

April 19, 1974

Dear Harold,

The other day I got a splinter in the underside of the heel of my left foot. I couldn't see it and had to ask my wife to dig it out. She sterilized a needle and tried. But a small piece of it must have escaped her probing and digging. I still feel it. My wife thinks an infection is setting in. To counteract it I soaked both feet in as hot water as I could stand. If the infection doesn't clear up I'll need a doctor.

Somehow all the trails I tread lead to doctors. If my trouble were urological or ballistic, or both, I could approach Dr. Lattimer with whom I am shamefully remiss in correspondence. If I had Addison's disease or was shot I could look up Dr. Burkley. If I anticipated death I'd ask him to make out a second set of "necessary papers." When I had a touch of Burkleititis recently, you may remember, I asked Dr. Weisberg for help but he refused to treat me. Instead of administering an antibiotic he suggested forcefully but vaguely my trouble was psychological. He recommended recourse to medievalism. It reminded me Papa "Doc" Duvallier of Haiti claimed, before he died of natural causes, he had killed President Kennedy by voodoo.

I thought I'd hear from you before this about your sixty-first birthday party. Did you have a cake and blow out all the candles while your student protegees sang "For he's a jolly good fellow" while they quaffed water from your new-dug well?

Just three days ago my heart beat quickened when I saw an unaccustomed envelope in the letter box. But, sad to say, it wasn't from you. It turned out to be from someone of whom I had never heard, asking me to suggest a suitable thought for inscription on a certificate signaling a donation to the Chile Emergency Committee, "which is actively working to bring out refugees from Chilean fascism," in the name of an old revolutionary who died in Philadelphia on the same day Allende was assassinated and at whose funeral I made "a meaningful eulogy," my correspondent said. I complied but it made me think. What would you say if you were asked to speak at my death after having written me off in life? Would you turn your back and let my distraught widow read scorching passages from your letters? Or would you be carried away by remorse and commend, while the flames consumed me, the virtue you denied me while I was alive and burning with zeal to expose the truth? What could I say at services for you - that you went in search of the holy grail but was so overcome with suspicion of foe and friend you trusted no one and cut down the tree of collaboration before first fruit?

Let spring melt your resolve. Confide your thoughts to my discretion. Joint work should benefit all. Have you never stood among your brothers and sung "Solidarity Forever?"

Patiently,

Thomas