

Konnarock, July 8, 1950

Dear Margaret,

All day today I have been a very good boy in the face of unequal odds. It had been arranged without regard to my own wishes that I should do a great many things in the way of being sociable. Now I am all through for the day, and very tired, and as disappointed as I always am, when I must be together with other people. Mother and father know very little about me: they think that my shyness is merely the expression of a feeling of superiority or arrogance. I like to think that it is nothing but the fear of being hurt, - and I am hurt each time, - by the incompleteness and the misunderstandings which are the dregs of every conversation. I would so much like to be able to work, to be together with books and music which are more patient to my entreaties than the human beings who are always concerned with so many unimportant things that they never become aware of the reality of things which are deep and necessary. I look forward to that time, - whenever it may be, - when I shall have time and strength to fulfill all those things which are waiting for me, because others have no time for them. I am very much afraid of having to leave the task undone, though I do not know how this could be, since death is the completion and fulfillment of all incompleteness. That is why the death of a young person has so much more import than the death of old men who have accomplished all that they must do and with their dying only seal the virtues of their lives. I also hope that I might not become so enamored of haste as are most of the people I know. The greatest problem to be solved is the differentiation between what is vital and what is superficial; very often the division is very difficult and very painful. Sometimes it is very difficult to know in what direction I must go. This my going to medical school is one of those things which is most difficult for me. My parents greet my intention with very frank, and as I feel, very callous scepticism. I like to think that I am giving up many things which I need only to find them again perhaps in a purer and more intimate relationship. The eternal life which Christians believe begins only after death is more vivid than that to me. A part of us must die every day, and whatever dies becomes sublime, timeless, and eternal.

It is two o'clock now; I must go to bed. Tomorrow or Sunday I shall try to write you of the many other things which it is now too late to say. I think and worry very much about you, and sometimes I am very troubled and sometimes very happy.

Good night, sleep well, and take good care of yourself.

Dein,

John.