

Cambridge, April 10

"... I shall we say? "Due to psychological difficulties beyond our control. Or what else? Some would say that the suicide itself was a sin, but was not the night that preceded it sufficient atonement? Surely God will not further punish him. I pray for his peace."

I Dear Margaret, My mind is necessarily circling about the incident. Will you pray for us?

Will you let me say my prayers to you now at the end of this long and trying day? It would be very empty but for the work which flowed into it. I reviewed three weeks' work in Greek, some 550 lines of Sophocles all afternoon and part of the evening. There were three lectures, a physics experiment to write up, a week's physics problems to do before the quiz tomorrow morning, dishes to do, an electric toy locomotive from Milton which Nicky wanted repaired, and even two movements from Bach's sixth sonata fitted into the day. Only the biology studying, with which I had planned to spend half the evening I had to postpone until tomorrow. Tomorrow I must write another biology lab report, proof-read my Zwingli paper, organize and begin reviewing biology, and translate two hundred more lines from Sophocles. There will be enough to do.

Do you see how the work pushes itself into the center of my thinking, - I wish it could, but it cannot fill but a small fraction of what must be filled. Today's paper carried the full text of Matthiessen's suicide note which haunts me with its prophetic finality:

"I am exhausted. I have been subject to so many severe depressions during the past few years that I can no longer believe that I can continue to be of use to my profession and my friends. I hope that my friends will be able to believe that I still love them in spite of this desperate act."

"How much the state of the world has to do with my state of mind I do not know . . ."

You see, the newspaper accounts which linked that tragedy to political happenings were distorting the truth for propaganda effect. I think of Matthiessen often, and must do so for a long time to come, and every day brings a portion of that unhappiness which he found impossible to bear. May God have mercy on his poor, tortured soul.

I dreamt last night that you and I were walking in the mountains, side by side. I was walking parallel to the edge of a very high cliff which you could not see and of which you knew nothing. Everything went well while we were walking together, but you were needed somewhere else, and told me to wait until you came back. I was too much paralyzed with fear to answer; you took my silence for assent, and went away. I turned around to watch you disappear among the crowd of people in the distance. Unwittingly I took a step backward. When you returned, - if you returned I would not be there. - Then I awoke.

Do you believe in prayer? - not the mimeographed kind, - rather the prayer that means something. We must pray for Matthiessen. What

shall we say ? "Due to psychological difficulties beyond our control ..."
Or what else ? Some would say that the suicide itself was a sin, but
was not the night that preceded it sufficient atonement ? Surely God
will not further punish him. I pray for his peace.

My mind is ceaselessly circling about the inscrutable event. I
must go to sleep now. Will you pray for us ?

I think sometimes of the aria from the St. Matthew Passion:

"Komm süßes Kreuz,"

So will ich sagen,

Mein Jesu gib es immer her.

Wind mir mein Leiden einst zu schwer

So hilf Du mir es selber tragen."

"Come blessed cross,"

So will I pray,

My Jesus let me only share it.

And if my suffering grows too great

Then you yourself will help me bear it."

Do you see how the work pushes itself into the center of my
thinking. - I want to say, but it cannot fill but a small fraction
of what must be filled. Today's paper carried the full text of
Matthew's note which haunts me with its prophetic finality:

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during the past few years that I can no longer believe that I can
continue to be of use to my profession and my friends. I hope that
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happenings were distorting the truth for propaganda effect. I think
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day brings a portion of that madness which he found impossible to
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