

MARCH 10, '63

TAMARA —

I WRITE THIS IN THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESS KINGDOM HALL. THE ONLY REASON I WRITE IT IS THAT THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO DO IN THIS TOMB - I CAN'T WRITE POEMS, STORIES, OR PLAYS ANY MORE BECAUSE I'VE GIVEN IT UP. RECENTLY (YOU REMEMBER THAT SATURDAY I CAME IN BABBLING ABOUT FINDING THE TRUTH - AT THAT TIME I HAD ONLY BEGUN TO FIND IT - IT IS A LONG PROCESS.) I ANALYZED MYSELF AND ALL MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FOUND THAT I WAS A NEAR-PSYCHOTIC AND WHAT I WAS WRITING WAS MERELY SELF-INDULGENCE. IT'S NO GOOD, AND ~~IF~~ I STOPPED. I HAVE PROGRESSED IN MY WRITING FROM REWRITING THE CLASSICS FOR KIDS TO READ (LONG AGO) TO HOWLING ANGRY, SELF-PITYING ADOLESCENT PIECES, AND THROUGH ALL SORTS OF MEANINGLESSNESS UNTIL I FINALLY ARRIVED AT THE CONCLUSIONS THAT TO BE A GOOD WRITER I HAD TO BE HONEST, AND THAT THE ONLY WAY TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST IN IT WOULD BE TO WRITE ABOUT MY IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT: THUS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY WITH THE NAMES CHANGED TO PROTECT THE ASININE. WELL, I BEGAN IT, FELT BRIEFLY THE SATISFACTION THAT I WAS FINALLY CREATING SOMETHING GREAT AND TRUE, AND THEN WATCHED MY STORY LITERALLY ERUMBLE BEFORE

MY EYES, THE ULTIMATE IN MY SELF-EXPRESSION
PROVED TO BE WORTHLESS. I QUIT, I'M NOT SO
MUCH CONCERNED WITH WRITING ANY MORE
AS WITH FINDING MYSELF. BY THIS I DON'T
MEAN THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING, BUT
MERELY SOLVING THE ENIGMA OF SELF AND DECID-
ING ON MY WAY OF LIFE. THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING
IS NOT TO BE FOUND, AND I'M GLAD BECAUSE IF IT WAS,
THERE WOULD BE NOTHING LEFT TO SEARCH FOR, TO WON-
DER ABOUT, AND LIFE WOULD BE A BORE. I HAVE
COME TO BELIEVE THAT THE ANSWER DOES NOT EXIST,
BUT RATHER IN A SORT OF RELATIVITY PRINCIPLE, THAT
IS, THAT ALL THE WORLD IS MADE UP OF GOOD AND
EVIL - SELDOM CLEARLY DEFINED AS ONE OR THE OTHER
AND THAT BOTH ARE NECESSARY FOR EXISTENCE. THIS
COMPLICATES THINGS TERRIBLY, BUT IT'S TRUE. WE
NEED EVIL JUST AS WE NEED GOOD, AND WE
MUST CONDOONE ITS EXISTENCE, YET NOT CON-
DONE EVIL ACTS. THIS IS SORT OF WALKING
A TIGHTROPE, BUT IT'S NECESSARY IF ONE IS TO FIND A
DEEPER PURPOSE FOR ONESELF. GOOD AND EVIL ARE
INEXTRICABLY LINKED. IF SUDDENLY MEN FOUND IT
IMPOSSIBLE TO MURDER EACH OTHER, WE WOULD ALL
BE FRUSTRATED TO THE POINT OF INSANITY. ~~THE~~
WE NEED EVIL TO LIVE THE SAME AS WE NEED GOOD.

YANG AND YIN. THIS FINDS ITS ESSENCE IN THE DEATH INSTINCT, WHICH IS IN US ALL AS SURELY AS THE WILL TO LIVE.

WHEN ONE SEES THIS IT MAKES LIFE MUCH MORE MEANINGFUL.

LIFE IS A LABYRINTH, AND ANYONE ~~WHO~~ ^{WHO} CONTENTS HIMSELF WITH STAYING IN THE MASS HALL OF CONFORMITY AT THE LABYRINTH'S ENTRANCE INSTEAD OF SEARCHING TILL HE FINDS HIS OWN CORNER IS A FOOL. AS BERI SAID, "YOU ARE A FOOL", BUT YOUR FOOLISHNESS IS INNOFFENSIVE ~~AND~~ ^{BECAUSE} IT IS WHAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN AS YOUR WAY INSTEAD OF JOINING A GROUP, YOURS IS A DELIGHTFUL HENRY MILLER/JACK KEROUAC TYPE OF FOOLISHNESS, THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE PERSON WHO THROWS UP HIS HANDS AND SAYS: "FUCK IT! I'M GOING TO QUIT SEARCHING AND ENJOY MYSELF," WHICH IS NOT SO FOOLISH AFTER ALL, BUT MERELY A MILD FORM OF COP-OUT FOR THE LAZY (YOU MUST ADMIT THAT YOU ARE), FOR HE WOULD RATHER LISTEN TO ORNETTE COLEMAN THAN PLAY THE MUSIC HIMSELF. I AM THE WORLD FIGHTER REBEL ^{TYPE} THOUGH - IF I CAN'T PLAY THE ALTO SAX AS GOOD AS ORNETTE, THEN AND ONLY THEN, AFTER I'VE TRIED, WILL I SAY "KATER FOR THE MUSIC MAKING BIT" AND TURN ON THE

RECORDS PLAYER. THAT'S ME - YOU HAVE YOUR VIEW,
AND I HAVE MINE, AND BOTH ARE CORRECT.

ANOTHER REASON I HAVE GIVEN
UP TRYING TO WRITE POEMS AND STORIES
IS THAT I HAD A SORT OF REVELATION —
IT BEGAN WHEN I LOOKED AT A PAINTING IN
"TIME" MAGAZINE OF FOUR INDESCRIBABLE FIG-
URES ON AN ALSO INDESCRIBABLE LANDSCAPE
WATCHING THE UNKNOWN, INDESCRIBABLE — YES,
AND THIS IS WHAT I REALIZED: IN ALL MY
DESCRIPTION, I HAD LOST THE INDESCRIBABLE, I
HAD LOST THE DREAM, THE TRANSCENDENTAL
BEAUTY. I HAD LOST HEAVEN.

I HAD FORGOTTEN THE BEAUTY
BEYOND HUMANITY, THE BEAUTY IN THE CLOUDY
SKY, THE RAIN, THE MUDPUDDLE OF WATER WITH
SHINING SEDIMENT ON CEMENT. I HAD LOST THE
CRASHING OCEAN SURF AND SCREAMING GULLS
AND DREAM SWIMS, I HAD LOST — PURITY.
Occasionally, AS YOU KNOW, I RECAPTURED
A SMATTERING OF IT, ~~AND~~ EVEN THOUGH
DISTORTED, IN MY POEMS, BUT I HAD LOST, AL-
MOST FOREVER, THE PURE, OVERWHELMING, MEAN-
INGLESS JOY OF NATURE — OF GOD. UNTIL I
CAN RETURN TO THIS, UNTIL I CAN RE-ENTER

THE RAINDROPS AND REEDS AND MIST OVER THE
SUN, I WILL WRITE NOTHING BUT THAT REQUIRED
FOR SCHOOL AND OCCASIONAL LETTERS TO MY
FRIENDS.

ONE THING IS CERTAIN, IF EVER AGAIN
I DASH OFF ANY MORE OF THOSE MEDIOCRE,
~~THE~~ ABURD POEMS AND STORIES OF MY PAST STYLE,
I WILL IMMEDIATELY DESTROY THEM.

ANOTHER THOUGHT OCCURS TO ME,
AND WITH IT I WILL CLOSE THE LETTER: TODAY
IN "ESQUIRE" I WAS READING NORMAN MAILER'S
COLUMN AND HE SAID SOMETHING VITAL; THAT ALL
OF US, THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE, ARE ADDICTS.
WE ARE ALL ADDICTED TO ONE THING OR ANOTHER.
MY MOTHER IS ADDICTED TO HER RELIGION, SOME
ARE ADDICTED TO TV, I USED TO BE ADDICTED
TO LISTENING TO RECORDS - MOST OF US ARE
ADDICTED TO ABSURDITY. I'M NOT EXPRESSING THIS
VERY WELL, BUT IF YOU WILL THINK ABOUT IT
YOU WILL SEE THAT IT'S TRUE. I WAS ADDICTED
TO WRITING STORIES, BUT I HAVE BROKEN THAT
ADDICTION - HOW I WISH I HAD THE TALENT
TO PAINT PAINTINGS - FAR MORE IMPORTANT
TO ME NOW ~~ARE~~ THE INDESCRIBABLE FEELINGS
THAT CANNOT BE EXPRESSED IN WORDS. I

WANT TO SEE, AND FEEL, THE UNNAMABLE, AND
RELIEVE MYSELF OF MY ADDICTION TO MY HUM-
DRUM LIFE. I WANT TO ACHIEVE, AS THE ZEN
BUDDHISTS, A WISDOM BEYOND EXPRESSION - THAT
WOULD BE ACHIEVING THE WISDOM OF THE
UNIVERSE.