

3/16/70

Dear Gary,

This is in response to Phil Boatright, my poet friend who knew Thornley and works in a psychiatric institute, I do not know in what capacity. He wants me to call him and set up a time for going out there to see a competent diagnostician in whom he and his wife have what he describes as utter and complete confidence. He had been intending to write me since the end of January, then, apparently, forgot until something reminded him of it.

He says of doctors what you do and what I have experienced. But he is pointed and direct in saying I must not be negligent about this and concludes "The problem has gone on too long already without professional attention". I've told him what you will need.

Sure makes me feel good. They are swell, decent, feeling people. And sensitive, really great.

Your tape came today. First time I don't feel like working I'll p̄ay on the large machine and dub on a smaller one those parts I might want. Or, I may dub the whole thing. It'll fit on a small reel of 1 7/8. I can do that without listening to it now, first time I do not want to listen to the radio for news (as I can, seatdily now for the Brown info) or it will not bother Lil. Nothing else new.

Best,

3/16/70

Dear Phil, Jean,

Truly, man's greatest blessing is friends. I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate your letter of the 11th. I'll send this airmail in the hope it reaches you before you are concerned, for I do not want to cost you the phone call needlessly.

I am getting some of the attention of which you speak. Having told you this to reassure you, I also tell you I am satisfied it is not as good or as comprehensive as it might and probably should be. Now to bring you up to date, first with the futilities.

I did find a local g.p. I asked his sec if he'd be willing to take me on as ~~XXXXX~~'s patient even though I am a member of the co-op. She made an appointment. I waited for two hours, saw him, explained the present problem, and he said only two things: he was not troubled by my membership in the co-op (the second doctor who saw me in the emergency room of the local hospital when I had the second attack of hyper-ventillation, the first correctly diagnosed, had declined for this reason) and would be my local physician; and he preferred for his patients who used their minds in their work either librium or valium (of which he gave me a few samples I have not taken). For this, which boils down only to a willingness to be my local physician, he also sent me a bill for \$6.00. And I did complain to the medical director of the co-op. Nothing happened for a week so I complained again. This time I got a call from the shrink to whom the complaint had been referred! We had it for a few minutes. He then said I should have a more satisfactory medical consultation, transferred me back to the med dir's office, and that secretary arranged one for about a month ago with a doctor joining the staff the next day, the day I saw him. He is an Indian and gave me the most thorough physical the co-op has ever given me. He also questioned me extensively. The one added test I got was a four-hour sugar-tolerance (I presume within normal range, since I've heard nothing of it). He said the only way to determine what caused the blackout was to watch me and to this end there is an appointment for the 31st, which is a little over six weeks from the time he examined me. He apparently thought at that point neither a neurological nor an EEG was indicated. My EKG's have all been normal. So have the neurological exams of the past. I was impressed with his attitude and am grateful he was new and could take the time he did take. That day is now gone, I'm sure, for the consultations are for 10 minutes, as I recall and the physicals for 20!

Among my good friends is one taking his doctorate in psychology at Meye. He also was concerned, also mentioned the probable desirability of a neurological examination. I should have written you after seeing this doctor. I'm sorry I didn't. The other friend thinks that at least temporarily the changed attitude of the new doctor is encouraging. I see him again in two weeks. After that consultation, I'll write you both. If there is anything you think I should ask him or ask of him, I'd appreciate knowing it before then. I did raise the question of a psychiatric consultation and he said on the basis of what he then knew this was premature. I am aware that it is possible anxiety could cause this. I am also aware of other possibilities, one of which is a brain tumor or the sudden stopping of blood to the brain. I am concerned, I think naturally. But all physical tests and examinations give me normal good health.

This has, I suppose, increased the anxiety problem. However, yesterday and thus far (noon) today I have taken no emprobamate, and it is now rare when I take more than half the prescribed dosage of four. Often I take but one on arising. I believe, however, I am also tending to imagine more and to worry more about smoking, etc. I had cut down to six xigs a day for a couple of days when something

made me jumpy and I shot back up again. I'm again cutting back. I've smoked one about each 1 1/2 hours today. I've had very slight chest discomfort, seeming to be on the surface, and I wonder if it is of nervous origin. No pain, just the suggestion of it, like tired muscles. I've been getting a little exercise most days, the weather having broken somewhat and most of the snow having melted, and I think that helps in several ways. However, after this blacking out, I am not pursuing getting-up calisthenics as I was simply because I'm alone then, I'll be fast asleep, and my last clear recollection is of this happening as I was beginning them. I do about half now, but during the several weeks of relative inactivity, I feel as though I aged much.

Now I only blacked out once. Twice in my life I've fainted, which is not the same thing. At least I think it isn't. And a couple of times I lost my balance and my sense of balance (the first time I got a really thorough check, including a number of head X-rays). The first time I fainted was back in 1949, when I saw my wife, with tubes in her arms, a Wagensteen in her nose, and all the odor of surgery after five hours of it. I came to as soon as my head hit the marble floor, and I was aware it was coming on with enough time to get out of her room. The second time was in M.O. a little over a year ago, again a time of great tension and little rest. That time two other things probably figured in it, possibly a third. I was at a get-together of head-favorers, and taken some with no effect (a duplication of an earlier experience with the same friends). I began to get warm. I removed my jacket, then my sweater, then lay on a mattress that was on the floor. I got uncomfortable, and when I got up I kept going, demolishing a harpsichord, ruining my glasses, cutting and bruising my head one, although I didn't become aware of it until the next day, hurting a knee. My friends were afraid I'd gone into shock. But, I came to almost immediately, unassisted. They bathed my wounds, watched me for a while (I was completely lucid and completely aware), let me get into bed, and I was okay the next day. I do not know and I have no way of knowing whether the pot figured in this. I do know I didn't feel it. I did check this with the doctor to whom I then went on my return and he said he believed there was no connection, that not feeling it was not uncommon among the unitiated. I also do not know how much he knows about such matters. The first time I lost my sense of balance was quite a few years ago, I guess about 1961 or 1962. I then got up about 3 a.m. (former). As I leaned over to tend a just-hatched gosling I was trying to save I kept going, unable to control myself. I didn't hurt myself, was able to get to a chair, sit there for a while, and was okay. The second time was a year ago. It was at night, I was taking calisthenics before retiring, and when I started to get up off the floor, again I was unable to control my movements. I could, however, when I had something to hold onto. I had some Meclizine from the first bout, took it until I could see the doctor. He found everything okay by the time I could get an appointment, cautioned me not to go swimming (which I ignore) but I never go in when I'm at home alone).

By the way, I never did get to see the medical director! Not even afterward, when I told his secretary I still insisted on it, having by then sufficient proof that care was inadequate.

I do not regard this as a trifle, Hil. I am concerned about it. But, with your kid offer, it remains impossible for me to get to Omaha because I haven't the fare. It is easier to get to NYC. Which reminds me, now that I know the symptoms of hyper-ventilation, I now know that was diagnosed as "classic gall bladder attack" in 9/66, when I was driving to NYC and left the Jersey Turnpike to see a doctor, actually was the beginning of an attack of hyper-ventilation I was able to control. The checking on that when I got home disclosed a healed ulcer I'd never known I had. But no gall bladder trouble.

Another symptom that is missing is inability to fall asleep. I do, almost as soon as I get in bed. Often I awaken, but I can return to sleep immediately. Last

I went to bed 11:30, awakened about 4, urinated, returned to bed end, for the first time since last fall, slept until daylight. I'm always up before daylight. No insomnia.

However, I will do as you or my friend Gary suggest (he now seems satisfied with the attentions of the new doctor). He wanted me to get out to Minneapolis, where he would put me up, and he'd have me gone over by the man with whom he works. If after I report the result of the coming consultation/examination. And if either of you wants me to make anything then, I'll do that. I am aware that this can be a serious matter and, as I assume you realize, I am concerned about it, whatever the cause and probably more so because I do not know the cause--nobody does. Had it not been for this and the prevention of outdoor work by the weather, I think I'd have had the anxiety under better control unassisted.

I know you and Gary are concerned also, and it seems much to me. I think I've told you all everything that seems to be of significance, except for detailing all the many things that could cause or contribute to the anxiety, of which I am aware of enough without professional assistance in learning of others. One other thing I've taken up with the doctor in the past that he apparently felt was normal for a man of my age. When I squat very any length of time, I get faint when I stand up again. Sometimes, in talking the fire in the fire lane, I have to be aware of this and not stay down too long, but otherwise it is never a problem.

I hope this letter is not delayed reaching you. I am anxious to save you the cost of the call, much as I appreciate your instructions to reverse the charges, for I know your financial situation is not the best. But if you are not satisfied when you get the letter, please call me at night, when the rates are lower. I'll make it a point not to be away when my life is here alone for several nights so you needn't, if you think you should call, make it person to person.

One other thing that might interest you. When Thornley's case was set he was without representation. Garrison's office was aware of this and told me in advance they'd not press him, would give him time. Then a lawyer named Baldwin, as I recall, made some motions for him (and apparently letting it be known this was all). I understood Kerry is trying to get the ACLU to represent him. He seems to have left Egypt, too, if my recollection is not wrong. Sciambra seems to think Kerry's defense will center on the complete fiction that I put Garrison up to this, I didn't, and after I saw it coming, as a possibility, I did get in touch with Clint Bolton with a message he did give Kerry. If that sick ego did not dominate Kerry, if he'd taken my advice and suggestion, none of this would have happened, I am convinced, for I knew more about him than is relevant than the Garrison office and, if he'd had satisfactory answers, I believe they'd have taken my word. I think it will be insane if they take this approach in the trial but I think both Kerry and his Yixiv friend and counsellor, Dave Lipton, are both mad enough to believe it, believe in it, and to try it.

Phil and Jean, you are wonderful, and I appreciate it, very much. Funny thing is that for the past couple of weeks I've been trying to find a few free moments to tell you I seem to be as okay as I have been and about Kerry. And other other bit of (almost totally suppressed) news. I've filed suit under the so-called freedom of Information Act, against both Justice and State, for the suppressed court record in the James Earl Ray extradition. They even snaffled the court file copy in London! Imagine, a man is tried, in open court, and all copies of the evidence are, in effect, stolen! Ah! Drave New World! Not rospero's, or Huxley's: Orwell's!

Many, many thanks,

Steppenwolf

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A JOURNAL OF POETRY AND OPINION

editor Philip Boatright

associate Miss Jean Shannon

11 March 70

Dear Hal,

Terrribly sorry, my friend, to be so slow in replying to yours of 28 January. I've been trying to find some way to help you avoid the "clinic" arrangement, with regard to medical examination, that you described to me some time ago. A telephone call recently from a friend now living in Chicago has finally brought something home to me. He described trying to see a doctor. He has no "family physician" in the area, of course, and so it seemed practical to visit one of the "clinics." Well, it is rather like an assembly line, apparently: hurry up and present your main complaint because I only have six minutes to spend with you before my next patient.

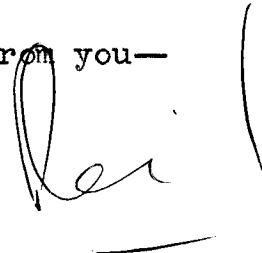
Well, I understand some of the reasons such non-human places have been allowed to come into being and why they have been tolerated—especially in the very big cities...even if I do not agree that they are the only answer. But in your case I think you should stay completely away from them. I asked, I think, about your seeing a private physician—one who had the time to see you properly—but I don't think you ever answered me on this point. So I bring it up again—because I think it is vitally important for you to make every effort to do this.

I understand your frustration and am sure you are justified in lodging a protest with the medical coop, even going to see the director. But similar cases I am familiar with have convinced me you would probably be wasting your time. Unjust? Hell, yes—but the essential thing right now is to get yourself adequately taken care of. The episodes of blacking out are not trifles, Hal, whatever their cause. You need to see someone, preferably a neurologist, and have time enough to describe to him in detail what these spells are like. You need to see someone who can and will give you a very thorough neurologic examination. And you need to do it now. It will be expensive, very likely, and the guy who does it may very well be an arrogant bastard—though I certainly hope not. In any case, do it. Who do you know who might be able to refer you to a physician they themselves have some confidence in? Arrange to go to NYC if necessary.

Now listen to me: I want you to call me, collect, after you've thought over what I've just told you. Jean and I have a diagnostician here in whom we have utterly complete confidence. (Yes, a rare soul!) It is just possible he may be able to make a referral himself. He may well have a contact of a professional type in your area. And we know he will help if he can. Nowthen. If it should develop that this type of referral is not practical—then we want you to seriously consider coming here, to Omaha, to see our physician or a neurologist recommended by him. The appointment can be set up from our end with a minimum of fuss, and you can stay with us while you're here. OK? I'll expect your call, say Monday or Tuesday evening, no matter what you decide or what arrange-

ments you may have made there in the meantime. We are completely serious about this, Hal. The problem has gone on too long already without professional attention.

Let us hear from you—



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