

October 18, 1939

Dear Julian Street:

Please believe that I am in sack cloth and ashes because of my long neglect of the wonderful letter you wrote me after reading the record of my Day's Work. It was a marvelous letter, so good that I could not properly answer it, I thought, when it came to me at Allegheny College where I was giving a series of talks on biography writing. I was some six weeks out there and it took every ounce of my strength to do the work - three lectures a week to a class of thirty, fine youngsters, too, quite reconciling me to some, at least, of the younger generation. And you know what demands a class makes. Well, I found I could do nothing else but this particular piece of work.

I got through it but there was not much left of me when I came back to New York to an over-crowded desk which unwisely I tried to clean up at once. By the time that was done I was as near a wreck as I have been for many years. In July I went to the country where I lay trying to gather up steam enough to come back to work.

I came back after Labor Day, much refreshed and if I keep down my activities to two or three hours a day, lie down for two hours every afternoon after lunch, play around until eight or nine o'clock, then go to bed and sleep until eight the next morning, I get on pretty well. But Julian, think of that for a schedule for a dray horse like me, who has been accustomed to going from daylight to dark. The truth is, however, I am learning to enjoy loafing which is a great thing. Then I am busy studying the problem of life after eighty. And it is a problem if one is not to be a burden and a nuisance to himself and his friends. I am thinking about writing a book about it if I come to a point where I think I have something to say.

All of this explains why I did not snap at your suggestion that I come over and see you and Margot this summer. I should have loved to have done it or have had you come over and see me in my toy house where I run away from the family to rest and work. But I was going nowhere and practically seeing no one - the Doctor's orders. And I put off writing you hoping there would be a time when I could make some definite arrangement about a visit.

How is it now? Are you to be there all the Fall? It is possible, not too probable, I fear, that I could get over from my place to you some day. I do not own a car but I have a taxi man neighbor who is only too glad to take me where I want to go. The trouble is I cannot promise anything as we have a semi-sanitarium at our house - my brother having had a very bad summer, just out of the hospital now convalescing and we are obliged to have a very quiet place. You know all about it, I am sure.

It was fun to have you compare experiences and impressions of people after reading the Day's Work, but it will be greater fun to talk things over. One of the satisfactions that I have had in the publication of the book, and I cannot tell you how many misgivings I had about that book, having always said I would never do an autobiography - one of the satisfactions have been letters like yours that have come to me from people who have had parallel experiences and compare their reactions.

We really must have a talk, dear Julian, and if you are still at Lakeville I will try and manage to get over there this Fall, though I cannot promise.

Remember me warmly to your wonderful Margot and believe me always

Your affectionate friend

Mr. Julian Street.
Lakeville, Conn.