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October 5, 1970

Dr. Virginia S. Carr  
Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Columbus College  
Columbus, Georgia 31907

Dear Doctor Carr:

Thank you for your very interesting letter concerning your dissertation on Carson McCullers and the book on her that you, with Professor Aimee Alexander, are preparing for publication.

I remember very well the visit Mrs. McCullers paid us in Augusta in the fall of 1953. She came here from the home of Miss Lillian Smith, whom she had been visiting in Clayton. She was never my patient, although I think from what Miss Smith told me over the telephone that she thought Mrs. McCullers might be in need of psychiatric care. I don't think she actually said this in an outright statement, but it is what I gathered by inference. My wife and I had never seen Mrs. McCullers but once before when a year or two earlier we had met her in Washington where I was attending a meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. We met her through Dr. Sidney Isenberg who had been a student of mine in medical school and who was and is a good friend. Interest in some of Mrs. McCullers' work led him to write to her, and through the acquaintance that developed from this we met her in Washington and she had lunch with us, Dr. Isenberg, and other psychiatrists. I did not get the impression that she was in deep grief during the few days she spent with us, nor did I get the impression that she particularly blamed herself for her husband's suicide. I do not know anything about the reported attempt at suicide by Mrs. McCullers. She did not mention to us the sort of loss she spoke of to Dr. Mary Mercer.

Mrs. McCullers did not seek advice from me about the psychology of any of the characters in her stories. We did, however, discuss some of them. I feel that Dr. Sidney Isenberg might have information about Mrs. McCullers that would be useful to



Dr. Virginia S. Carr

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you. His address is: 401 Peachtree Street, NE, Atlanta,  
Georgia 30308.

With the best of wishes,

Sincerely,

*Hervey Cleckley*  
Hervey M. Cleckley, M. D.

HMC:jsw