

131 South 15th way

N.Y. ed., N.Y.

Dear Sidney:

Your alarming letter reached me when it was
a problem to a degree I could not answer
it at once. For any letter I might have written
then would have been a cry for salvation.

I was in Payne Whitney Psychiatric Clinic - where
I remained for 3 dreadful weeks.

You see these last exhausting months of
illness had got me into an emotional, unbalanced
state. One night, in a fit of transient
melancholy I slashed my wrist. My medical doctor
thought I needed hospitalization. So I
had to go to Payne Whitney.

There I was fixed in a vacuum, unable to
 try to help myself. I could not write, or read
 undisturbed, and was allowed no veil of privacy.
 It was like Kaffka without the hope of

ultimate salvation. I suffered intensely until
 finally a great dear friend of mine who is
 a psychiatrist decided my mother to take me
 away.

I have no suicidal tendencies and I will never
 hurt myself again. I was just over strained
 and fearful after this long ill ness. I had a
 vascular
 vascular spasm that has left me still
 partly paralysed. I long to be strong and
 well. I have had so much illness, and
 have almost lost the hope of health.

I wonder how it would feel to be a psychiatrist.
 The responsibility is so immense. Are you
 ever afraid ^{of this power?} I had an excellent, kind doctor at
 Payne Whitney, but the head doctor is a
 I was hesitant without a shake of insight - I
 dreaded talking with him. I had never known
 such a feeling of helplessness as I had there.

I think I don't believe very much in
 psycho therapy for creative people. The
 artist's hall mark is the product of his inner
 conflicts. I do not want my internal chemistry
 changed, even though I may suffer.

It is absurd to say I don't believe in psycho therapy -
 I mean that I intend to maintain my grasp,
 of my own soul - however fragile ^{that grasp} might be -
 as long as possible.

1. The head doctor at the clinic said I was not
 "facing" my ill health - and questioned me about
 my defenses. When I said that writing was my
 bastion then he insisted that work was not enough,
 To him writing is (psychologically) a neurosis.
 He held me, the act of artistic creation, as the
 prime expression of health that I recognize.
 My long chestnut friend, William Meyer, corroborates me.
 And has been my guardian angel for ten years,
 You might call my condition a somatic - psycho
 state. But, since my emotional attitudes, and not
 possibly after my vascular defects, I think it best

to forget my infirmities and concentrate
on something responsive that offers the possibility
of some place - work.

I am sorry you are unable to accept the

Boston appointment. How long will you be in
the army - and what will you be doing then?

The true artist and the psychiatrist are
concerned with the same subject - man in
his relation to the human condition. On this subject -
psychiatrists regard anxiety as an individual,
neurotic "problem" - while I believe it is an essential,
basic part of the conditions of human existence.
We fear the acknowledgment of finity. There is always

a tendency to reclaim the state of
non-responsibility, the animal infinity that we
find when staking our claims to a soul.

Does this have meaning to you?



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