

Abrigden, Virginia  
July 11, 1949

Dear Margaret,

Two roda jerks are standing in a corner, watching me write, and commenting on my activity, which must be a very strange one for any Southern drugstore. Father is busy at a meeting of the hospital staff just now, I drove him to town because he was tired, and having left father here at the hospital, I promptly fled to the drugstore for fear of the radiologist's wife and daughter, who, if they once got hold of me, would try to entertain me all evening.

This is a good drugstore for waiting, for passing the time with a book, - as I have done often; or for writing a letter as I am doing now. The two roda jerks have accustomed themselves to me already, the amazement has fled from their faces, and they are chewing their gum as placidly as before. In all there must be about ten people and fifty flies here tonight. Most of the people are leaning over the counter, discussing the weather and the crops with the man

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at the cash register, while the flies <sup>are</sup> bustling  
over some spilt sugar and cream. Two  
fairs are visibly - and vainly - trying to  
circulate the stuffiness.

The heat of the past few days has been  
continuous, and the rain intermittent but  
persistent. I suspect nature knows her own  
mind as little as I know mine, and if that  
be any consolation. I wish I could somehow  
make the manifold phases of experience fit to-  
gether and mold them into an harmonious  
whole like a piece of music, a fuge or a  
suite. But I cannot. - I wish my emotions  
could be like a clear deep river flowing slowly  
and serenely toward their inevitable ocean.  
Then the mountains and trees, the birds  
and the animals, the people who know me  
and those who think they do, could find in  
me a clear and deepened reflection of them-  
selves. The rain is too persistent and the  
intellectual embankment can no longer contain  
the currents that would be so clear. The  
water becomes muddy, the mind, confused,  
and the river overflows.

How ugly are not emotions which refuse to be - <sup>B.</sup>  
come an organic part of the personality, and  
which, like stagnant swamps or cloudy puddles  
of water, pollute the air and destroy the harmony  
of their surroundings.

I wish I could drain myself of all inactivity  
and richly introspection, ~~the~~ as one drains a  
putrefied swamp, that all streams might unite  
in a common effort and seek a common goal  
like the beautiful blue river which is flowing  
through my imagination. But outside it  
is raining even more, and the rivers are  
getting even muddier.

John.

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