to know it you would probably look through all the facades of the face which I present to the world and be pretty rough with the weak, unwholesome character hidden behind those facades. But in consideration of how much I love you and how much worry and care you cause me through that love, I shall let down the veil and reveal the real Martin.

Before I go any further in this undraping of the real Martin's psyche, you must swear on the Bible (one enclosed. See appendix attached to last leaf of previous chapter) that you will never let Harry (Stevenson-Macbeth) Hershel with whom I know the contents of these pages. If you do
I shall be forced to spend the rest of my life here amidst the dusty misery of Italy, far from my little children, my wife, my friends, and all that I love in life. For how could I ever show my face amongst you again if Harry were to get hold of my undraped psyche and lead it about the streets of the village on a leash, for all to laugh and mock at? No! never that! never that! I am a sensitive artist, appreciating these things which make life full of wonder and beauty; those things upon which civilizations are built—those corner-stones of culture and national philosophies! Shall my psyche be led in all its tender, nakedness toward such a fate?—You can easily see from all that hysteria what this undraping of the psyche means to me, and how Horshamite could be the cause of my spiritual-rage were he to get hold of my poor defenseless psyche.

You are my friend Baldwin, so my spiritual life lies in the palm of your hand. (I hope you wash your hands every day because I wash my spiritual life every day, and if we are going to have this
IV

relationship it may as well be a clear one.)
But oh, how I digress! to get back to my
naked psyche sleeping with my Father.
Pardon me, Tanesse. I mean myself sleep-
ing with my Father and my naked
psyche. So that we really understand each
other, before I commence this story I
may as well tell you that this is a hor-
tribly sordid story, so be on the watch
for its sordidness, and for goodness sake
do not let it affect your psyche. If
you think that you know what misery
is now, wait until you hear this ugly
story which entitles itself to the next few
sentences and paragraphs. O Misery! that
the world should ever know this tale!

To begin this tale rightly I must tell
you that I also had a very sordid child-
hood. I was brought up by my grand-
mother until I was six years old and
she used to tell me an awful lot of
insane fairy-tales about banshees, ghosts,
God, Christ, and Mary, Mother of God,
which most probably determined all those
religious beliefs I am accused of by
people. This I undoubtedly accept as a
young and warped ‘warping’ effect upon
that thing we call my psyche.
My Grandmother also taught me how to read and write while I was still only an infant. I was able to read proficiently before I was even five years of age. This factor alone I accept as being one of the first influences which has over the years gradually warped and torn away all that’s vital into so many little shred and pitifully torn shreds of ghostly things. Well to top that bad beginning, my mother, then put me into Catholic Grammar School, and my first introduction to the mature womanhood of the world outside the barriers of my home and daily was that of nuns. - What a terrible thing this was I am sure I do not have to analyze or point out. Already I can feel the sympathy with which you are reading these pages and am deliberately leaving a wide margin to the left so that your tears may fall therein, and not blot out any words. - This peonship of mine (also the result of some terrible psychological experience) is bad enough alone, without suffering under the handicap of tears. - But to again string these words of scornlessness together. - I finally left Parochial School because the Parish Priest took to criticizing
my Mother from the pulpit of the Church. For "living with a man," she wasn't used to.-This, even I knew, was a base and cowardly lie even though I was but eight years of age. For my Mother was not living with this Man, the Man had come to live with us. We didn't move out of our house. He had moved in. To this day I remember the day that he arrived with three suitcases and an electric fan for me. Of course realizing at such an early age that "Priests," those embodiments of the Catholic "God" in Man, were capable of uttering untruths, shattered beyond repair my respect or love I may have ever had for them, as a class, and I remember peculiarly sharp since then and still, I look upon and consider them as fellow-men, human beings who suffer and strive, get hurt, hurt, and in general have a tough enough time of it to be capable of understanding Shakespeare's lines, "Men must endure their coming and going. Fate is a lie. Virtue is all." But you can easily see that in this little incident I shelter for you above lay all the seeds of the
immortal life which I came to live later on. In fact, crushed with one stroke all the beliefs I may have accumulated up until that time, and left me naked and shivering in a wild, orderless universe, with that light which drives down within, that beauty which the nuns had spoken of, all the gods of my grandmothers’ fairy tales, all the hope of the Irish folksongs which picture man as an eternally striving force in motion towards the realization of all the potentialities of itself; and the world as a place in which men discover the truth through tears and uniting and remembering, and the gravest madness, of those lines of Eshib, repeated by Christ in the New Testament, “I said to the gods: all this gone, swept away as if by magic by the lie of one single word, happy and merry in his own peddling self-righteousness. You can easily see that I was in quite a state by that time, and still only eight years of age. If I had known what the years were yet to bring, I knew now, that I should have lain down then and died joyfully for respite of the hell and blow which destiny yet concealed from my mind...
cent eyes! To think how malformed and crippled I was by them, how utterly useless to God or Man in any conceivable way. But I realize now, naked as I am, behind all those façades of personality and character, how removed for your seeing my nakedness, that my self-pity is running full tide, and I am losing the thread of my argument for the joy of recalling my misery and invoking your pity for my pitifulness, that I will take too many pages to tell you the tale of my sordid relationship with my father, if I do not cease with the history of my relations sorrow fullness, before the inception of this most malignant psychic influence of my father.

Th, to recall those terrible years. Never before in the history of human kind were so many tears evoked from the eyes of such a one as I by such a one as my father. Never before in the history of human kind were so many tears evoked from one for so little. Never before in the history, — oh, why continue, there is no tale of misery like unto mine! — The relationship of myself and my father began with my coming to life.
with my father when I reached the age of fourteen years. I had never known my father before except as being the odd fellow who came around the neighborhood where I had lived with my brothers and sisters and mother, and spreading malicious stories of that stupid, aforementioned lie about my mother "living with that man." By the time I had realized and come to know that it was my father who was spreading this lie in all our neighborhood, I didn't really care any more too much about the lie, and knew beyond doubt that the "Man lived with us." At his share towards expenses he even paid the rent of the house we shared. I knew, I had seen him write and sign his own check and hand it to the bank lords plenty of times. So before I came to live with my father at the age of fourteen years, I also knew that he too was also that hopeless liar as that priest of my tenderer years. The awful psychic effect this realization of my father being such a hopeless liar had upon me, I feel, need not be pointed out. Well, now this happy beginning of our life together my father and myself began fine glorious years of fighting. I fought him in a stand-up, knock-down fist fight when...
I was only sixteen years of age. The fight began because he accused me of masturbating, and I denied it vehemently. Of course I had masturbated, but I would never admit such a thing to my father. I never thought that people should speak about such things in polite society in any way. - Masturbation! My goodness, it is nearly as low as fornication! So because I denied this masturbating so vehemently, my father took a sunder at me, and to my surprise was actually able to hit me. Of course, I would never stand such an impolite and practically beastial thing intruding upon my father's and my relationship so I smacked him back. And so began our knock-down, "kick him in the balls, Joe" fist fight. At that time I only weighed one hundred and ten pounds, and was just recovering from a rage of tonsilitis which had kept me in bed for two months, so I admit in such good shape for a fight. After nearly a half an hour of pulling and grappling, and unsuccessful attempts of "kneeling" by both parties involved, he finally got me down on the floor and sat on me, thus ending the contest very unlively and without any regard
For any of the sportsmanship & Queenberry rules which you and I know, Till, always govern such contests—you can imagine the unspeakable grief and misery it caused that callow, ideal-loving youth of those sixteen miserable years, who und I, to realize and know from personal experience that my Father disregarded the Marquess of Queensberry rules when he engaged in fistic contests—oh, how I suffered the shame of that knowledge!—I even abandoned an aspiring to career in boxing. Because whenever I got into fights, or just boxed playfully in bed, the picture of my Father sitting on my stomach, with all his two hundred and thirty pounds of Irish flesh pressing the life out of me, came into my mind. And the realization of the viciousness and dirtiness of the blood which flowed through my veins, as it was the same blood as my Father's, so revolted me that I became physically ill. You can easily see, again, how that thought of my Father sitting on my stomach pressed itself down upon my consciousness until it became one of the psychic springs of my being, one of the shaping forces of my personality, and has preyed upon my daily—
stream of consciousness ever until this day. Since I was sixteen, I never have been involved in a fist-fight. - My oldest brother whom I love very much, even punched me very hard in the jaw when I was twenty-two years of age, and that thought was still so strongly with me, that I was unable to strike him back. - I just cite this to make you realize the terrible string which made me construct that block.

I have remedied for you. - Remember the night you and I waited in the hospital in Princeton for Flinnie to deliver allegro? - you never knew why I was so happy to realize when the Doctor told us that Flinnie had given birth to a girl, did you? well, now you know that it was because I knew that she, being a girl would never have to engage in fist-fights, and that tragic disease of the disregarding of that Greensberry race would not show itself in that generation of my family. - Should I tell you the grief that I now feel in the knowledge that I have a son, who will continue the life of that disease in the life-blood of France, and so contaminate the whole nation before the next four or five Yea-
sand years of these Days of our Lord are
been. And so you see, Twix, who is this per-
on is that you write to "take care of
yourself," you are valuable. Now, I hope,
you see what value I put to the sound
word of our civilization, to that goal
of the race of mankind, so strangely
beautiful and not knowing their own
beauty, some times even hating it; and
and, when recognizing it in other human
beings, a tempting to or destroying it with
pride, by or gleeeful hate, to that goal of
this human race,
when all the trees shall speak again,
And all the stones shall laugh,
And all the dead shall rise in joy.
And sing their epitaph.

We die, Twix, as it is written
by Christ. — "I said ife are gods"

Remember that I love you, and
do not tell me that you wish I was
"there" for I am there, and you are
here, and we are all together, and your
sorrow is my sorrow, your death is my
death, and my death is your death. Remem-
ber that death of those who walk around
with "dead" eyes is out death, remember, that you are blessed to be able to see the death in their eyes, because by being able to see it you are there. Be able to help them in their wretchedness. Do not reject any more this, for whomsoever you reject, you are rejecting yourself, and as you reject yourself, you reject knowledge and wisdom, and as you reject others your heart grows smaller and smaller until a man arrives at that point where there is nothing in the universe, no love, no beauty, no sorrow, no joy, no thing human. And when we have arrived at that point neither are we human, nor are we alive.

I have not said all that I feel I should say in this letter. I know that I have not answered many of your questions, so I shall dedicate myself that task tomorrow evening when we may be alone together.

Remember always, Tim, that I am your friend.

Yours,
1944 November 9-10 : [envelope recto]
1944 November 9-10 : [envelope verso]
Italy 10th November, 1944

Dear Jim: Well, here we are alone again. You that sends me this long letter of his heart's thoughts, and I, half-way around the world, settled, it seems, for a good many months amidst the melancholy-eyes Italians who love life so ardently, but hate the results of their own follies and unconsciousness.

I have not reread your letter before beginning this. I read it two or three times last night so that I might understand your thoughts and feelings, and I would rather write in the consciousness of a day's unconscious analyses, than to read it again. Perhaps that sounds a little mad, but I am sure that you understand by now that the basis of our friendship is our mutual madness! Otherwise, O Black Boy, upon what grounds would we meet?

You ask me what is the matter with Harry? Are you wrong for suspecting Harry of Charlatanism? Have you any basis for accepting your own heart's counsel against that of your older friends who claim to be 'artists'? These are not simple things to answer, not because of their lack of complexity, but because it has been over two years that I last saw Harry, and nearly a year now since I last saw you. We are all such tender, facile things, we humans, that I wonder if I can say some things to you today which might offend you, that would not have offended you one year ago.

Of Harry I would not give any analyses of his character or motivations; and for yourself I would not tell you how to live or what to do. I do not believe such things would clarify the problem for either of us, but would, perhaps, because I am so close to both of you, and see you the less clearly in the blindness of love, only add more mud to an already muddy situation.

For you see, Jimmy, I have never trusted Harry because he does not laugh. Nor would I trust any human-being who does not have the magnanimity and honesty to see himself as a fool and a knave half the hours of his days. We are all fools, and perhaps that is the path to wisdom and knowledge, so long as we are able to see ourselves as fools. But when the day comes that we are not able to
see ourselves as the grandest fools, then I believe we should be beware of ourselves, and then it is that we become dangerous. It is not enough to be sincere, if sincerity means that you say always what you think. I believe a little more is needed than that. What else, then is wisdom and integrity of purpose? or what meaning has love or the terrible things we accept in our attempts, often in vain, to perceive beauty and truth?

Of the village I have little more to say than what I have felt of it about six months after I first became aware of its existence; it is the center of a circle of the mutual-admiration societies. It is the home of people who make pretentions of being artists out of their own feelings of meagerness and lack of depth. That is the village I mean, as the people of the Waldorfs' and Georges' and Poetry Circles' represent it to be. I believe that is the village which you mean. It is the village of the economically comfortable 'artists' who have executive and 'creative' positions in the advertising houses up-town. Who daily paint and write for their stomach's ease and security and nightly talk about their souls and psyches and ambitions. It is the village of the people who believe in the transience of truth, and make certain that each day has its sufficiency of evil. It is the place where people tell each other of their knowledge and culture and 'deeper feelings' in defence of their lack of these things.

How sick all these people are! How sick and weary of the hollowness of their own hearts they are! How pitifully weak and forlorn, running, racing about, seeking the sustenance of each other's weaknesses, preying upon each other like talking-apes, and spearing each other of everything they half-suspicion is 'different' or 'new.' Out of this will come literature? Out of this will come the pure hearts which experience perception and articulation at the same precise moment? Out of this will come integrity of language, and the tone which is the mark of words of these thoughts which are felt as understood? Out of this pyramiding of symbols upon symbols, literatures upon literatures, cultures upon cultures,—all held up to the sun-god of that analyses which knows no synthesis, what will come?
Thoughts which are naught but paraphrasings of other's thoughts; vanities which are proffered as philosophies; 'Art' taught as the mighty mover and builder of civilisations and cultures: what are these things? — They are dreams of the sensual conquerors of the 'thought-world' by men who will remake the world in their own time. These are the 'fools of time' whom Shakespeare was so fond of because of their madnesses and vanities. These are the men who speak to the world of 'spiritual-worlds' while they stand miserably and forlorn of hope in the muck of their own misunderstandings and misapprehensions. These are most truly those 'scribes' who are said to be after the widow's purses in the New Testament.

How old! how horribly old and desecrated the world is when that small phrase taken from the New Testament, is still so aptly and completely defines these writers who call themselves 'Artists'. Who found 'new' religions, who institute 'new' philosophies, who provoke this 'dead' humanity with their barbed and bitter words! who reject half the world in a phrase and rebuild their own egos in two paragraphs. — "Beware of the scribes who are querulous after widow's purses."

What better definition can be found for these men? For what else are they after? Are they searching in their hearts for those glimmerings of truth and beauty which are hidden there? Do they seek to know life or do they seek to rule lives? Are they after the praise of a moment's adulation, or do they seek the springs of action and laws of being upon which a life-time may be balanced and directed? Do they hold themselves responsible for every word they utter and write as the sincerest and wisest and deepest word that they are then capable of uttering? Or do they believe in the transcendence of truth, and that each word is sufficient unto each moment and true unto each moment? For what do these men live, the satisfaction of their own egos or for the good of their brothers, for the beauty of truth that is shareable with their brothers, and the love that belongs to all?

Of course, we know, that it is all good, and that even the evil in their hearts and ways is also a step on the road toward the palaces of wisdom. But in the meanwhile, lives are wrecked, souls sent shrieking into the quietnesses of
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of the mad-houses, and we have the stage set for the writing of another 'De Profundis' amidst the wreakage and misery of another ruined life and broken lives.

My name is legion and my voice is Tragedy. I am the untamed will of the beast that lives in men's hearts. I am the selfishness of their eyes, the lust of their hands, the rationalization of their reason; I am the Devil. I am the tears of sentimentality, the complacency of boredom, the comforter of the comfortable, and the sneer-creased lips of the proud. I am happiest in cruelty, the gleefullest in perversity, and the enemy of peace. I am the one who speaks of beauty with my eyes and thoughts full of the softness of the breasts of the woman to whom I am speaking. I am the innovator of religions, the discoverer of philosophies, and the founder of cultures. But I am always the Devil, and you do not believe in my existence! I am unhappiest alone, but always slain in solitude. I am the hater of light, but light is my master. I am the joy of the proud, but suffocate in the sorrow of sadness. I am the friend of the man who believes he is truth, but the man who believes in truth will not know me. I am legion and my voice is Tragedy.

And of such, Jimmy, I am afraid our friends will be found. It is always sad and always regretful, but they are all human-beings and when we reject one of them, we are only rejecting ourselves. Better by far for sure it is so, than to be lukewarm and damm everything with faint praise. But it is all tragedy, and still forms that captain good attending captain ill, and truth made tongue tied by authority, and maiden-virtue rudely strumpeted, and tired with all these for restful death I cry, but that to die I leave my love alone. We have the choice of a 'safe' universe of sterile neutrality or a universe of passionate realizations and madness. The latter is productive of gods, the former a breeding place of abstractions and metaphysicians.

And so I don't believe I have yet answered your questions, but I shall wait now for your answering letter of what questions remain, remember me to all our friends, and write me! but soon! Love, yr friend, "Tom"
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