

## Richard Hugo

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an excerpt from

### *Dear Folks: Letters Home, 1964–72*<sup>\*</sup>

[4/11/68]

Dear Folks:—first, Dad, how distressing to hear of your accident. From Mother's description it's a wonder you weren't wiped out. It sounds almost as if the other driver was bent on suicide. Anyway, thanks to the fates you were spared. I'm sure the fact you are physically tough for your age helped considerably. I know recovery will be long and uncomfortable at your age and can only hope you can take it easy. I assume you are home or will be soon as hospitals today discharge much faster than they used to feeling that recovery at home is better for the patient. It must have been a frightening experience too and it's lucky you didn't suffer shock, a frequent reaction and a dangerous one. So I'm distressed but grateful—My God it really is a miracle you survived. Please relax, watch TV, etc. Do they give you morphine or codine for the pain? I'm aware of the pain of torn tendons having suffered them myself and can only send my sympathies.

I wrote you a couple letters but tore them up as I was upset about the Martin Luther King killing, and for a few days was trying to stop feeling ashamed of

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<sup>\*</sup>These transcriptions of some of Richard Hugo's typewritten letters to his mother and stepfather are true to the spirit of the originals: we have let stand some of Hugo's characteristic misspellings but silently corrected a few typographical and other inconsequential errors. Letters are used courtesy of Ripley Hugo, who provided the bracketed dates. Handwritten signatures and notes are indicated with italics.

my country. I have been asked endless questions here, but how can you explain senseless hate, a nation that seems to have too much of it? I don't know, I have no answers. I suppose I can hope we will learn from the killing, but given human nature who can say. We didn't listen to Christ either, so how can we listen to King? The papers are full of us here, the awful riots. I only hope the majority of black people don't listen to their leaders who want them to arm. Think of the blood that will flow. And how much worse racial relations will be after. I feel a little better today and so am writing. Anyway news of Dad's accident shook me out of my preoccupations.

I haven't written a thing here but today I took a wonderful boat ride up the Thames to Kew Gardens, a lovely park with many tropical greenhouses. The ride is great but the weather is bitter cold for the first time since I arrived. Otherwise I've been seeing movies and eating in some good restaurants. London is a cheap town by American standards though Englishmen find it dear, as they say here.

At least it looks like we are going to get out of that silly damn war—what a relief that will be. But the decision is a wise one even though a bit late. All we could have done to 'win' was to destroy the whole country and we weren't there to do that.

Next week I'm going to Cornwall, to the ocean. A great place I hear. Also up to Lincoln later. Tell your friend Mrs. Suer I'll have her information for her quite soon.

Take care, both of you.

*Love*  
*Dick*

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