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Stang

J. D. Salinger

Hapworth 16, 1924

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SOME comment in advance, as plain and bare as I can make it: My name, first, is Buddy Glass, and for a good many years of my life—very possibly, all forty-six—I have felt myself installed, elaborately wired, and, occasionally, plugged in, for the purpose of shedding some light on the short, reticulate life and times of my late, eldest brother, Seymour Glass, who died, committed suicide, opted to discontinue living, back in 1948, when he was thirty-one.

I intend, right now, probably on this same sheet of paper, to make a start at typing up an exact copy of a letter of Seymour's that, until four hours ago, I had never read before in my life. My mother, Bessie Glass, sent it up by registered mail.

This is Friday. Last Wednesday night, over the phone, I happened to tell Bessie that I had been working for several months on a long short story about a particular party, a very consequential party, that she and Seymour and my father and I all went to one night in 1926. This last fact has some small but, I think, rather marvellous relevance to the letter at hand. Not a nice word, I grant you, "marvellous," but it seems to suit.

No further comment, except to repeat that I mean to type up an exact copy of the letter, word for word, comma for comma. Beginning here.

May 28, 1965

●

Camp Simon Hapworth
Hapworth Lake
Hapworth, Maine
Hapworth 16, 1924, or quite
in the lap of the gods!!

DEAR BESSIE, LES, BEATRICE, WALTER, AND WAKER:

I WILL write for us both, I believe, as Buddy is engaged elsewhere for an indefinite period of time. Surely sixty to eighty per cent of the time, to my eternal amusement and sorrow, that magnificent, elusive, comical lad is engaged elsewhere! As you must know in your hearts and bowels, we miss you all like sheer hell. Unfortunately, I am far

from above hoping the case is vice versa. This is a matter of quite a little humorous despair to me, though not so humorous. It is entirely disgusting to be forever achieving little actions of the heart or body and then taking recourse to reaction. I am utterly convinced that if A's hat blows off while he is sauntering down the street, it is the charming duty of B to pick it up and hand it to A without examining A's face or combing it for gratitude! My God, let me achieve missing my beloved family without yearning that they miss me in return! It requires a less wishy-washy character than the one available to me. My God, however, on the other side of the ledger, it is a pure fact that you are utterly haunting persons in simple retrospect! How we miss every excitable, emotional face among you! I was born without any great support in the event of continued absence of loved ones. It is a simple, nagging, humorous fact that my independence is skin deep, unlike that of my elusive, younger brother and fellow camper.

While bearing in mind that my loss of you is very acute today, hardly bearable in the last analysis, I am also snatching this stunning opportunity to use my new and entirely trivial mastery of written construction and decent sentence formation as explained and slightly enriched upon in that small book, alternately priceless and sheer crap, which you saw me poring over to excess during the difficult days prior to our departure for this place. Though this is quite a terrible bore for you, dear Bessie and Les, superb or suitable construction of sentences holds some passing, amusing importance for a young fool like myself! It would be quite a relief to rid my system of fustian this year. It is in danger of destroying my possible future as a young poet, private scholar, and unaffected person. I beg you both, and perhaps Miss Overman, should you drop by at the library or run into her at your leisure, to please run a cold eye over all that follows and then notify me immediately if you uncover any glaring or merely sloppy errors in fundamental construction, grammar, punctuation, or excellent taste. Should you indeed run into Miss Overman quite by accident or design, please ask her to be merciless and deadly toward me in this little matter, assuring her amiably that I am sick to death of the wide gap of embarrassing differences, among other things, between my writing and speaking voices! It is rotten and worrisome to have two voices. Also please extend to that gracious, unsung woman my everlasting love and respect. Would to God that you, my acknowledged loved ones, would cease and cut out thinking of her in your minds as a fuddy duddy. She is far from a fuddy duddy. In her disarming, modest way, that little bit of a woman has quite a lot of the simplicity and dear fortitude of an unrecorded heroine of the Civil or Crimean War, perhaps the most moving wars of the last few centuries. My God, please take the slight trouble to remember that this worthy woman and spinster has no comfortable home in the present century! The current century,

unfortunately, is a vulgar embarrassment to her from the word go! In her heart of hearts, she would zestfully live out her remaining years as a charming, intimate neighbor of Elizabeth and Jane Bennet, continually being approached by those unequally delicious heroines of "Pride and Prejudice" for sensible and worldly advice. She is not even a librarian at heart, unfortunately. At all events, please offer her any generous specimen of this letter that does not look too personal or vulgar to you, prevailing upon her at the same time not to pass too heavy judgment on my penmanship again. Frankly, my penmanship is not worth the wear and tear on her patience, dwindling energies, and very shaky sense of reality. Also frankly, while my penmanship will improve a little as I grow older, looking less and less like the expression of a demented person, it is mostly beyond redemption. My personal instability and too much emotion will ever be plainly marked in every stroke of the pen, quite unfortunately.

Bessie! Les! Fellow children! God Almighty, how I miss you on this pleasant, idle morning! Pale sunshine is streaming through a very pleasing, filthy window as lie forcibly abed here. Your humorous, excitable, beautiful faces, I can assure you, are suspended before me as perfectly as if they were on delightful strings from the ceiling! We are both in very satisfactory health, Bessie sweetheart. Buddy is eating quite beautifully when the meals are stomachable. While the food itself is not atrocious, it is cooked without a morsel of affection or inspiration, each string bean and simple carrot arriving on the camper's plate quite stripped of its tiny, vegetal soul. The food situation could change in a trice, to be sure, if Mr. and Mrs. Nelson, the cooks, man and wife, a very hellish marriage from casual appearances, would only dare to imagine that every boy who comes into their mess hall is their own beloved child, regardless of from whose loins he sprang in this particular appearance. However, if you had the racking opportunity of chatting for a few minutes with these two persons, you would quite know this is like asking for the moon. A nameless inertia hangs over those two, alternating with fits of unreasonable wrath, stripping them of any will or desire to prepare creditable, affectionate food or even to keep the bent silverware on the tables spotless and clean as a whistle. The sight of the forks alone often whips Buddy into a raw fury. He is working on this tendency, but a revolting fork is a revolting fork. Also, past a certain important, touching point, I am far from at liberty to tamper with that splendid lad's furies, considering his age and stunning function in life.

On second thought, please do not say anything to Miss Overman about my penmanship. It is best for her daily and hourly position to dwell or harp on my rotten penmanship to her heart's content. I am inutterably in that good woman's debt! She has been meticulously trained by the

Board of Education. Quite unfortunately, my rotten penmanship, coupled with the subject of the late hours I enjoy keeping, are very often the only grounds for discussion she finds thoroughly comfortable and familiar. I do not yet know where I have failed her in this respect. I suspect I got us off on quite the wrong foot when I was younger by allowing her to think I am a very serious boy simply because I am an omnivorous reader. Unwittingly, I have left her no decent, human notions that ninety-eight per cent of my life, thank God, has nothing to do with the dubious pursuit of knowledge. We sometimes exchange little persiflages at her desk or while we are stepping over to the card catalogues, but they are very false persiflages, quite without decent bowels. It is very burdensome to us both to have regular communication without bowels, human silliness, and the common knowledge, quite delightful and enlivening in my opinion, that everybody seated in the library has a gall bladder and various other, touching organs under their skin. There is much more to the question than this, but I cannot pursue it profitably today. My emotions are too damnably raw today, I fear. Also the precious five of you are innumerable miles from this place and it is always too damned easy to fail to remember how little I can stand useless separations. While this is often a very stimulating and touching place, I personally suspect that certain children in this world, like your magnificent son Buddy as well as myself, are perhaps best suited to enjoying this privilege only in a dire emergency or when they know great discord in their family life. But let me quickly pass on to more general topics. Oh my God, I am relishing this leisurely communication!

The majority of young campers here, you will be glad to know, could not possibly be nicer or more heartrending from day to day, particularly when they are not thriving with suspicious bliss in cliques that insure popularity or dubious prestige. Few boys, thank God with a bursting heart, that we have run into here are not the very salt of the earth when you can exchange a little conversation with them away from their damn intimates. Unfortunately, here as elsewhere on this touching planet, imitation is the watchword and prestige the highest ambition. It is not my business to worry about the general situation, but I am hardly made of steel. Few of these magnificent, healthy, sometimes remarkably handsome boys will mature. The majority, I give you my heartbreaking opinion, will merely senesce. Is that a picture to tolerate in one's heart? On the contrary, it is a picture to rip the heart to pieces. The counsellors themselves are counsellors in name only. Most of them appear slated to go through their entire lives, from birth to dusty death, with picayune, stunted attitudes towards everything in the universe and beyond. This is a cruel and harsh statement, to be sure. It fails to be harsh enough! You think I am a kind fellow at heart, is that not so? God reward me with hailstones and rocks, I

am not! No single day passes that I do not listen to the heartless indifference and stupidities passing from the counsellors' lips without secretly wishing I could improve matters quite substantially by bashing a few culprits over the head with an excellent shovel or stout club! I would be less heartless, I am hoping, if the young campers themselves were not so damned heartrending and thrilling in their basic nature. Perhaps the most heartrending boy within sound of my ridiculous voice is Griffith Hammersmith. Oh, what a heartrending boy he is! His very name brings the usual fluid to my eyes when I am not exercising decent control over my emotions; I am working daily on this emotional tendency while I am here, but am doing quite poorly. Would to God that loving parents would wait and see their children at a practical age before they name them Griffith or something else that will by no means ease the little personality's burdens in life. My own first name "Seymour" was quite a gigantic, innocent mistake, for some attractive diminutive like "Chuck" or even "Tip" or "Connie" might have been more comfortable for adults and teachers wont to address me in casual conversation; so I have some acquaintance with this petty problem. He, young Griffith Hammersmith, is also seven; however, I am his senior by a brisk and quite trivial matter of three weeks. In physical bulk, he is the smallest boy in the entire camp, being still smaller, to one's amazement and sadness, than your magnificent son Buddy, despite the gross age difference of two years. His load in this appearance in the world is staggering. Please consider the following crosses this excellent, droll, touching, intelligent lad has to bear. Re-sign yourselves to ripping your hearts out by the roots!

A) He has a severe speech impediment. It amounts to far more than a charming lisp, his entire body stumbling at the brink of conversation, so counsellors and other adults are not pleasantly diverted.

B) This little child has to sleep with a rubber sheet on his bed for obvious reasons, similar to our own dear Waker, but quite different in the last analysis. Young Hammersmith's bladder has given up all hope of soliciting any interest or favor.

C) He has had nine (9) different tooth brushes since camp quite opened. He buries or hides them in the woods, like a chap of three or four, or conceals them beneath the leaves and other crap under his bungalow. This he does without humor or revenge or private relish. There is quite an element of revenge in it, but he is not at liberty to enjoy his revenge to the hilt or get any keen satisfaction out of it, so totally has his spirit been dampened or quite smothered by his relatives. The situation is thoroughly subtle and rotten, I assure you.

He, young Griffith Hammersmith, follows your two eldest sons around quite a bit, often pursuing us into every nook and cranny. He is excellent, touching, intelligent company when he is not being hounded by his past and present. His future, I am fairly sick to death to say, looks abominable. I would bring him home with us after camp is over in a minute, with complete confidence, joy, and abandon, were he an orphan. He has a mother, however, a young divorcée with an exquisite, swanky face slightly ravaged by vanity and self-love and a few silly disappointments in life, though not silly to her, we may be sure. One's heart and pure sensuality go out to her, we have found, even though she does such a maddening, crappy job as a mother and woman. Last Sunday afternoon, a stunning day, utterly cloudless, she popped by and invited us to join her and Griffith for a spin in their imposing, ritzy Pierce-Arrow, to be followed by a snack at the Elms before returning. We regretfully declined the invitation. Jesus, it was a frigid invitation! I have heard some stunning, frigid invitations in my time, but this one quite took the cake! I am hoping you would have been slightly amused by her utterly false, friendly gesture, Bessie, but I doubt it; you are not old enough, sweetheart! Not too deep in Mrs. Hammersmith's transparent, slightly comical heart, she was keenly disappointed that we are Griffith's best friends in camp, her mind and admirably quick eye instantaneously preferring Richard Mace and Donald Wiegmueller, two members of Griffith's own bungalow and more to her taste. The reasons were quite obvious, but I will not go into them in an ordinary, sociable letter to one's family. With the passage of time, I am getting used to this stuff; and your son Buddy, as you have very ample reason to know, is no man's fool, despite his charming, tender age on the surface. However, for a young, attractive, bitter, lonely mother with all the municipal advantages of swanky, patrician, facial features, great monetary wealth, unlimited entrée, and bejewelled fingers to show this kind of social disappointment in full view of her young son, a callow child already cursed with a nervous and lonely bladder, is fairly inexcusable and hopeless. Hopeless is too broad, but I see no solution on the horizon to damnable and subtle matters of this kind. I am working on it, to be sure, but one must of necessity consider my youth and quite limited experience in this appearance.

At first, as you know, they put us in different bungalows in their folly, advancing on the premise that it is quite sound and broadening to separate brothers and various members of the same family. However, acting upon a casual, comical remark made by your incomparable son Buddy, with which I heartily concurred, we had a damned pleasant chat with Mrs. Happy on the third or fourth ridiculous day, pointing out to her how completely easy it is to forget Buddy's absurd, budding age and delightfully human need for conversation and lightning ri-

poste, with the lively result that Buddy got permission to move his personal effects as well as his own fine, puny, humorous body in here the following Saturday after inspection. We both continue to find relief, pleasure, and simple justice in this turn of affairs. I am hoping to hell you get to know Mrs. Happy quite intimately when or if you get an opportunity to come up or resourcefully make one. Picture to yourselves a gorgeous brunette, perky, quite musical, with a very nice little sense of humor! It requires all one's powers of self-control to keep from taking her in one's arms when she is strolling about on the grass in one of her tasteful frocks. Her appreciation and fairly spontaneous love for your son Buddy is a handsome bonus to me, making tears spring to the eyes when least expected. One of the many thrills of my existence is to see a young, gorgeous girl or woman from sheer instinct recognize this young lad's worth within a quarter of an hour of casual conversation beside a charming brook that is drying up. Jesus, life has its share of honorable thrills if one but keeps one's eyes open! She, Mrs. Happy, is also a big fan of yours, Bessie and Les, having seen you many times before the footlights in Gotham, usually at the Riverside, near their residence. She unwittingly shares with you, Bessie, a touching heritage of quite perfect legs, ankles, saucy bosoms, very fresh, cute, hind quarters, and remarkable little feet with quite handsome, small toes. You know yourselves what an unexpected bonus it is to run into a fully grown adult with splendid or even quite presentable toes in the last analysis; usually, disastrous things happen to the toes after they leave a darling child's body, you would agree. God bless this gorgeous kid's heart! It is sometimes impossible to believe that this haunting, peppy beauty is fifteen (15) years my senior! I leave it to your own fine and dear judgment, Bessie and Les, whether to allow the younger children to get wind of this, but if perfect frankness is to pass between parent and child as freely by mail as in loving person, which is the relationship I have striven for during my entire life with increasing slight success, then I must admit, in all joviality, to moments when this cute, ravishing girl, Mrs. Happy, unwittingly rouses all my unlimited sensuality. Considering my absurd age, the situation has its humorous side, to be sure, but merely in simple retrospect, I regret to say. On two or three haunting occasions when I have accepted her kind invitation to stop by at the main bungalow for some cocoa or cold beverage after Aquatics Period, I have looked forward with mounting pleasure to the possibility, all too slight for words, of her opening the door, quite unwittingly, in the raw. This is not a comical tumult of emotions while it is going on, I repeat, but merely in simple retrospect. I have not yet discussed this indelicate matter with Buddy, whose sensuality is beginning to flower at the same tender and quite premature age that mine did, but he has already quite guessed that this lovely creature has me in sensual thrall and he has made several humorous remarks. Oh, my God, it is an honor and

privilege to be connected to this arresting young lad and secret genius who will not accept my conversational ruses for the truth! The problem of Mrs. Happy will pass into oblivion as the summer draws to a close, but it would be a great boon, dear Les, if you would recognize that we share your heritage of sensuality, including the telltale ridge of carnality just below your own heavy, sensual, bottom lip, as does our own marvellous, youthful brother, the splendid Walter F. Glass, young Beatrice and Waker Glass, those sterling personages, being comparatively free of the telltale ridge in question. Usually, I think you will agree, I freely trample on signs to go by in the human face, for they are absolutely unreliable or may be obliterated or altered by Father Time, but I never trample on the ridge below the bottom lip, usually a darker shade of red than the rest of the lips. I will not harp on the subject of karma, knowing and quite sympathizing with your disdain for my absorbing and accidental interest in this subject, but I give you my word of honor that the ridge in question is little more than a karmic responsibility; one meets it, one conquers it, or if one does not conquer it, one enters into honorable contest with it, seeking and giving no quarter. I for one do not look forward to being distracted by charming lusts of the body, quite day in and day out, for the few, blissful, remaining years allotted to me in this appearance. There is monumental work to be done in this appearance, of partially undisclosed nature, and I would cheerfully prefer to die an utter dog's death rather than be distracted at crucial moments by a gorgeous, appealing plane or rolling contour of goodly flesh. My time is too limited, quite to my sadness and amusement. While I intend, to be sure, to work on this sensual problem without ceasing, it would be quite a little wind-fall if you, dear Les, as my dear father and hearty friend, would be a complete, shameless, open book with regard to your own pressing sensuality when you were our ages. I have had the opportunity of reading one or two books dealing with sensuality, but they are either inflaming or inhumanly written, yielding little fruit for thought. I am not asking to know what sensual acts you performed when you were our ages; I am asking something worse; I am asking to know what imaginary sensual acts gave lively, unmentionable entertainment to your mind. Without the mind, sensuality quite has no organs to call her own! I fervently urge you to be shameless in this matter. We are human boys and would not love or respect you the less, quite the contrary, if you laid bare your earliest and worst sensual thoughts before us; I am certain we would find them very touching and moving. A decent, utterly frank criterion is always of splendid, temporary use to a young person. In addition, it is not in your son Buddy's nature or mine or your son Walter's to be in the least shocked or disgusted by any sweet, earthly side of humankind. Indeed, all forms of human folly and bestiality touch a very sympathetic chord within our breasts!

Ye gods and little fishes! How cheerful and rewarding it is to have a little leisure for communication with one's family during one's busy camp life! You can easily fail to suspect how damn much blessed time I have on my hands today to attend to the needs of the heart and mind; full explanation to follow shortly.

Continuing my description, confidential and quite presumptuous, of Mrs. Happy, whom I know you could learn to love or pity, she is at great pains in private not to let her rather rotten married life spoil the happiness and sweet burden of having a baby. She is currently pregnant, though having at least six or seven months to go before the event which she understands so badly takes place. It is an up hill struggle for her all the way. She is verily a poor kid with a tiny, distended stomach and a head full of very touching crap based on confusion, maddening books by doctors who share the same popular, narrow horizons, and the information supplied by a dear friend, with whom she roomed at college, a superb bridge player, I understand, named Virginia. Unfortunately, this whole camp is loaded with heartrending, rotten marriages, but she, Mrs. Happy, is the only pregnant person abroad, to my knowledge. Hence, in the absence of the above Virginia, Mrs. Happy has enrolled my services as a conversationalist, these being the services of a child of seven, mind you! It affords me unlimited worry, also trivial amusement on occasion, I am ashamed to say, that she is practically unconscious that she is freely employing a child my age as an audience; however, she is a shy, tremendous talker; if she were not spilling these sad beans to me, to be sure, she would be spilling them to some other emotional face that came along. One is obliged to take everything she says with innumerable grains of salt. She is really a foreigner, though a cute one, to absolute honesty of conversation. She believes that she is a very affectionate person and that Mr. Happy is an unaffectionate person. It is a very conversational theory, but sheer crap, unfortunately. As God is my judge, Mr. Happy is no prize package, but he is quite definitely an affectionate person. At the other end of the pole, unfortunately, Mrs. Happy is a very tenderhearted, quite unaffectionate person. One burns with impatience toward her delusions when one is not secretly coveting her beauty! She does not even know enough on occasion to pick up a little child like your son Buddy, far from his mother and other loved ones, and give him a decent kiss that will resound through the surrounding forest! She so easily has no human idea of the terrible need for ordinary kissing in this wide, ungenerous world! A flashing, charming smile is quite insufficient. A delicious cup of cocoa, decorated with a thoughtful marshmallow, is no decent substitute for a kiss or hearty embrace where a child of five is concerned. She is in more hot water than she knows, I freely suspect. If I am powerless to be of slight use to her as conversationalist before the summer is over, this lovely beauty is in

future danger of immorality; a quite subtle downfall and degrading from mere flirtation and girlish conversation is foreseeable. With her unaffection and great depths of ungenerosity, she is growing prepared to make delirious, sensual love to an attractive stranger, being too proud and hemmed in by self-love to share her countless charms with a real intimate. I am very alarmed. Unfortunately, my position is utterly false at moments of conversational crisis, being torn between good, sensible, merciless advice and corrupting desire to have her open the door in the raw. If you have a moment, dear Les and Bessie, and the younger children as well, pray for an honorable way for me out of this ridiculous and maddening wilderness. Pray quite at your leisure, using your own good, charming words, but stress the point that I cannot achieve an even keel while being torn between quite sound and perfect advice and simple lusts of the body and genitals, despite their youthful size. Please be confident that your prayers will not go down the drain, in my opinion; merely form them in words and they will be absorbed very nicely in the way I mentioned to you at dinner last winter. Should God choose to see me instrumental in this affair, I can be of quite unlimited help to this beautiful, touching kid. The whole root of Mrs. Happy's and Mr. Happy's private evil is that they have failed to become one flesh quite to perfection. With daring and a careful explanation of the proper, courageous method required, it can be achieved quite briskly and in a comparative jiffy. I could demonstrate very easily if Désirée Green were here, who is exceptionally daring and open at the mind for a young girl of eight, but I can manage quite nicely without a demonstration also. Do not hesitate to pray for me in this delicate matter! Waker, old man, I particularly appeal to your thrilling, innocent powers of prayer! Remember that I am not at liberty to excuse myself from keen responsibility because I am a mere boy of seven. If I excuse myself on such flimsy, rotten grounds, then I am a liar or a cowardly fraud and maker of cheap, normal excuses. Unfortunately, I cannot approach Mr. Happy, the husband, in this matter. He is not too approachable in this or any other matter under the sun. Should the proper time come for approachment, I will practically have to strap him to a convenient chair to get his entire attention. He made ropes in his previous appearance, but not very well, somewhere in Turkey or Greece, but I know not which. He was executed for making a defective rope, resulting in the deaths of some influential climbers; however, it was really incredible stubbornness and conceit, joined with neglect, at the root of the matter. As I told you before we left, I am trying like hell to cut down on getting any glimpses while we are up here for a pleasant, ordinary summer. Nine times out of ten, it is an utter waste of time anyhow to let them pass freely through the mind, whether or not the person involved would find an open discussion of the matter helpful, quite spooky, or openly distasteful.

This is going to be a very long letter! Stiff upper lip, Les! I humorously give you my permission to read only one quarter of the entire communication. Freely attribute the longness of the letter to an unexpected bonus of leisure time, which I shall relate shortly. Temporarily explained, I wounded my leg quite badly yesterday and am confined to bed for a change, windfall of windfalls! Guess who skillfully got permission to keep me company and attend to my personal needs! Your beloved son Buddy! He should be returning at any moment now!

We have received quite a few more demerits since your thrilling call from the LaSalle Hotel, which was an unspeakable pleasure for us, despite the rotten connection. I have also mislaid my handsome, new wrist watch during a recent Aquatics Period; however, everybody is going to dive for it again tomorrow or this afternoon, so have no fear, unless it is too hopelessly saturated. Returning to the subject of the demerits, we got most of them for continuously sloppy bungalow, followed by quite a few more in a neat bunch for not singing at pow wow and leaving pow wow without permission. So it goes. Jesus, I hope you can freely sense at this distance how much we miss you, dear Bessie and Les and those other three peanuts after my own heart! Would to God a simple letter were less fraught with the burdens of superb written construction! One begins to despair of sounding quite like oneself, your son and brother, and yet quite uphold the excellent and touching demands of splendid construction. This has the earmarks of being one of the future despairs of my life, but I shall give all my consuming attention to it and hope for an honorable, humorous truce.

A thousand thanks for your amusing and delightful letter and several postcards! We were relieved and overjoyed to hear Detroit and Chicago were not too tough, Les. We were equally delighted to hear that young Mr. Fay was on the same bill in the Windy City; quite juicy news for you, Bessie, if you still have a harmless, social passion for that remarkable chap. I have been meaning to write to that chap out of the blue for a whole year, dating from our rewarding and comical chat together when we shared a taxi during that beautiful downpour; he is a clever and mercifully original fellow and will be widely imitated and stolen from before he is through, mark my words. Close on the heels of kindness, originality is one of the most thrilling things in the world, also the most rare! Kindly give us all the news in your future letters, the more trivial and sweetly unimportant, the more readable. The news about "Bambalina" is excellent and more than arresting! Give it all you have, I beg you! It is a charming tune. If you do it before camp is over, hastily send us one of the first records, as there is a Victrola in poor condition in Mrs. Happy's pleasant quarters and I would

gladly impose upon our peculiar friendship in such a case. Keep up the good work! Jesus, you are a talented, cute, magnificent couple! My admiration for you would be measureless were we not even related, be assured. Bessie, we hope to hell you are enjoying magnificent spirits again, sweetheart, and are not too discontent with being on the road so quickly again. If you have not got around to doing what you faithfully swore up and down you would do to ease my ridiculous mind, please hurry and do it. It is definitely a cyst, in my unhumorous opinion, and some respectable physician should burn or cut it off post haste. I spoke to a personable physician when we were on the train coming up and he said it is quite fairly painless when they remove it, a gentle lop doing the trick very nicely. Oh, God, the human body is so touching, with its countless blemishes and cysts and despised, touching pimples arriving and departing, on adult bodies, when least expected. It is just one more pressing temptation to take off one's hat to God during the distracting day; I personally cannot and will not see Him dispense with human cysts, blemishes, and the odd facial pimple or touching boil! I have never seen Him do anything that is not magnificently in the cards! I pass over this delicate matter and merely send all five of you about 50,000 kisses. Buddy would readily join me in this if he were here. This leads to another delicate matter, I am afraid. Bessie and Les, I soberly address you. Take no offense, but you are both entirely, absolutely, and very painfully wrong about his never missing anybody but me; I refer, of course, to Buddy. You would make me a lot happier, quite frankly spoken, if you didn't press that kind of painful and erroneous crap on me over the phone again, dear Les. It is very hard to leave the phone on your own two feet when your own beloved and talented father says something that damaging, wrong, and quite stupid. The magnificent person in question does not wear his heart on his damnable sleeve like most people, including you and myself. The very first and last thing you must remember about this small, haunting chap is that he will be in a terrible rush all his life to get the door nicely slammed behind him in any room where there is a striking and handsome supply of good, sharp pencils and plenty of paper. I am quite powerless as well as dubiously inclined to alter his course; it is an old affair, hanging upon innumerable points of honor, be assured! As his beloved parents, you may not humanly be expected to lighten his load, but you must not, I beg you, deliberately throw weights of reproof on his little back. Beyond these subtle matters, he is privately the most resourceful creation of God I have ever run into, forever striving not to live a second-hand existence on the fervent recommendation of practically everybody one runs into. He will be swiftly and subtly guiding every child in the family long after I am quite burned out and useless or out of the picture. It is disrespectful and inexcusable for a young boy my age to address his

lovable father this way, but Buddy is the one thing you don't know anything about. Let us quickly pass on to more unticklish topics.

A certain United States congressman, a war buddy of Mr. Happy's, visited the camp last weekend. As he was one of the most unwatchable figures I have watched in many years, it would be wise to skip over his name in this personal letter. A breath of insincerity and personable corruption passed through the camp; the air still stinks to high heaven. The kowtowing and artificial laughing on Mr. Happy's part was beyond earthly description. In the privacy of an impromptu meeting on the porch of her bungalow, I asked Mrs. Happy to take careful pains not to allow the congressman and Mr. Happy's quite sickening responses to him to upset her and that marvellous little embryo while all this unamiable crap is going on. She quite concurred. Later in the day, for her sake, I painfully accepted Mr. Happy's request and command that Buddy and I come to their bungalow after third mess and sing and do a few routines for his guest, the congressman in question. I have no right whatever to accept a corrupt invitation for my beloved younger brother; I am quite hoping, secretly, that the Almighty will take me to task, quite harshly, for this criminal presumption; I have no business making snap decisions without consulting this brilliant youth. However, we went into consultation after the invitation was accepted, privately agreeing not to wear our taps when we went over, but this was a very false and self-deceptive relief for us. In the heat of the evening, we consented to do a soft shoe! In all irony, we were in superb form, as Mrs. Happy played her accordion for accompaniment; it is very hard for us not to be in superb form if a gorgeous, untalented creature accompanies us rottenly on the accordion; it touches us to the quick, amusing us quite a bit, too. For all our extreme youth, we remain quite vulnerable, amusing foils where gorgeous, untalented girls are concerned. I am working on it, but it is a fairly severe problem.

Please, please, PLEASE do not grow impatient and ice cold to this letter because of its gathering length! When you are ready to despair, swiftly recall how much leisure I have on my hands today and how needful I am to have some pleasant communication with the five absent family members of my heart! I am not constructed for continued absences; I have never claimed to be constructed for them. Also, much of my news and general communication promises to be very absorbing, delightful, and emollient.

As you damned well know, we never change much in our hearts. However, we are getting slightly tan and looking quite a lot like healthy children and campers. We may need all the damnable health we can get, to be sure. An unengaging incident recently occurred. In addition to the common information that we are the children of the es-

teemed Gallagher & Glass and that we are fairly experienced and skilled entertainers in our own right, thanks to your touching and thrilling example, news has travelled round about the camp that the both of us, your small son Buddy and I, have been notorious, heavy readers from a tender age and in addition have certain abilities, prowesses, knacks, and facilities of very uncertain value and the gravest responsibility, the latter being warmly attached to us like cement from previous appearances, particularly the last two, tough ones. Your son Buddy is currently taking most of it at the flood. It requires broad shoulders, I can assure you. Consider, if you have a minute, the sheer, juicy novelty and food for gossip and malice of a chap of five who is an experienced reader and writer, daily increasing in fluency by leaps and bounds, and who is also, despite his ridiculous age on the surface, an exciting authority on the human face with all its touching masks, vanities, spurts of pure courage, and frightening deceits! That is this small fellow's present position. Continue to imagine what would inevitably blossom out if some of this confidential information leaked out and became common fact or rumor among campers and counselors alike. That is quite what has happened. Unfortunately, as he well knows, most of the recent commotion is his own reckless fault. Oh, my God, this is a droll and thrilling companion to have on life's bumpy road! Here is the entire crappy incident in a nut shell, as follows: Mr. Nelson, a born neophile and enthusiastic talebearer and gossip, is in utter charge of the mess hall, as already related, along with Mrs. Nelson, a termagant, unhappy woman, and inspired trouble maker. When nobody is in the mess hall, it is the only charming place in camp where one can get any blissful privacy whatsoever. Buddy has had his eye on this haven from the word go. On Tuesday afternoon, a sultry day, he bet Mr. Nelson that he could memorize the book Mr. Nelson chanced to be reading within the space of twenty minutes to a half-hour. If he did it perfectly, then Mr. Nelson in his turn, to show his appreciation for the controversial accomplishment, would let us, the Glass brothers, use the empty, pleasant mess hall in our spare time for reading, writing, language study, and other aching, private needs, such as evacuating our heads of second-hand and third-hand opinions and views that are buzzing around this camp like flies. My God, how I deplore and uncountenance bargains of any kind, be they with responsible adults or adults without honor! Without my knowledge of this quite terrible fact, this astounding, independent chap went ahead and made this bargain with Mr. Nelson, despite our countless discussions, in the wee hours, on the desirability of keeping our mouths firmly shut on the subject of some of our endowments and peculiarities. Fortunately, the incident was not a total loss or debacle. The book itself chanced to be "Hardwoods of North America," by Foley and Chamberlin, two magnificently modest and quiet men, long admired by me from my reading experience, with very infectious love

for trees, especially beech and white oak; they have a charming, unreasonable preference for beech trees! So the exchange of words between Buddy and me was not too unbearably harsh or unpleasant; no tears, thank God, were spent. However, Whitey Pittman, the head counsellor, hailing from Baltimore, Md., quite a laughing intimate of Mr. Nelson's, got wind of the accomplishment when it was completed and freely plucked the opportunity to cash in on it in conversation. In all fairness and fascination, he has a remarkable gift for increasing his own prestige at some child's expense; an intelligent scavenger and conversational parasite. He is the same person, a fellow twenty-six years of age, no spring chicken to be sure, who said to Buddy in the midst of a throng of strangers: "I thought you were supposed to be such a witty kid." Is that a conscientious remark to make to a little fellow of five? Thank God for the avoidance of shame and embarrassment to the whole family, I had no decent weapon on my person when this revolting, crappy remark was made; however, quite afterwards, I embraced an opportunity to tell Roger Pittman, the full name his hapless parents gave him, that I would kill him or myself, possibly before nightfall, if he spoke to this chap again in that manner, or any other five-year-old chap, in my presence. I believe I could have curbed this criminal urge at the crucial moment, but one must painfully remember that a vein of instability runs through me quite like some turbulent river; this cannot be overlooked; I have left this troublesome instability uncorrected in my previous two appearances, to my folly and disgust; it will not be corrected by friendly, cheerful prayer. It can only be corrected by dogged effort on my part, thank God; I cannot honorably or intimately pray to some charming, divine weakling to step in and clean my mess up after me; the very prospect turns my stomach. However, the human tongue could all too easily be the cause of my utter degrading in this appearance, unless I get a move on. I have been trying like hell since our arrival to leave a wide margin for human ill-will, fear, jealousy, and gnawing dislike of the commonplace. Do not read this rash remark out loud to the twins or possibly let it fall on Boo Boo's ears prematurely, but I admit, with maddening tears coursing down my unstable face, that I do not in my heart hold out unlimited hope for the human tongue as we know it today.

If the above paragraph is too illegible and irksome, try to recall that I am writing at a swift, terrible rate of speed, with admirable penmanship quite out of the question. In another handful of minutes or quarter hours, it will be time for supper; I am writing against time. In the Midget bungalow, one is required to sleep like a dog for ten, exasperating hours every night, the bungalow being plunged into darkness at nine o'clock sharp. I have approached Mr. Happy in this matter several times, but to no avail. My God, he is a maddening man; if he

does not move one to wrath, he moves one to hysterical laughter, an equal waste of time. If you could possibly write a short, amiable, crisp letter, dear Les, if I may address you personally, advising him that if one knows even the very rudiments of sensible breathing, ten hours of sleep is sheer folly and imposition. We have our flashlights, to be sure, but the arrangement remains a striking inconvenience to us, entangling us in bad light and ill humor.

My contempt for myself for showing you merely the black and quite dank side of camp life is immeasurable. In this rotten attitude, I have failed to mention the countless things that are zipping along with smoothness and beauty; despite my gloomy remarks in the above paragraphs, each day has been generously studded with happiness, sensuous pleasure, rejoicing, and fairly explosive laughter. Many sweet animals loom into view when least expected, such as chipmunks, unpoisonous snakes, but no deer. I am taking the dubious liberty, Les, of sending you a few quills from a porcupine, dead but not diseased; they may be a perfect answer to your old problem with the softness and breakability of tooth picks. The general scenery is spell-binding, both underfoot as well as to the sides. To my joy and sheer wonder, your son Buddy has turned out to be utterly and thrillingly nemophilous! It is an unexpected revelation to me to see him shape up in this manner. While I take keen relish in country affairs, too, it is merely up to a point; in my heart of hearts, I am outside my true element when away from cold, heartrending cities of ludicrous size after the manner of New York or London. Buddy, on the other hand, will forever break loose from city connections, it is quite plain to see; we will not be able to restrain him in another mere handful of years. I wish you could see him striking through the dense forest here, when the powers that be are not minding everybody's business for them, moving with heartrending stealth, like a magnificent, amusing, berserk, Indian messenger. Each night, to our entertainment and equal chagrin, I put untold quantities of iodine on his stubborn, funny body, mutilated from the blackberry thorns and other damnable outgrowths. Our pleasant consumption of possibly a dozen books, excellent as well as mediocre, before departure, on the subject of plants, edible and otherwise, has been a superb boon to us, allowing us to cook many decent meals, under the rose, of steamed pigweed, young nettles, purslane, as well as the last of the tender fiddle heads, using the canteen cup as cooking receptacle and frequently being joined by that heartrending little peanut, Griffith Hammersmith, whose appetite in congenial surroundings is quite stupefying and thrilling. Lest it slip my vacant mind, Buddy asked me to tell you, Bessie sweetheart, to send him some more tablets without lines, also some apple butter and corn meal, as he is practically living on the latter, I daresay, when we are able to prepare a pleasant, leisurely meal in peace. Be assured that the

corn meal is very nutritive for him; his little body is unusually suited to corn and barley, if the truth be known. He will write to you very soon, given the right opportunity and inclination. My God, is he a busy boy! I have never known him busier, to the best of my recollection. He has written 6 new stories, entirely humorous in places, about an English chap recently returned from some stimulating adventures abroad. It is an indescribable reward to see a person five years of age sit back on his dear, comical, fleshless haunches and dash off an engaging yarn with zest and no little acumen! I give you my word of honor you will hear from this chap one day; no nightfall passes that I do not mentally take off my hat to you for bringing him into the world; your loving, charming agency in this lad's general birth remains unspeakably moving to me; the picture is even more moving and rewarding when one considers the abominable glimpse I had at recess period after Christmas vacation, revealing that our intimacy with you, dear Les, if you are still there, in our last appearance, was fairly slight and fraught with discordancy. Continuing at leisure, as for my own writing, I have completed about twenty-five (25) reasonable poems for which I have a low regard, followed by 16 poems that have some merit but no enduring generosity, as well as about 10 others that have turned out to be in unconscious, disastrous imitation of William Blake, William Wordsworth, and one or two other dead geniuses whose sudden passing never ceases to cut me like a knife. With regard to my poetry, the general picture is poor and gnawing. It is my absolute opinion that the only poem of personal, haunting interest to me that I have written so far this summer is one I have not written at all. During your expensive phone call from the La Salle, you will recall, I mentioned that we and the other campers had spent the entire day at the Wahl Fisheries. On the way there, a lunch of sandwiches, quite filling, was prepared for us at Kallborn Hotel, a well-bred, popular hotel frequented by loving, young couples on their honeymoons. Strolling by the lake with Buddy and Hammersmith, I saw a couple sporting and laughing. Putting two and two together, and suddenly feeling disposed, from head to toe, to feel harmony with those two unknown, young lovers, I wished to write a poem intimating that the one millionth groom at the Kallborn Hotel had just playfully splashed the millionth bride; I have personally witnessed young lovers doing the same thing at Long Beach and other popular resorts. Bessie dear, it is a little sight you would enjoy, thrill to, and faintly smile at with a portion of your brain and heart; however, there is no demand for this in any immortal poetry I have run into. One is left holding the bag. Let us pass over this prickly topic. For your private information and possibly Miss Overman's, but draw the line a bit firmly there as she has no great gift for not repeating a confidence, I regret to say, we are continuing to master Italian and reviewing Spanish after taps. It is a broad, rotten hint, but some new batteries would be a windfall.

Les, it is such a relief and pleasure to dash off a few lines without listening for the damnable strains of the bugle that my ardor is running away with me. If you are tired or frankly bored reading, stop instantaneously, with my heartfelt permission. I am admittedly taking advantage of your good will, fatherhood, and notorious, humorous patience. Bessie, I know, will kindly give you the gist of any communication that follows; light a cigarette with abandon, drop my damn letter like a hot potato, and go down to the lobby of whatever hotel you are staying at and enjoy yourself with a free conscience and my undying love; a game of pool or pinochle might be refreshing!

Continuing at blissful random, we are not too popular with the other campers in the same bungalow as yet, principally Douglas Folsom, Barry Sharfman, Derek Smith, Jr., Tom Lantern, Midge Immington, and Red Silverman. Tom Lantern! Is that or is that not an appealing name to go through life with? Unfortunately, this youth seems determined not to turn on any of his lights, so his delightful name is in danger of going down the drain. This opinion is too harsh. My opinions are all too frequently too damn harsh for words. I am working on it, but I have given way to harshness too often this summer to stomach. God speed you, Tom Lantern, with or without your lights turned on! There is one boy on the top floor of this poorly constructed bungalow who is the very salt of the earth; no compliment heaped upon him would be too lavish, be assured. He is often dashing freely down the flimsy stairs in his leisure moments and passing the time of day with your unworthy sons, discussing with a humorous and open heart his friends, acquaintances, and foes in Troy, New York, a large hamlet beyond Albany, and generally finding life and humanity magnificent under the deceptive surfaces. His valiance would break your heart, I trust, or painfully chip it; an immeasurable amount is required just to say a hearty hello to us; I have neglected to say that we are currently being ostracized. His name is John Kolb, 8 ½ years of age, by rights an Intermediate, but there was no room for him in the Intermediates, so we are privileged to have his chivalrous company in this crowded building. I beg you to write that valiant, good-humored name upon your memory for now and all future time! Unfortunately, anything over five minutes of conversation bores this dauntless, active boy to tears, and one looks up, to one's touching amusement, to find his winning, kind face gone from the premises! I would give countless years of my life to be of some future help to this lad. He kindly gave me his word of honor, quite blind to the reasons that made me ask him, that he would never swallow whiskey or any other liquors on reaching adulthood, but I have damnable, sad doubts that he will keep his word. He has a waiting tendency to drink himself into a soothing stupor; it can be defeated utterly if he uses his entire mind, with a few lights turned on, but I am afraid he is too kind and impatient a boy to

use his entire mind for anything. We have his address in Troy, New York. If I am alive when the crucial years arrive, I shall rush to Troy, New York, without a second's delay and if necessary act in his splendid behalf; it would slightly require drinking the cup that stupefies myself, but you have to understand that we have quite lost our hearts to this boy without a shred of prejudice in his heart. My God, a valorous boy, 8½ years of age, is a moving thing! It is too ironical to bear, but I give you my word that valorous people require far more protection than meets the eye. I kiss your noble, unsung feet, John Kolb, native of Troy, brother of an uncruel Hector!

As for other matters, we are mixing admirably when opportunity allows, joining in all the incessant sports and other activities, enjoying many of them to the hilt. It is a break for us that we are fairly magnificent, limited athletes; at baseball, perhaps the most heartrending, delicious sport in the Western Hemisphere, even our worst foes would not deny our unassuming prowess. This is no conceit or credit to us, being a humorous bonus from the last appearance; any game with a ball we achieve easy excellence with a little application; any game without a ball we tend, unfortunately, to stink. Apart from games and activities, we are making a handful of lifelong friends quite by accident. You, however, in the strenuous position of being our beloved parents, Bessie, must try quite hard to look at certain matters straight in the face with utter refusal to flinch as one or two factors loom large. I tell you now, this very moment, to please tuck away someplace utterly unmelancholy in your memory against a rainy day, that until the hour we finish our lives there will always be innumerable chaps who get very seething, and thoroughly inimical even when they see our bare faces alone coming over the horizon. Mark you, I am saying our faces alone, independent of our peculiar and often offensive personalities! There would be a fairly humorous side to the matter if I had not watched it happen with sickening dismay too many hundred times in my brief years. I am hoping, however, that as we continue to improve and refine our characters by leaps and bounds, striving each day to reduce general snottiness, surface conceits, and too damn much emotion, coupled with several other qualities quite rotten to the core, we will antagonize and inspire less murder, on sight or repute alone, in the hearts of fellow human beings. I expect good results from these measures, but not thrilling results; I do not honestly see thrilling results in the general picture. However, don't let this place too large a shadow on your hearts! Joys, consolations, and amusing compensations are manifold! Have you ever personally seen two such maddening, indomitable chaps as your absent sons? In the midst and heat of fury and gathering adversity, do our young lives not remain an unforgettable waltz? Indeed, perhaps, if you perversely use your imagination, perhaps the only waltz Ludwig van Beethoven ever

wrote on his deathbed! I will stand without shame on this presumptuous thought. My God, what thunderous, thrilling liberties it is possible to take with the simple, misunderstood waltz if only man dares! In my whole life, I give you my word, I have never risen from bed in the morning without hearing two splendid taps of the baton in the distance! In addition to distant music, adventure and romance press us hard; absorbing interests and diversions kindly prevail; not once have I seen us unprotected, thank God, against half-heartedness. One has no business spitting at these hopeful blessings. Piled on top of all this good fortune, what else does one find? A capacity to make many wonderful friends in small numbers whom we will love passionately and guard from uninstructional harm until our lives are finished and who, in turn, will love us, too, and never let us down without very great regret, which is a lot better, more guerdoning, more humorous than being let down without any regret at all, be assured. I merely mention some of this painful crap to you, need I say, so that it will be available to your sweet memories either before or after our untimely departures; do not let it get you down in the meantime. Also on the hearty, revitalizing side of the ledger, bear in mind, with good cheer and amusement, that we were quite firmly obliged, as well as often dubiously privileged, to bring our creative genius with us from our previous appearances. One hesitates to suggest what we will do with it, but it is incessantly at our side, though slow as hell in development. It is insuperably strong after taps up here, I find, when one's ridiculous brains finally lie down and behave themselves and the entire, decent mind is at long last quiet and not racing around in the slightest; in that interlude, one watches it play in the magnificent light I mentioned to you privately last May, Bessie, when we were chatting back and forth affably in the kitchen. I am also watching the same heartening action take place in the mind of that magnificent person and companion you gave me for a brother. When the light mentioned above is insuperably strong, I go to sleep in absolute assurance that we, your son Buddy and I, are every bit as decent, foolish, and human as every single boy or counsellor in this camp, quite tenderly and humorously equipped with the same likable, popular, heartbreaking blindnesses. My God, think of the opportunities and thrusts that lie ahead when one knows without a shred of doubt how commonplace and normal one is at heart! With just a little steadfast devotion to uncommon beauty and passing rectitudes of the heart, combined with our dead certainty that we are as normal and human as anybody else, and knowing it is not just a question of sticking out our tongues, like other boys, during the first, beautiful snowfall of the year, who can prevent us from doing a little good in this appearance? Who, indeed, I say, provided we draw on all our resources and move as silently as possible. "Silence! Go forth, but tell no man!" said the splendid

Tsiang Samdup. Quite right, though very difficult and widely abhorred.

While I am quite frankly skimming over on the debit side, I ought to point out, regretfully, that the great percentage of your children, Bessie and Les, if you have not already repaired to the diversions of the lobby, have a fairly terrible capacity for experiencing pain that does not always properly belong to them. Sometimes this very pain has been shirked by a total stranger, perhaps a lazy chap in California or Louisiana, whom we have not even had the pleasure of meeting and exchanging words with. Speaking for your absent son Buddy as well as myself, I see no way to quit experiencing a little pain, here and there, till we have fulfilled our opportunities and obligations in the present, interesting, humorous bodies. Half the pain around, unfortunately, quite belongs to somebody else who either shirked it or did not know how to grasp it firmly by the handle! However, when we have fulfilled our opportunities and obligations, dear Bessie and Les, I give you my word that we will depart in good conscience and humor for a change, which we have never entirely done in the past. Again speaking for your beloved son Buddy, who should be back any moment, I also give you my word of honor that one of us will be present at the other chap's departure for various reasons; it is quite in the cards, to the best of my knowledge. I am not painting a gloomy picture! This will not be tomorrow by a long shot! I personally will live at least as long as a well-preserved telephone pole, a generous matter of thirty (30) years or more, which is surely nothing to snicker at. Your son Buddy has even longer to go, you will freely rejoice to know. In the happy interim, Bessie, please ask Les to read these next remarks when or if he returns from the lobby or any other enjoyable place of his choice. Les, I beg you to be patient with us in your leisure time. Try your utmost not to mind too much and get very blue when we don't remind you very freely and movingly of other regular boys, perhaps boys from your own childhood. At frequent black moments, swiftly recall in your heart that we are exceedingly regular boys from the word go, merely ceasing to be very regular when something slightly important or crucial comes up. My God, I utterly refuse to wound you with further discussion of this kind, but I cannot honestly erase any of the previous, sweeping, tasteless remarks. I am afraid they must stand. Also, it would not be doing you a true favor if I did erase them. Largely through my own cheap softness and cowardice, you have twice before in previous appearances gently neglected to face up to similar issues; I have no idea if I could stand to see you repeat this pain. Postponed pain is among the most abominable kind to experience.

For a pleasant change, here is a cheerful and quite uplifting bit of news to put under your belts. It quite takes my own personal breath away. Either this coming winter or the winter which briskly follows, you, Bessie, Les, Buddy, and the undersigned will all be going to one of the most pregnant and important parties that Buddy and I will ever attend, either in each other's harmonious company or quite alone. At this party, entirely in the night time, we will meet a man, very overweight, who will make us a slightly straightforward business and career offer at his leisure; it will involve our easy, charming prowess as singers and dancers, but this is very far from all it will involve. He, this corpulent man, will not too seriously change the regular, normal course of our childhood and early, amusing youth by this business offer, but I can assure you that the surface upheaval will be quite enormous. However, that is only half my glimpse. Personally speaking, quite from a full heart, the other half is more after my own heart and comfort. The other half presents a stunning glimpse of Buddy, at a later date by innumerable years, quite bereft of my dubious, loving company, writing about this very party on a very large, jet-black, very moving, gorgeous typewriter. He is smoking a cigarette, occasionally clasping his hands and placing them on the top of his head in a thoughtful, exhausted manner. His hair is gray; he is older than you are now, Les! The veins in his hands are slightly prominent in the glimpse, so I have not mentioned the matter to him at all, partially considering his youthful prejudice against veins showing in poor adults' hands. So it goes. You would think this particular glimpse would pierce the casual witness's heart to the quick, disabling him utterly, so that he could not bring himself to discuss the glimpse in the least with his beloved, broadminded family. This is not exactly the case; it mostly makes me take an exceedingly deep breath as a simple, brisk measure against getting dizzy. It is his room that pierces me more than anything else. It is all his youthful dreams realized to the full! It has one of those beautiful windows in the ceiling that he has always, to my absolute knowledge, fervently admired from a splendid reader's distance! All round about him, in addition, are exquisite shelves to hold his books, equipment, tablets, sharp pencils, ebony, costly typewriter, and other stirring, personal effects. Oh, my God, he will be overjoyed when he sees that room, mark my words! It is one of the most smiling, comforting glimpses of my entire life and quite possibly with the least strings attached. In a reckless manner of speaking, I would far from object if that were practically the last glimpse of my life. However, those two, tantalizing, tiny portals in my mind I mentioned last year are still far from closed; another brisk year or so will probably turn the tide. If it were up to me, I would gladly shut the portals myself; in only three or four cases, such as the present one, is the nature of the glimpse worth the wear and tear on one's normalness and blessed peace of mind, as well as the unembar-

rassment of one's parents. I quite ask you, though, to imagine how marvellous it is to see this chap, your son Buddy, spring in a trice from a lad of five, who has already lost his heart to every pencil in the universe, into a mature, swarthy author! How I wish I could lie on a pleasant cloud in the distant future, perhaps with a good, firm, Northern Spy apple, and read every single word he writes about this eventful, pregnant party in the offing! The first thing I hope this gifted chap describes, as a quite mature, swarthy author, is the beautiful positions of the bodies in the living room before we leave the house on the night in question. The most beautiful thing in the world, in a fairly large family going out to a party or even a casual restaurant, is the easy going, impatient positions of all the bodies in the living room while everybody is waiting for some slowpoke to get ready! I mentally implore the touching, gray-haired author of the distant future to begin with the beautiful positions of the bodies in the living room; in my opinion, it is the most beautiful place to begin! I give you my word of honor that I find the entire glimpse of the evening quite a sober joy to behold, from start to finish. I find it magnificent how beautiful, loose ends find each other in the world if one only waits with decent patience, resilience, and quite blind strength. Les, if you have returned from the lobby, I know you toy honorably with disbelief in God or Providence, or which ever word you find less maddening or embarrassing, but I give you my word of honor, on this sultry, memorable day of my life, that one cannot even light a casual cigarette unless the artistic permission of the universe is freely given! Permission is too broad, but somebody's head must freely nod before the cigarette can be touched to the flame of the match. This is also too broad, I regret with my entire body to say. I am convinced God will kindly wear a human head, quite capable of nodding, for the benefit of some admirer who enjoys picturing Him that way, but I personally am not partial to His wearing a human head and would perhaps turn on my heel and walk away if He put one on for my dubious benefit. This is an exaggeration, to be sure; I would be powerless to walk away from Him, of all people, even if my life depended on it.

To my amusement, I am sitting here, quite suddenly, alone in the abandoned bungalow, crying or weeping, which ever you prefer to say. It will pass in a trice, I don't doubt, but it is saddening and exhausting to realize in unguarded interludes what a young bore I am, seventy-five to eighty per cent of my life so far. I am freely saddling you, one and all, parent and child, with a very long, boring letter, quite filled to the brim with my stilted flow of words and thoughts. Speaking in my own behalf, it is less my fault than quickly meets the eye; among many, onerous things, it is all too easy for a boy of my dubious age and experience to fall easy prey to fustian, poor taste, and unwanted spurts of showing off. As God is my judge, I am working on

it, but it is a taxing struggle without a magnificent teacher I can turn to with absolute abandon and trust. If one has no magnificent teacher, one is obliged to install one in one's mind; it is a perilous thing to do if you were born cravenhearted, as I was. In my own, transparent defense, however, I have been lying here all day picturing your faces, Bessie and Les, combined with the haunting, fresh faces of the children, so the need to be in excessive touch with you is circumstantial. "Damn braces, bless relaxes!" cried the splendid William Blake. This is quite right, but it is not very easy on splendid families and nice people who get a little nervous or worn to a frazzle when their loving, eldest son and brother is damning braces all over the place.

The reason I am in bed is fairly amusing, and I have delayed all too long in mentioning it, but it does not consume my personal interest as much as it might. Yesterday was rife with one trivial misfortune after another. After breakfast, every Midget and Intermediate in the entire camp was obliged to go strawberrying, possibly the last dubious opportunity of the season. In the course of the morning, I wounded my damned leg. We drove miles and miles to where the strawberry patches were in a little, ramshackle, old-fashioned, maddening cart, quite fake, drawn by two horses where at least four were required. The cart had a ridiculous piece of iron sticking out of the hub of one of the wooden wheels, penetrating my thigh or femur a good inch and three-quarters or two inches as we were pushing the God forsaken cart out of the mud; it had rained cats and dogs previously, on the day before, making the road entirely crappy for a strawberry expedition. With a dash of maddening melodrama, I was rushed to the infirmary, possibly three miles to the rear, on the back of Mr. Happy's also God forsaken motorcycle. It had several fleeting, humorous moments. Quite in the first place, it is very hard for me, I regret to say, to be less than contemptuous and scathing around Mr. Happy personally. I am working on it, but that man brings to the fore supplies of hidden malice I thought I had worked out of my system years ago. In my own, flimsy defense, let me suggest that a man thirty years of age has no earthly business forcing small, useless boys to push a damnable, fake cart out of the mud where a veritable team of four or six, young, stalwart horses was really required. My malice shot forward like a snake. I told him on the motorcycle before we started back that Buddy and I, as he well knew, were experienced, fairly talented singers and dancers, like our parents, though still amateurs. I suggested that you would probably sue him, Les, for every dime he had in the event that I lost my ridiculous leg from infection, loss of blood, or gangrene. He pretended not to mind or heed this utter nonsense, which it was; nevertheless, it didn't do his driving any good, twice nearly killing us before we reached our destination. Although, from my point of view entirely, it was a risible situation from the word go.

Fortunately, I find that if a situation is funny or risible enough, I tend to bleed less profusely. On the other hand, while I personally enjoy attributing the stopping of the bleeding to the humor of the situation, it is possible that the damnable motorcycle seat was resting against a pressure point; my pressure points are usually quite springy, with a pleasant pulse. What is beyond debate is that Mr. Happy was far from delighted to see the blood of a young camper, connected with him merely by enrollment and money, distributed on the back of his new motorcycle, seat, wheel, fender, and tire sides. There was no question of regarding it as his own; he would not even regard Mrs. Happy's blood as his own, so how would he feel a human connection with the blood of a strange child with prominent, quite ugly, ludicrous features?

At the infirmary, a comical shambles, though possibly clean as a whistle in the last analysis, Miss Culgerry cleaned the wound and bandaged me. She is a young girl and registered nurse, age unknown to me, far from gorgeous or lovely, but with a trim, superb body, which most of the counsellors and one or two of the Seniors are trying very hard to make physical love to before they have to go back to college. It is the old story, I am afraid. She is a quiet person without any private resources or ability to make sound, first-hand decisions. Under the countless surfaces, she is confused and disastrously excited to be the only available, female beauty in the camp, Mrs. Happy being out of the picture. A sober, passive girl with a voice that sounds very competent in the infirmary, she gives the impression of always keeping her head in a ticklish situation, but it is merely a heartrending pose. In a cruel manner of speaking, this young woman may well have lost her head before she was born; it is certainly not on her shoulders at this stage of the game. Only her deceptive voice, which sounds quite cool and competent, in the mess hall as well as the infirmary, is keeping her out of the complete clutches of the counsellors and Seniors mentioned above, who are all young, very healthy, very gross in safe numbers, and quite cruelly attentive to susceptible girls, particularly if they are not of classic beauty. The situation is alarming and worrisome, but my hands are tied. One knows at first glance that she has never discussed anything quite frankly with either child or adult acquaintances, so there is no approaching her in this matter; however, with another full month of camp life to go, I personally would not answer for her safety if she were my child. The question of virginity, to be sure, is a ticklish one; what criteria I have carefully read on the subject are quite open to question and heated debate, but that is not the point in question here. The point in question here is that this lass, Miss Culgerry, perhaps twenty-five years old, with no true, private head on her shoulders, coupled with a voice that deceptively sounds competent and full of excellent horse sense, is in no position to

decide with intensive, personal honor and forethought about such an important matter as her own pretty maidenhead; this is my forward opinion. It is, of course, no better or more final, to my regret, than the forward opinion of any other person on the face of the earth. Without keeping up a merciless guard, day and night, the variety of forward opinions in this world could easily destroy one's sanity; I am not exaggerating; in the last analysis, how long can one carry on with rotten, unreliable criteria, very touching and human to examine, respect, and uphold, but entirely liable to go to pieces with a sharp change of company or passing scenery? You ask me many times in the course of my life, Bessie dear, why I drive myself like a humorous dog; in a fragmentary sense, that is exactly why I drive myself. Quite in the first place, I am the eldest boy in our personal family. Think how practical, pleasant, and thrilling it would be if one could open one's mouth, from time to time, and something other than sheer, forward, unreliable opinion came out! Unfortunately, a young jackass of the first water, I am weeping slightly as I make this remark. There is quite a bit of cause to weep, fortunately. If you jump to the conclusion that I regard one thing as personal opinion, such as the loss or preservation of a damsel's virginity, and some other thing as quite unassailable, respectable fact, you will be jumping to a very pleasant, easygoing conclusion, but you will be bitterly wrong. Bitterly is too broad, but you will miss the terrible mark by a mile. I have never seen a quite unassailable, respectable fact that was not the first cousin, at least, if not closer, to personal opinion. Let us say, if you can stomach a small, passing explanation, that you leisurely come home from a matinee performance, dear Bessie, and soberly ask the person who opened the door for you, myself, your crazy son, Seymour Glass, if the twins have had their bath yet. I will heartily reply yes. My firm, personal opinion is that I have personally deposited their wiry, elusive bodies in the tub and have personally insisted that they use the soap and not just get water all over the floor and generally squirt around. My young hands are even still wet from my offices! One is tempted to say that this is unassailable, respectable fact that the twins have been bathed, as desired! It is not! It is not even unassailable, respectable fact that the twins are home! There is even quite a question of pressing doubt, in the last analysis, I daresay, that any marvellous twins, with snappy tongues and amusing ears, have ever joined our family at any time in the past! For the dubious satisfaction of calling anything in this beautiful, maddening world an unassailable, respectable fact, we are quite firmly obliged, like good-humored prisoners, to fall back on the flimsy information offered in excellent faith by our eyes, hands, ears, and simple, heartrending brains. Do you call that a superb criterion? I do not! It is very touching, without a shadow of a doubt, but it is far, far from superb. It is utter, blind reliance on heartrending, personal agencies. You are familiar with the expression "go-between;" even the

human brain is a charming go-between! I was born without any looming confidence in any go-between on the face of the earth, I am afraid, an unfortunate situation, to be sure, but I have no business failing to take a moment to tell you the cheerful truth of the matter. Here, however, we move quite closer to the crux of the constant turmoil in my ridiculous breast. While I have no confidence whatsoever in go-betweens, personal opinion, and unassailable, respectable facts, I am also, in my heart, exceedingly fond of them all; I am hopelessly touched to the quick at the bravery of every magnificent human being accepting this charming, flimsy information every heartrending moment of his life! My God, human beings are brave creatures! Every last, touching coward on the face of the earth is unspeakably brave! Imagine accepting all these flimsy, personal agencies at charming, face value! Quite at the same time, to be sure, it is a vicious circle. I am sadly convinced that it would be a gentle, durable favor to everybody if someone broke through this vicious circle. One often wishes, however, there were not such a damn rush about it. One is never more separated from one's charming, loved ones than when one even ponders this delicate matter. Unfortunately, there is a great rush about it in my own case; I am quite referring to the shortness of this appearance. What I am seeking, with the very ample but in some ways quite scrawny amount of time left in this appearance, is a solution to the problem that is both honorable and unheartless. Here, however, I drop the subject like a hot potato; I have merely scratched one of its myriad surfaces.

Upon bandaging my leg very badly and amusingly, as well as keeping up a cool, falsely competent conversation that could drive one to drink if unsupported by a little self-control, Miss Culgerry sent me back to my bungalow, with an amusing crutch, to wait for the doctor to come from the town of Hapworth, where he lives and has his dubious practice. He, the doctor, arrived shortly after third mess, transporting me back to the infirmary to take eleven (11) stitches in my leg. A disagreeable problem arose in this connection, quite damnable. I was offered a touch of anesthesia, which I politely declined. Quite in the first place, way back on Mr. Happy's damnable motorcycle, I had snapped the communication of pain between the leg and the brain, sheerly for my own convenience. I had not used the method since the little accident involving my jawbone and lips last summer. One sometimes despairs that anything peculiar one learns will ever come in handy more than once or even just once, but it surely does, with a little patience; I have even used the clove knot on two occasions since we got here, which I thought would surely go down the drain! When I politely declined the anesthesia, the doctor assumed I was showing off, Mr. Happy, at his side, sharing this maddening opinion. Like a born fool, which I can assure you I am, I foolishly demonstrated that I

had snapped the communication of pain utterly. It would have been more foolish and quite offensive to tell them straight to their falsely patient faces that I prefer not to allow myself or any child in the family to give up his or her state of consciousness for flimsy reasons; until I get further word on the subject, the human state of consciousness is dubiously precious to me. After several minutes of heated, rotten debate with Mr. Happy, I exacted the doctor's consent to sew up the wound while I was pleasantly conscious. This is a ridiculously painful subject to you, dear Bessie, I know from previous experience, but I can assure you that it is a splendid convenience for me, from time to time, to have a face, humorously speaking, that only a mother could love, with a foul nose and a chin as weak as water. If I had been a fairly handsome boy, with fairly charming features, I am quite convinced they would have made me take the anesthesia. This is nobody's fault, swiftly be assured; being human beings with personal opinions and brains, we are respondent to any shreds of beauty we can get; I myself am hopelessly respondent to it!

After my leg was sewed up, which Buddy was not permitted to watch, because of his age, or to remain at my side, I was briskly carried back to the bungalow and placed in my bunk. By a stroke of good fortune, all the beds in the infirmary were taken; several boys with high temperatures and myself are being allowed to stay in their own bungalows till they get some empty beds again. I consider the bed situation quite a windfall. This is the first utterly restful, leisurely, fulfilling day I have had, in several ways, since getting off the train, the case being exactly the same for Buddy, his having got permission from Mr. Happy to be absent from all formations throughout the day to attend to my wants. He nearly did not get permission, but Mr. Happy would rather give him permission, in the last analysis, than have to chat with him face to face, being far from completely at his ease in his presence. There is a wealth of humorous, bad blood between those two, partially stemming from Monday inspection. At Monday inspection, which I myself regard as an inexcusable and insulting imposition on every boy in this place, Mr. Happy came in the bungalow when we were standing at attention and started giving Buddy holy hell for not making his bed the way he, Mr. Happy, did when he was a doughboy and quite miraculously managed not to lose the whole, damnable war for us. He unleashed several, unnecessary insults at Buddy in my presence. Watching your son Buddy's face, quite able, I assure you, to fend for itself, I did not step in or interfere with these bullying insults. I have complete confidence in this young lad's ability to fend for himself at all times, and this moment was no exception. Quite coolly, right while Mr. Happy was bawling him out and embarrassing him in front of his bungalow mates and fellow campers, Buddy did that humorous business with his marvellous, expressive eyes, letting

them slip away toward his pretty, black eyebrows, quite lifeless, white, and fairly spooky from the point of view of anyone who has never seen him do it. I doubt if Mr. Happy ever saw anybody do that before in his life. Alarmed and disconcerted, to say the least, he instantaneously went over and inspected Midge Immingtun's bunk instead, leaving the immediate vicinity entirely, even forgetting to give your self-reliant son any fresh demerits! Oh, my God, he is a resourceful, entertaining chap for five years of age! Gather up your pride, I beg you, and freely lavish it on this little boy! He should be in any minute now and will possibly be very eager to add a few lines of his own. In the interim, please do not ask me to prevail upon him to be nicer to Mr. Happy or to treat Mr. Happy with kid gloves; it is not a question of kid gloves; it is a question of knowing when to use his ingenuity to protect himself and his entire life's work from passing foes, short of doing them any serious harm.

Goodbye for a short interlude of days or hours! I will have the simple mercy and courtesy to finish writing to you; I can assure you, parent and child alike, that you are all too good and worthy to have such a consuming son, but I can't help it. We miss you far more than words can tell. There you have one of the few, worthwhile opportunities for the human tongue. Bessie, please attend to that little matter already discussed. Also, please, utterly collapse more between performances when you are on the road; among other reasons, which I have no right to discuss quite freely right now, when you are unrested and very tired is when you long most bitterly to quit being on the stage. I beseech you not to rush it. I beseech you to strike only when the iron we discussed at an earlier date is perfectly hot. Otherwise, if you forsake a remarkable career at the chipper age of 28, no matter how many illustrious years you already have under your belt, you will be tampering with fate out of season. In season, to be sure, fate can be dealt stunning blows, but out of season, regrettably, mistakes are quite usual and costly. Remember our sober and intimate discussion the day the new, beautiful stove arrived, as follows: Except when performing on the stage or engaged in fairly rough stuff during the span of hours I mentioned, please try very hard to breathe through the left nostril exclusively, at other times going back swiftly to the right nostril. To get the breath started in the proper nostril, to review slightly, warmly lock your fist in the opposing armpit, bearing down with friendly pressure, or simply lie down for several minutes on the side of the body opposing the desired nostril. I assure you again that there is no rule against doing all this with quite utter distaste, but try, while the distaste is mounting high, to take your hat off to God, quite mentally, for the magnificent complications of the human body. Should it be so difficult to offer a brief, affectionate salute to this unfathomable artist? Is it not highly tempting to take off one's hat to someone who is both

free to move in mysterious ways as well as in perfectly unmysterious ways? Oh, my God, this is some God we have! As I mentioned while we were taking our first pleasure in the new kitchen equipment, this nostril business can be abandoned in a trice at the very instant that one takes utter and complete reliance upon God with regard to breathing, seeing, hearing, and the other maddening functions; however, we are all merely human beings, damnably remiss about this kind of reliance at all undesperate hours and situations of the day. To make up for this neglect, quite touching as well as shoddy, to rely on God utterly, we must fall back on embarrassing, sensible devices of our own; however, they are not our own, which is another humorous, wondrous side of the matter; the embarrassing, sensible devices are His, too! This is merely my forward opinion in the matter, but it is far from merely impulsive.

If the rest of my letter seems a little too brisk and impersonal, please excuse it; I am going to devote the remainder of the letter to economy of words and phraseology, quite my weakest point in written construction. If I sound quite cold and brisk, remember it is for my own practice and that I am not feeling cold and brisk where you, parent and child alike, are concerned; far from it!

Lest it slip my mind during the curt remainder of the letter, I practically beg you on bended knee, Bessie, to sing in your own abandoned voice when making "Bambalina" with Les! I beg you not to take the safe, customary way and sound like you are sitting in a damn swing, in the center of the stage, bearing a charming parasol aloft; this comes very gently and naturally to somebody like Julia Sanderson, a pleasant performer, to be sure, but you are at heart a tempestuous, disturbing person, with deep springs of highly likable and touching coarseness and attractive passion! Les, if you are on the premises again, I beg you about something, too. Please strive very hard to do what I asked you to do the next time you make a record. Any words or hold notes that freely rhyme with "try" or "my" or "by" are very tricky and dangerous in the circumstance! Rough shoals ahead there! Except when you are singing in public or engaged in heated or angry discussion around the family hearth, your accent, I assure you, is no longer detectable, quite possibly, to anybody but myself or Buddy or Boo Boo or some person with the curse of unsparing ears. Please do not misunderstand these remarks. Personally, I am hopelessly attached to your accent; it is utterly moving. However, this is a question of how your accent sounds to myriad people with ears that have no time or inclination to listen with unprejudice; audiences in general find French, Irish, Scotch, Southern Dixie, Swedish, Yiddish, and several other accents comfortably diverting and likable in themselves, but a fine, undisguised Australian accent does not seem to lend itself quite freely to arousing affectionate regard; it is practically fool-

freely to arousing affectionate regard; it is practically fool-proof against pleasing or diverting for its own sake. This is a sad state of affairs, with general stupidity and snobbery at its backbone, but should be faced at record time! If you can possibly do it without unhappiness, excessive strain, or the feeling that you are slighting or offending the decent, charming Australian people of your childhood, please keep your accent off the record, even though we, your relatives, enjoy it to the very hilt! Are you furious at me? Please don't get furious at me. My only selfish interest at heart, in this grave matter, is your own, deep, torturous desire for a smash hit finally. With due apologies, I gratefully steer away from this presumptuous subject; I love you, old man.

The following brisk messages are for the twins and Boo Boo. However, kindly ask Boo Boo to read them by herself, absolutely without help from her parents, which she is perfectly capable of doing! That marvellous, black-eyed girl can do it if she tries!

Boo Boo, practice your writing of complete words! I am not interested in the alphabet in itself! Do not fall back on conventional excuses! Do not take any more crafty refuge in your tender age, I beg you! Do not throw it in our face again that Martine Brady or Lotta Davilla or any other child of four of your acquaintance is not required to read and write quite fluently. I am not their mean brother; I am your mean brother. On several occasions, I have given you my word of honor that you are by nature an exhaustive reader, quite like Buddy and myself; if you were not, I would gladly throw my meanness to the wind, with good riddance! For an exhaustive reader, an early start with pen as well as eye is very desirable. On the immediate, credit side, think what untold pleasure you will give your astonishing brother and myself, temporarily in exile, with an occasional postcard! If you but knew how much we admire and relish your handwriting and unimaginable choice of words! Just print two or three words in your customary fashion on the card and then race it to the mail box in the lobby or give it to a chambermaid of your choice. Also, my dear, darling, unforgettable Miss Beatrice Glass, please work harder on your manners and etiquette in private as well as in public. I am far less concerned about how you behave in public than how you behave when you are absolutely alone in a solitary room; when you accidentally look deep into a lonely mirror, let a girl with stunning tact, as well as flashing, black eyes, reflect!

Walt, we received your message from Bessie. We were delighted to get it, though it was frankly crap from the word go. We are all too damnably prone to take refuge in our tender ages. The age of three is no earthly, damn excuse for not doing the simple things we discussed

in the taxi on the way to the train; I laugh hollowly down the years at the trite reports and customs firmly connected with the tender age of three! At the roots, you yourself are perhaps more capable of a healthy, hollow laugh at these prejudiced reports than anybody I have ever met! If it is too “damn hot” to practice as reported, then at least wear your tap shoes fairly constantly, such as at meals, on your feet under the table, or while strolling about the room or the lobby of which ever hotel you are staying; however, keep them on your haunting, magical feet for at least 2 hours per day!

Waker, the same request, utterly mean and tyrannical, goes for juggling in this heat! If it is too damn hot for juggling, at least carry some of your favorite juggling objects, those of reasonable size, about with you in your pockets during the stifling day. I know Buddy would heartily join me in being content if you incomparable boys should decide, quite overnight, to quit your chosen careers utterly. However, you have not yet come to that decision; until you do, it is terribly necessary that you do not estrange yourselves utterly from your chosen career for more than 2 or 2½ hours in a row! Your tap shoes and juggling objects must be treated like unreasonable, jealous sweethearts that cannot bear any form of estrangement from your person for even 24 hours in a row. Your splendid, elder brother and I, God knows, are keeping our own hand in at this place, despite countless impediments and embarrassments. If this is bragging, let God have the simple, rudimentary courtesy to chastise me in the severest manner, but it is not dirty bragging; I am merely saying that both you boys can do anything your elder brothers can do; our own instability, I assure you, will match anybody’s on earth!

Boo Boo, I am more than disgusted with myself for saying just one thing to you and having that one thing sound unfavorable and quite ugly. The partial truth is, as follows: Your manners and etiquette are getting more and more marvellous every day. If I slightly harp on one or two discrepancies, it is only because you love pleasant, ritzy things so much and have always preferred myself or Bessie to read you books with well-bred, aristocratic, uncrude children and adults in them, usually English persons with excellent manners on the surface, tasteful clothes and interiors, as well as unassailably high class in every visible respect. Oh, my God, you are a risible, amusing kid! You quite take your elder brothers’ hearts by storm! You are one of a precious handful of persons I have met in my time, here and there, who probably have God’s entire permission not to think anything out! It is a charming, magnificent blessing, and I have no intention of spitting in its beautiful face, but you are also stuck with me as your brother; I have no natural course but to assure you that if you grew up and knew in your heart that your excellent, ritzy manners in public

were merely skin deep, leaving you free to be quite a dirty pig when alone in a room, with no one watching but yourself, you would be far from pleased; it would quite corrode you, in a subtle manner.

I will tyrannize no one any further! Goodbye to all for the interlude!
We send you our naked hearts!

To my relief and utter amusement, I have another pad of paper that I didn't know I had, together with the pleasure of realizing that Griffith Hammersmith's clock, which Buddy kindly borrowed for my convenience, has not been wound up and is recording the time of yesterday or the sultry day before! I will be quite brisk about it, however. As well as yourselves, I assure you, my hand and finger are beginning to rebel against the length of this letter, begun shortly after dawn with only a tray or two of food for interruption, to my delight. My God, I love a decent stretch of leisure! Quite rare, as things go.

Les, while this opportunity is at hand, as well as quite before the damnable bugle quite blows for third mess and confusion reigns, allow me to make one last request on behalf of both your eldest sons. I will be entirely brisk about it. Should my written construction, as follows, prove to be quite curt, pauciloquent, and too cold or chilly in general impression, merely realize I have already consumed too much of your time; I am now bending over backwards to save you further wear and tear on the nerves.

Your road schedule, old man, has not been separated from my ridiculous body since you entrusted it to me. At this very moment in time, I am placing it on the counterpane before me for careful examination. On the 19th of the current month, you and the intoxicating Mrs. Glass, demon of the cinder path and toast of a thousand continents, to give that cute devil her due, will leave the Cort Theatre, long may it flourish, and leave for New York to fill an engagement at the Albee, one reads, in Brooklyn. Would to God we, your son Buddy and I, could be with you and two other, quite unknown boys had this opportunity to stay off the streets and out of the stifling heat of trains, hotel rooms, and other cramped accommodations all summer. Here, free from banterous remarks, is my bare request. When you are comfortably settled back in Manhattan, please stop by at the library, customary annex branch, and offer our compliments, as well as our love, to the incomparable Miss Overman. At your leisure, please ask her to get in touch with Mr. Wilfred G. L. Fraser at the library council for us so that we may take him up on his friendly, spontaneous, possibly rash offer to send us any required reading material while we are away. I utterly dislike to ask Miss Overman, quite a busy person, to go to this trouble, but she has his personal address for the summer; he neglected

to give it to us before we left, perhaps from humorous design! If I could avoid asking Miss Overman to step into this breach, I would gladly do so; I am not happy about taking advantage of her leisure time; always friendship in this world is being corrupted by countless strings attached and personal interests, quite a vicious dilemma, despite the pronounced, humorous side. However, perhaps you will briefly remind her that Mr. Fraser, quite in person, offered this uncommon service to us, quite out of the blue, flabbergasting us, I can assure you. He said he would send any requested books personally or on his authority, should he be out of town, no doubt assuming that a friend or trusty relative would defray mailing costs. Without further sparring around, here is a rough list of books for your convenience and Miss Overman's that we would relish having passed in this dubious direction. Mr. Fraser did not mention how many books he would consent to send to us, so if I have taken too many liberties with the quantity, please ask Miss Overman to step in and cut down the number, using her touching discretion. Tersely put, as follows:

Conversational Italian, by R. J. Abraham. He is a likable, exacting person, our good friend from the old days in Spanish.

Any unbigoted or bigoted books on God or merely religion, as written by persons whose last names begin with any letter after H; to stay on the safe side, please include H itself, though I think I have mostly exhausted it.

Any marvellous, very good, merely interesting, or regrettably mediocre poems that are not already too familiar and haunting to us, regardless of the poet's nationality. There is a decent list of exhausted poems in my drawer in N.Y. incorrectly marked athletic equipment, unless you did finally let the apartment go and put everything in cold storage at the last minute; you quite forgot to tell us in your correspondence and I neglected to ask you in the heat of the delicious phone call from the LaSalle.

The complete works again of Count Leo Tolstoy. This will be no inconvenience for Mr. Fraser; this will be an inconvenience for Miss Overman's cordial sister, also a damned beautifully self-reliant spinster, whom Miss Overman refers to, very touchingly, as her "baby sister," though past the flush of youth by many years. She, the younger Miss Overman, owns the Count's complete works and may quite consent to re-lend them to us, knowing by now that we take very passionate and suitable care of books entrusted by friends. Please accentuate, without rubbing any of these sensitive ladies the wrong way, not to send "Resurrection" or "The Kreutzer Sonata" or possibly even "The Cossacks" again, an intensive, second reading of these masterpieces

not being necessary or desired. Do not pass it along, as it is not entirely up their alley, but we particularly wish to remake the acquaintance of Stepan and Dolly Oblonsky, who quite captured our hearts, humanity, and amusement when last we met; these are characters, man and wife, in "Anna Karenina," magnificent in entirety. To be sure, the young, thoughtful hero of the book is utterly absorbing, too, as well as his sweetheart and future wife, an adorable kid in the last analysis; however, they are very callow; we are much more in need of the company of a charming rogue at this place, with straightforward kindness in his heart and bowels.

The Gayatri Prayer, by unknown author, preferably with original, rolling words attached to English translation; utterly beautiful, sublime, and refreshing. Incidentally, here is an important matter for Boo Boo, lest I forget to include it. Boo Boo, my marvellous kid! Discard entirely the temporary prayer you asked me to give you before going to bed! If it takes your immediate fancy, substitute this new one, which quite gets around your current objections to the word "God." There is no excusable law that says you have to use the word if it is currently a stumbling block. Try this, as follows: "I am a young child about to go to sleep, as usual. The word God is currently a thorn in my side, being habitually used and revered, perhaps in superb faith, by two girl friends of mine, young Lotta Davilla and Marjorie Herzberg, whom I consider appreciably mean, as well as liars from the word go. I address the nameless hallmark, preferably without shape or ridiculous attributes, who has always been kind and charming enough to guide my destiny both between and during the splendid, touching use of human bodies. Dear hallmark, give me some decent, reasonable instructions for tomorrow, quite while I am sleeping. It is not necessary that I know what these instructions are, pending development of understanding, but I would be delighted and grateful to have them under my belt nevertheless. I will assume temporarily that these instructions will prove potent, effective, encouraging, and quite intensive, provided I hold my mind quite still and empty, in the manner suggested by my presumptuous, elder brother." At conclusion, say "Amen" or merely "Good night," which ever takes your fancy or strikes you as sincere and spontaneous. That is all I was able to think of on the train, but I tucked it away to pass on at my earliest convenience. However, use it only if you find it undistasteful! Tamper with it as freely and ardently as you choose! If it is distasteful or embarrassing, discard it without a particle of regret and wait till I get home and can freely reconsider the issue! Do not think me infallible! I am utterly fallible!

The list for Mr. Fraser now continues at random:

Don Quixote, by Cervantes, both volumes again if not too much trouble; this man is a genius beyond easy or cheap compare! I am hopeful that Miss Overman will send this personally and not Mr. Fraser personally, as he is quite unable to pass on to us a work of genius without personal comment and maddening evaluation and condescension, I am afraid. In tribute to Cervantes, I would prefer to receive these works in the mail without useless discussion and other needless crap.

Raja-Yoga and Bhakti-Yoga, two heartrending, handy, quite tiny volumes, perfect for the pockets of any average, mobile boys our age, by Vivekananda of India. He is one of the most exciting, original, and best equipped giants of this century I have ever run into; my personal sympathy for him will never be outgrown or exhausted as long as I live, mark my words; I would easily give ten years of my life, possibly more, if I could have shaken his hand or at least said a brisk, respectful hello to him on some busy street in Calcutta or elsewhere. He was fully acquainted with the lights I mentioned earlier, far more than I! One hopes that he would have not found me too worldly and sensual a person! This devilish thought often haunts me when his gigantic name passes through my mind; a very enigmatic and saddening experience; would to God there were a better footing between the unsensual and the sensual persons of this universe. I have no stomach for gaps of that kind; I personally can't stand it, which is another looming sign of instability.

For first acquaintance or renewed acquaintance, as small-size editions as possible of the following writers of genius or talent:

Charles Dickens, either in blessed entirety or in any touching shape or form. My God, I salute you, Charles Dickens!

George Eliot; however, not in her entirety. Please leave this question to Miss Overman or Mr. Fraser to decide. As Miss Eliot is not too dear to my heart or mind in the last analysis, leaving the question to Miss Overman or Mr. Fraser also gives me a sorely needed chance to be courteous and respectful, as becomes my ridiculous age, without paying a very heavy price for it. This is a fairly disgusting thought, quite bordering on the calculating, but I can't help it. I am ashamed of it, but I am very worried by my inhumane attitude towards unreliable advice. I am striving very hard to find a course of action in a matter of this kind which is both humane and acceptable.

William Makepeace Thackeray, not in entirety. Please ask Miss Overman to let Mr. Fraser deal with this personally. No harm involved, mindful of the two books by William Makepeace Thackeray I have already read. As in the case of Miss Eliot, he is excellent, but I

cannot take my hat off to him in utter gratitude, I find, so this is another good, disgusting chance to fall back on Mr. Fraser's personal taste. I am now exposing my rotten weaknesses and calculations right in front of my beloved parents and young brothers and sister, I realize, but my hands are tied; also I have no excusable right to appear a stronger person or youth than I really am, which is not damnably strong, by any human taken!

Jane Austen, in entirety or in any shape or form, discounting "Pride and Prejudice," which is already in possession. I will not disturb this incomparable girl's genius with dubious remarks; I have already hurt Miss Overman's feelings inexcusably by refusing to discuss this girl, but I lack even the slight decency to regret it very much. Quite in a pinch, I would be willing to meet somebody at Rosings, but I cannot enter into a discussion of a womanly genius this humorous, magnificent, and personal to me; I have made some feeble, human attempts, but nothing at all meritorious.

John Bunyan. If I am getting too curt or terse, please excuse it, but I am racing to a brisk conclusion of this letter. All too frankly, I did not give this man a fair chance when I was younger, finding him too unwilling to give a few personal weaknesses, such as sloth, greed, and many others, the benefit of a few prickly, quite torturous doubts; I personally have met dozens upon dozens of splendid, touching human beings on the road of life who enjoy sloth to the hilt, yet remain human beings one would turn to in need, as well as excellent, beneficial company for children, such as the slothful, delightful Herb Cowley, fired from one menial, theatrical job after another! Does the slothful Herb Cowley ever fail his friends in need? Are his humor and jolliness not a subtle support to passing strangers? Does John Bunyan think God has some maddening prejudice against taking these things into very pleasant consideration on Judgment Day, which, in my forward opinion, quite regularly occurs between human bodies? Upon re-reading John Bunyan this time, I am aiming to give his natural, touching genius more recognition and admiration, but his general attitude is a permanent thorn in my side, I am afraid. He is too damnably harsh for my taste. Here is where a decent, private re-reading of the touching, splendid Holy Bible comes in very handy, freely preserving one's precious sanity on a rainy day, the incomparable Jesus Christ freely suggesting, as follows: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Quite right; I do not find one thing unreasonable there, far from it; however, John Bunyan, a baptized Christian warrior, to be sure, seems to think the noble Jesus Christ said, as follows: "Be ye therefore flawless, even as your Father which is in heaven is flawless!" My God, here is inaccuracy incarnate! Did anybody say anything about being flawless? Perfection is

an absolutely different word, magnificently left hanging for the human being's kind benefit throughout the ages! That is what I call thrilling, sensible leeway. My God, I am fully in favor of a little leeway or the damnable jig is up! Fortunately, in my own forward opinion, based on the dubious information of the unreliable brain, the jig is never damnable and never up; when it maddeningly appears to be, it is merely time to rally one's magnificent forces again and review the issue, if necessary, quite up to one's neck in blood or deceptive, ignorant sorrow, taking plenty of decent time to recall that even our magnificent God's perfection allows for a touching amount of maddening leeway, such as famines, untimely deaths, on the surface, of young children, lovely women and ladies, valiant, stubborn men, and countless other, quite shocking discrepancies in the opinion of the human brain. However, if I keep this up, I will firmly decline to give this immortal author, John Bunyan, a quite decent re-reading this summer. I swiftly pass on to the next author on the disorderly list.

Warwick Deeping; not too hopeful, but strongly recommended by very nice, chance acquaintance at the main library. While the consequences are often quite hellish, I am absolutely and perhaps permanently against ignoring books recommended from the heart by very nice people and strangers; it is too risky and inhuman; also the consequences are often painful in a fairly charming way.

The Brontë sisters again; here are ravishing girls! Please bear in mind that Buddy was in the middle of "Villette," a softly gripping book, when the time drew near to embark for camp; this zealous reader, as you know quite well, brooks no interruptions that are not entirely unavoidable! It may be remembered, as well, that his sensuality is awakening at a very early date; one is at a human loss, at moments, not to reach out to these doomed girls carnally. In the past, I personally never reached out to Charlotte in a carnal manner; however, in retrospect, her attractions are quite a damned pleasant surprise.

Chinese Materia Medica, by Porter Smith; here is an ancient book, quite out of circulation, possibly unsound and annoying; however, I would like to go through it under the rose and, if worthy, give it to your magnificent son Buddy as a little surprise. You can easily have no idea how much unawakened knowledge of weeds and splendid flora this lad brought with him, principally in his spatulate fingers, from previous appearances; unless it interferes with his life's work, this unawakened knowledge must not go down the drain! I, his senior by two years, am his earnest, ignorant pupil in these matters! Quite apart from the delicious meals he has offered Griffith Hammersmith and myself, he is absolutely powerless to pluck an innocent flower without examining and smelling its roots, dampening them with a lit-

the saliva to remove the soil; they are crying out to this boy, awaiting the return of his splendid ears! Unfortunately, the paltry number of books on this subject, usually English, are fraught with inaccuracy, wishful folly, and deplorable superstition, with gross exaggeration the reigning hallmark! Let us, his loving family, turn with some hope and good cheer to the wondrous Chinese, freely sharing with the noble Hindus a wide, open mind on the subject of the body, the human breath, and the staggering differences between the left and right sides of the body. This leaves some refreshing hope to go on, provided the author, Porter Smith, has given body and soul to the unlimited subject and is not another maddening, pretentious dabbler merely keen on making a pleasant niche for himself in the field, but do not let me castigate this fellow without a handsome, decent trial!

In convenient amounts, suitable for the wear and tear of camp life, please send the following Frenchmen, for practice or pure pleasure, depending upon the magnetism of the individual Frenchman involved. In fairly large amounts, please send books by Victor Hugo, Gustave Flaubert, Honoré de Balzac or merely Honoré Balzac, as the latter freely gave himself the aristocratic “de” from a touching, humorous motive, quite unlicensed. The humorous lust for aristocracy in this world is unending! It is not too humorous in the last analysis, in my forward opinion. Some pleasant, rainy day, when you have the stomach for it, examine the bowels of any effective revolution since history began; deep in the heart of every outstanding reformer, if you do not find personal envy, jealousy, hunger for personal aristocracy, in a new, clever disguise, running a very close race with desire for more food and less poverty, I will gladly answer to God for this entire, cynical attitude. Unfortunately, I see no immediate solution to the situation.

In smaller amounts, also in French for practice or pure pleasure, diverse selections from the works of Guy de Maupassant, Anatole France, Martin Leppert, Eugene Sue. Please ask Miss Overman to ask Mr. Fraser not to insert any biographies of Guy de Maupassant by mistake or design, quite particularly those by Elise Suchard, Robert Kurz, and Leonard Beland Walker, which I have already read with untold pain and sorrow and do wish Buddy to read with pain and sorrow at such a tender age. As sensualists from the word go, I am afraid, we need every decent, thoroughgoing warning sign we can get on the subject of sensuality, but neither your son Buddy nor I have the slightest intention of dying by the phallus as surely as the sword; we fully intend to come to grips with the subject of sensuality, I give you my word of honor; however, I absolutely decline to accept Guy de Maupassant as a good illustration of abuse of sensuality, though it is very tempting. Had he not abused his male organ, he would have abused

something else. I do not trust you, Monsieur de Maupassant! I do not trust you or any other monumental author who thrives, day in, day out, on lowly irony! My inexcusable ill-will freely extends to you as well, Anatole France, great ironist! My brother and I, as well as myriad human readers, come to you in superb faith and you give us a slap in the face! If that is the best you can do, have the rudimentary courtesy to kill yourselves or kindly burn your magnificent pens!

Please forgive the above, deplorable outburst; it is sorely inexcusable, no apology being quite acceptable, but my attitude towards universal irony and slaps in the face is admittedly harsh; I am working on it, I assure you, but making fairly rotten progress. Let us change to a less hopeless topic, returning to the list. Please ask Miss Overman to send Marcel Proust, as a final Frenchman, in entirety. Buddy has not yet had the onslaught of meeting this uncomfortable, devastating genius of modern times, but is now swiftly approaching readiness, his tender age quite aside; I have already prepared him slightly, in the bowels of the main library, with many magnificent passages, such as the following, from the tantalizing "A l'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs," which this remarkable reader has preferred to remember by heart, as follows: "On ne trouve jamais aussi hauts qu'on avait espérés, une cathédrale, une vague dans la tempête, le bond d'un danseur." In a trice, this lad instantaneously translated every word to perfection except "vague," which quite means an ocean wave, as well as being captivated by the beauty! If he is old enough to be captivated by the beauty of this incomparable, decadent genius, he should be quite prepared to take the rampant perversion and homosexuality in his stride; there is quite a bit of it going on here anyway, particularly in the Intermediates. I see no earthly point in approaching these matters with false, blind, kid gloves. However, do not, under any human condition, advance the impression to Mr. Fraser that I am offering any Proust book for Buddy's benefit. Very dangerous shoals ahead! Considering Buddy's youthful age, Mr. Fraser is not in the least above using things like this to amuse or greatly interest his friends in casual conversation, having a fairly violent passion for being the center of interest in conversational matters! Such an event, I assure you, would slowly work evil on us, quite undermining all our private, confidential training in behaving as inoffensive, regular boys in quite dangerous, heartless, public places! Although entirely kind at heart, helpful, and educated widely, Mr. Fraser has quite a big mouth, be utterly assured. Vanity plays a small part in this; forfeit of individuality at an early age plays a much larger part. This thoughtful, widely educated man is unscrupulous about using an independent child as a conversational highlight, the sad, unrelenting factor being that good people who do not strive hard enough to uncover their own destinies and incessant responsibilities in life content themselves with parasitic occupations, feeding upon

other chaps' lives to the marrow. Mr. Fraser, a damned charming person at frequent intervals, has my sympathy from the word go, but I absolutely decline to allow him to use my junior brother, as well as any other hopeful, secret genius of remarkably tender age, to serve as host fish to Mr. Fraser! Only harm without measure can come from this crap! At all costs, as long as humanly possible, let this young boy keep his precious shares in the divinely human state of nobodiness!

The list now continues at random.

The complete works, quite in full, of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, with the exception of any books that are not utterly concerned with Sherlock Holmes, such as "The White Company." Oh, here is cause for mental frolic and amusement when I tell you what happened to me in this regard one day quite recently! I was quietly swimming in the lake during Aquatics Period, quite without a thought in my head, merely recalling sympathetically to myself the pleasant passion of Miss Constable, at the main library, for the great Goethe's works in full. At this quiet moment, a thought occurred to me which raised my eyebrows unmercifully! It was suddenly borne in upon me, utterly beyond dispute, that I love Sir Arthur Conan Doyle but do not love the great Goethe! As I darted idly through the water, it became crystal clear that it is far from an established fact that I am even demonstrably fond of the great Goethe, in my heart, while my love for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, via his contributions, is an absolute certainty! I have rarely ever had a more revealing incident in any body of water. I daresay I shall never get any closer to drowning in sheer gratitude for a passing portion of truth. Think for a stunning moment what this means! It means that every man, woman, and child over the age, let us say, of twenty-one or thirty, at the very outside, should never do anything extremely important or crucial in their life without first consulting a list of persons in the world, living or dead, whom he loves. Remember, I implore you, that he has no right whatever to include on this list anybody he merely admires quite to distraction! If the person or the person's contributions have not roused his love and unexplainable happiness or eternal warmth, that person must be ruthlessly severed from the list! There may be another list for that person, and quite a pleasant one, let us presume, but this list I have in mind is exclusively for love. My God, it could be the finest, most terrible, personal guard against deceit and lies both to oneself and to any friends or acquaintances in casual or heated conversation with oneself! I have already made quite a number of such lists in my leisure time, for private consultation, embracing many types of people on earth. As a very revealing example of where this can lead, and which I think you will enjoy to the hilt, who would you say casually is the only singer on my list whose voice is represented either on Victrola record or personal appearance? En-

rico Caruso? I am quite afraid this is not the case. Excluding family members, whose voices have never failed to charm me, to be sure, the only singer I am utterly prepared to say I love his singing voice, without fear of lying or quite intelligently deceiving myself, is my incomparable friend Mr. Bubbles, of Buck & Bubbles, merely singing softly to himself in his dressing room next to yours in Cleveland! This is not to disparage Enrico Caruso or Al Jolson, but facts heartlessly remain facts! I cannot help it! If you make a terrible list of this kind, you are quite stuck with it. For my own part, I give you my word of honor that when I return to New York I will never again leave my room for a moment without a very telling few of my lists on my person, saving a simple trip to the living room or bathroom. I do not know where it will all lead to, I can freely confess to you, but if it does not lead to more lies in the world, it is something. The worst it can do is to show that I am a stupid boy, quite without any impeccable taste in the last analysis, but this may not be exactly the case, thank God.

Moving rapidly along, kindly send any unflinching book on the World War, in its shameful, exploitive entirety, preferably unwritten by vain-glorious or nostalgic veterans or enterprising journalists of slight ability or conscience. I would greatly appreciate anything not containing excellent photographs. The older one gets, the more inclined one is to trample on excellent photographs.

Please send me the following, choice, foul books, perhaps coupled together for convenient packaging, also that they may avoid contaminating any books by men or woman of genius, talent, or thrilling, modest scholarship: "Alexander," by Alfred Erdonna, and "Origins and Speculations," by Theo Acton Baum. Quite without exerting yourselves or my good friends at the library, please do your utmost to drop these in the earliest mail at your convenience. These are invaluable stupid books that I would like Buddy to have under his belt before entering school next year for the first time in this appearance. Do not trample too quickly on stupid books! One of the swiftest ways, though very enervating and torturous, to have a young, utterly competent boy like Buddy avoid shutting his eyes to daily stupidity and foulness in the world is to offer him an excellent, stupid, foul book. Perhaps in utter silence one can then say to him, avoiding emotional sorrow or rank fury in the voice, merely handing over the invaluable books on a silver platter: "Here, young man, are two books both of which are subtle, admirably unemotional, and unnoticeably rotten to the core. Both are written by distinguished, false scholars, men of condescension, exploitation, and quiet, personal ambition. I have personally finished reading their books with tears of shame and anger. Without another word, I give you two, godsent models of the feculent curse of intellectuality and smooth education running rampant without

talent or penetrating humanity.” I would not say a single, additional syllable to the young man in question. You may quite think this sounds very harsh again. It would be only foolish and humorous to deny it; it is very harsh. On the other side of the ledger, you may not know the dangers of these men. Let us clear the air momentarily by examining them with simple brevity, proceeding with Alfred Erdonna first. A professor at a leading university in England, he has written this biography of Alexander the Great in a leisurely, readable fashion, despite its size, frequently making references to his wife, also a distinguished professor at a leading university, and to his charming dog, Alexander, and his former, old professor, Professor Heeder, who also lived off Alexander the Great for a number of years. Between the two of them, they have made an excellent living off Alexander the Great, quite in their spare time, if not in monetary gain certainly in fame and prestige. Despite this, Alfred Erdonna treats Alexander the Great like just another charming dog in his damned possession! I am personally not crazy about Alexander the Great or any incurably, militant person, but how dare Alfred Erdonna finish his book quite giving you the subtle, unfair impression that he, Alfred Erdonna, is superior to Alexander the Great in the last analysis merely because he and his wife, and possibly dog, are in a very cozy position to exploit and patronize Alexander the Great! He is not even in the least bit grateful to Alexander the Great for having existed so that he, Alfred Erdonna, could have the privilege of quite sponging off him in a leisurely, distinguished way. I am not even taking this false, scholarly personage to task because he quite personally dislikes heroes and heroism from the word go, even devoting a chapter to Alexander and Napoleon, in similar capacities, to show what harm and bloodful nonsense heroes have wrought upon the world. The germ of this is very sympathetic to me, in acknowledged frankness, but two things are necessary to write such a daring, unoriginal chapter. Surely it is worth a moment’s casual discussion; I beg you to be patient and blindly affectionate with me till it is over! There is also a third thing necessary.

1. You are in a much stabler position to dislike heroes and heroism utterly if you yourself are quite equipped to do something heroic. If you are not equipped to do anything heroic, you may still enter the discussion honorably, but with terrible caution and reasonableness, very deliberately and painstakingly turning on every single light in your body, also perhaps re-doubling your fervent prayers to God not to go astray in any cheap way.

2. You must have a model of the human brain handy for general reasons. If you do not have a model of the human brain handy, a peeled chestnut will do only too damn well! But it is quite necessary to see with your own eyes, in a matter of this kind, involving such matters as

heroes and heroism, that the human brain is just a charming, likable, quite dissectible agency, without a shred of reliable ability to understand human history in full or what temporary role, heroic or unheroic, it is time to play with all one's heart and conscience.

3. He, Alfred Erdonna, freely acknowledges that Alexander the Great's personal teacher, when a lad, was Aristotle. Not once, at any decent time, does Alfred Erdonna sadly take Aristotle to task for failing to teach Alexander the Great to avoid becoming great! There is utterly no mention, in any book on this interesting subject I have ever read, that Aristotle ever even at least begged Alexander to accept only the mantle of accidental greatness and refuse, quite like excrement, if you will pardon me briefly, any other kind of greatness whatsoever.

I will gladly close the damnable subject here. My nerves are quite raw now; also I have quite forfeited the decent time I was going to give to Theo Acton Baum's dubious and very dangerous, untalented, cold-hearted work of literature. However, to repeat, I will not answer for my peace of mind if Buddy is allowed to enter school and the long, utterly complicated road of formal education until he has had these perilous, conceited, utterly commonplace books under his belt.

Moving along quite at a trot now, humorously speaking, please send me any thoughtful books on human whirling or spinning. You will recall, quite with my undying, humorous sympathy, that at least three of your children, in sheer independence of each other, and utterly untaught, have picked up the delicate custom of spinning the body around with alarming speed, after which regrettably ostentatious experience the person who does the whirling can often, though not always, by any means, arrive at a decision or an impressive answer to a problem, usually quite small. The practice, to be sure, has been invaluable to me on more than one trivial occasion in the library, provided one can find a place unseen by the naked eye. To date, of course, I have discovered a few people spread widely throughout the world who have used this practice with success, even the touching Shakers, to a small extent. Also, there is an impressive rumor that St. Francis of Assisi, a marvellous person, once asked a fellow monk to do a little spinning when they were on an important crossroad with hesitation which direction to take. There, to be sure, you have the Byzantine influence on the Troubadours, but I am far from convinced that the practice can be limited to one corner of this thrilling globe. While I am very shortly going to give up the practice for the rest of my life, leaving more responsibility on another portion of my mind, the fact quite remains that copious information on the subject will be very welcome, as the other children may, for personal reasons, prefer to continue the practice well into maturity, though I doubt it.

To continue and mercifully conclude this list, I would be thankful to read anything in English written by the tolerable Cheng brothers or anybody else passably gifted and heartrendingly ambitious who had the disagreeable luck to do any religious writing in China after the two, towering, incomparable geniuses of Lao-tse and Chuang-tse, not to mention Gautama Buddha! One need not approach Miss Overman or Mr. Fraser with kid gloves on this subject, as I have already broken the ice repeatedly, but delicacy of approach is still quite advisable! Neither Miss Overman nor Mr. Fraser has ever been even slightly bitten by the subject of God or essential chaos in the universe, therefore casting quite a cool, dissembling countenance on my consuming interest in such affairs. Their concern, thank God, is far from petty or unaffectionate, the distinguished Edgar Semple having told Mr. Fraser that I have the makings of a splendid American poet, which is quite true in the last analysis. They are quite fearful, one and all, that my consuming admiration for God, straight-forward and shapeless, will upset the delightful apple cart of my poetry; this is not stupid; there is always a slight, magnificent, utterly worthy risk that I will be a crashing failure from the word go, disappointing all my friends and loved ones, a very sober, rotten possibility that brings the usual fluid to my eyes as I bring the matter into the open. It would be quite a moving, humorous boon, to be sure, if one knew quite well, every single day of one's splendid current appearance, exactly where one's everlasting duty lies, obvious and concrete! Quite to my regret and secret delight, my glimpses are ludicrously helpless to aid me in such matters! While there is always a flimsy possibility that one's beloved, shapeless God will surprise one out of the blue with a charming, useful command, such as "Seymour Glass, do this," or "Seymour Glass, my young, foolish son, do that," I utterly fail to warm up to this possibility. This is quite a gross exaggeration, to be sure. I am utterly warming up to the possibility when I am freely and deliciously pondering it, but I am also utterly and eternally abhorring it, from the very roots of my dubious soul! Vulgarly speaking, the whole possibility of getting charming, personal commands from God, quite shapeless or adorned with an impressive, charming beard, stinks to high heaven of sheer favoritism! Let God raise one human being up over another, lavishing handsome favors upon him, and the hour has struck to leave His charming service forever, and quite good riddance! This sounds very harsh, but I am an emotional youth, frankly mortal, with innumerable experiences under my belt of mortal favoritism; I cannot stand the sight of it; let God favor us all with charming, personal commands or none of us! If You have the stomach to read this letter, dear God, be assured that I am meaning what I say! Do not sprinkle any dubious sugar on my destiny! Do not favor me with charming, personal commands and magnificent short cuts! Do not ask me to join any elite organization of mortals that is not widely open to all and sundry! Recall quite fer-

vently that I have felt equipped to love Your astonishing, noble Son, Jesus Christ, on the acceptable basis that you did not play favorites with Him or give Him carte blanche throughout his appearance! Give me one, single inkling that You gave Him carte blanche and I will regretfully wipe His name from the slim list of those human beings I respect without countless reservations, despite His many and diverse miracles, which were perhaps necessary in the general circumstance but remain a dubious feature, in my forward opinion, as well as a nasty stumbling block for decent, likable atheists, such as Leon Sundheim and Mickey Waters, the former an elevator operator at the Hotel Alamac, the latter a charming drifter without employment. Foolish tears are coursing down my face, to be sure; there is no decent alternative. It is humorous and kindly of you, Your Grace, to allow me to remain absorbed in my own dubious methods, such as industrious absorption with the human heart and brain. My God, you are a hard one to figure out, thank God! I love you more than ever! Consider my dubious services everlastingly at your disposal!

I am freely resting for a moment, dear Les and Bessie and other loving victims of the above onslaught. Across the empty bungalow, through the view offered by the window above Tom Lantern's fortunate bunk, the afternoon sun is shining in a very moving manner, provided my brain is not merely shining in a very moving manner. With or without absolute proof, it is sometimes folly not to accept the happiness of which ever is shining.

I will conclude the interrupted list of books for Miss Overman and Mr. Fraser with a few, brisk strokes:

Please send anything on the colorful and greedy Medicis, as well as anything on the touching Transcendentalists, quite in our own back yard. Also send copies, preferably without exhibitionistic pencil marks on the page, of both the French edition and Mr. Cotton's translation of Montaigne's essays. There is a charming, shallow, delightful Frenchman! Let one's hat be doffed to any gifted, charming fellows; my God, they are rare and impressive!

Please send anything interesting on human civilization well before the Greeks, although quite after the list of civilizations in the pocket of my former raincoat with the unfortunate gash in the shoulder, which Walt humorously declined to wear in public.

This is of unspeakable importance. Please send any books on the structure of the human heart that I have not read; a fairly compact list last lay in the top drawer of my chiffonnier, either beneath my handkerchiefs or in the vicinity of Buddy's guns. Unusual, accurate draw-

ings of the heart are always welcome, as any well-meaning, crude likeness of this incomparable organ, the finest of the body, is a pleasure to see; however, drawings are not essential in the last analysis, merely covering the pure, physical characteristics, leaving out the uncharted, best parts entirely! Unfortunately, quite to one's eternal chagrin, the best parts can only be viewed at very odd, thrilling, unexpected seconds when one's lights are quite definitely turned on; without a healthy talent for drawing, which I utterly lack, one is at a terrible loss to share the view with one's intimate and interested acquaintances. This is an unpretty state of affairs, to say the least! The entire view of this magnificent organ, without compare in the human body, should be in the possession of everyone and not merely of dubious young fellows like the undersigned!

Conveniently on the subject of the body, seen or unseen by the naked eye, please send any book devoted exclusively to the formation of callus. It will be very difficult or impossible, so please do not ask Miss Overman or Mr. Fraser to strain. However, if a book on this compelling subject should be found, be assured that it will be consumed eagerly around here, particularly any discussion of callus that unites a broken, human bone while it is healing, its intelligence being quite staggering and delightful, quite knowing when to begin and cease, without intentional assistance from the brain of the injured person. Here is another magnificent accomplishment that is maddeningly attributed to "Mother Nature." With all quite due respect, I have been sick, for many years, of hearing her dubious name.

In February of this memorable year, I had the unspeakable pleasure of chatting back and forth, for a delicious quarter of an hour, with a handsome woman hailing from Czechoslovakia, a figure in somber costly clothes, yet with interesting, touching, dirty fingernails. The incident occurred in the main library, a month or so after the Honorable Louis Benford, in reply to my letter, swiftly and humorously made my dubious presence possible. Professing to be the mother of a young diplomat, which had a comfortable ring of truth to it, she softly introduced the subject of her favorite poet, Otakar Brezina, a Czech, urging me to read him. Perhaps Mr. Fraser can find one of his works for me, in English translation, I am afraid. The possibilities are quite hopeful, as this stunning woman, though very nervous and unbalanced in the last analysis, had a marvellous, lonely spark! Mr. Brezina has a stunning champion there! God bless ladies with costly, tasteful clothes and touching, dirty fingernails that champion gifted, foreign poets and decorate the library in beautiful, melancholy fashion! My God, this universe is nothing to snicker at!

In conclusion, quite absolutely final, I would greatly appreciate it if you would ask Miss Overman to ask Mrs. Hunter, possibly on the phone if it is convenient, to please track down the January, 1842, issue of *Dublin University Magazine*, the January, 1866, issue of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the September, 1866, number of the *North British Review*, as all these unrecent magazines contain articles about a very dear friend of mine, purely by correspondence, in my last appearance, quite frankly, Sir William Rowan Hamilton! I am very seldom able to do this, which is quite a blessing in disguise, but I can still see his friendly, lonely, sociable face before me, at wide intervals! Do not, however, mention any of these personal connections to Miss Overman, I beg you! Her set of automatic revulsions on this subject is perfectly normal; she is invariably taken aback with alarm and disappointment on the rare occurrences when I am damn foolish and thoughtless enough to introduce the unpopular subject of appearances. There is also another reason for not going into dubious details with her, as follows: It is, unfortunately, a subject that makes quite a rotten subject for casual, social conversation. Although Miss Overman does not generally use us, your son Buddy and myself, as dubious subjects of conversation to entertain her friends or associates, being an honorable lady and wont to consider other people's feelings and dubious positions, she is utterly incapable of withholding peculiar or slightly novel information from Mr. Fraser or any well-dressed, cultured gentleman with distinguished, white hair; they are her permanent weakness, being inclined to fall slightly in love with them if they are kind and attentive to her or use conversational persiflage with her, with or without sincerity. This is quite a gentle, humorous fault, to be sure, but it would be very expensive to indulge too freely. Please just ask her to phone Mrs. Hunter and see if the magazines in question can be tracked down without great inconvenience, mentioning no reasons, perhaps requesting in the same breath, quite casually, that she, Miss Overman, pass on to us any delightful light reading that she has enjoyed lately. This stinks to high heaven of rank duplicity, but her taste in light reading is also often delightful, so I regretfully recommend the ruse. I trust your discretion in this and all affairs completely, needless to say, Bessie sweetheart. Also we would appreciate it if you would casually slip Mr. and Mrs., Moon Mullins, and perhaps a few copies of *Variety* into a convenient envelope when you are done with them. Jesus, what a millstone, bore, and general nuisance I am becoming in your lives! No day passes that I am not mindful of my rotten, demanding traits of character. Also, quite by the way, I think I should warn you to warn Miss Overman that Mr. Fraser may well be vexed and quite floored at the number of books requested, though he himself failed to mention the maximum number he would be willing to send us while we were away. Please ask Miss Overman to impress upon him that we are both reading with increased, incredible rapidity every

day of our lives and can return any very valuable books in a trice, where speed of return is essential and we can get stamps. Difficulties, I am afraid, will be myriad. He, Mr. Fraser, is really a very generous, kind man, with an astonishingly high tolerance for my rotten traits, but there is also a small catch in his generosity, as he likes to see the grateful recipients' faces in person when he does them a favor of this magnitude. This is entirely human and cannot be expected or uselessly desired to disappear from the earth overnight, but please keep the warning under your belts anyway. In my private, humorous opinion, we will be very damn lucky if Mr. Fraser sends us as much as two or three books on the entire list! Oh, my God, there is a maddening, comical thought!

Guess who entered the bungalow with a broad smile on his face! Your son Buddy! Also known as W. G. Glass, the superb author! What an inexpugnable lad he is! He has obviously had a productive day's work! I wish to God you were all here, quite in the flesh, to see his stunning, appealing, slightly tanned face; in more ways than one, dear Bessie and Les, you are paying a very exorbitant price for our frivolous summer's enjoyments and recreations. Au revoir! Buddy joins me in every sincere wish for your continued health and happy existence in our prolonged absence. We remain,

Your loving sons and brothers,
Seymour and W. G. Glass; united
forever by spirit and blood and
uncharted depths and chambers of
the heart.

In my haste to bring this letter to a swift termination, as well as my joy to see your astounding son pop into the bungalow, following an absence of seven and one half hours, I am in danger of overlooking a small cluster of final requests, quite slight, let us hope. As already mentioned, the chances are blackly excellent that Mr. Fraser will fall into a pit of dejection upon receiving this list of books, utterly regretting his sociable, spontaneous offer to me; however, I may be doing him quite a grave injustice with this thought; in the hopeful event that I am, which I sadly doubt, please ask Miss Overman to remind him that this will be absolutely our last fling for 6 long months at the very least! With summer's glorious end, we will be devoting the remainder of this memorable year to dictionary consultation entirely; we will avoid even poetry during the crucial period in the offing; this freely means that Mr. Fraser will not have the experience, more trouble than rewarding, of seeing our young, exasperating faces in any public library in Gotham for the entire, comfortable period of six, full months! Who will not be quite relieved to hear this, with the heartening excep-

tion of perhaps no one! Quite in connection with the 6 months just mentioned, I am freely asking you, as our beloved parents and brothers and sister, to issue a few, crisp, earnest prayers in our behalf. I am personally very hopeful that great layers of unnatural, affected, stilted fustian and rotten, disagreeable words will drop off my young body like flies during the crucial period to come! It is worth every effort, my future sentence construction quite hanging in the balance!

Please do not get annoyed with me, Bessie; however, here is my absolutely last word on the subject of retirement from the stage at an uncommonly early age. I beg you again not to do anything out of season. At least wait, quite patiently, till October and then keep your eyes very peeled for retirement opportunities; October could be very clean sailing! Also, lest I forget, Buddy requests that you be sure to send him some of those very big tablets, quite without lines, for his haunting stories. Absolutely do not send him the kind with lines, such as I am using up for this day of pleasant communication, as he despises them. Also, though I have not dared to discuss the matter with him in a frank manner, I think he would enjoy it very much if you sent him middle bunny, having lost big bunny when the porter on the train made the bed in the morning; please, however, do not refer to this matter in your future correspondence, merely placing middle bunny silently in a convenient package, perhaps an empty shoe box or container, and dispatching it in the mail. I know I can leave this or any other matter quite to your discretion, Bessie; my God, you are as admirable as you are lovable! As well as not sending him any more tablets with lines for his stories, also absolutely do not send him any tablets with very flimsy paper, such as onion skin, as he merely drops this kind in the garbage can for general disposal outside the bungalow. This is wasteful, to be sure, but I would appreciate it if you did not ask me to step in in a delicate matter of this kind. I am hesitant to say that certain kinds of waste do not offend me; indeed, certain kinds of waste tend to thrill me to the marrow. Also worth keeping in mind, it is this chap's leonine devotion to his literary implements, I give you my word of honor, that will be the eventual cause of his utter release, with honor and happiness, from this enchanting vale of tears, laughter, redeeming human love, affection, and courtesy.

With 50,000 additional kisses from the two looming pests of Bungalow 7 who love you,

Most cordially,
S. G.