

1

—The novel that didn't work out.

—Yes. Tho I still haven't given up.

—To me you were trying to do *Steppenwolf* or something.

—Yes. A philosophical novel.

—Why not just direct philosophy ?

—I try to write that too, but the novel allows for more irony and ambiguity.

2

I know that I know what I know, but I know also that maybe you don't and even shouldn't give a fuck. The delights of ontology are obscure and uncertain. The building stands undecorated, however brightly lit its hidden interior.

I believe and yet I do not believe. I believe in science but not so much in life itself. Or in death.

Only a blockhead gives it away for free.

I write for the unborn I told him, at just about the time he stopped writing me back. A generous friend, a friend full of compliments, but a friend who could no longer follow me, a friend who seemed to be taking politics a little too seriously.

I read the dead. I write for the unborn. I was just starting to say that at the time.

At first I wrote letters to imaginary friends. Occasionally I would include pieces of letters (emails) to actual friends, leaving out anything personal of course. I was in fact in a position to be lonely, but my conscious motivation was that it helped me find the right tone. My reader would be treated as an intelligent friend. I would show something important about the philosophical attitude, that it is generous and open. That it has a sense of humor.

At some point I came up with a cute saying: *I read the dead. I write for the unborn.* Let me just address myself indeed to the unborn. And so this letter is for you, unborn philosopher.

–So I work as a teacher. I am more in the habit of throwing down the ladder than some. I would like to be James Joyce, piecing together an edifice according to some perfectly balanced masterplan. But what comes natural is this interview form.

–So your vanity is messing with you.

–Yeah. These interviews aren't so beautiful. They get the job done maybe. But I also like closed, suggestive structures.

So I talk to bright young people who despite their brightness are not yet in a position to understand me all that well, tho I am grateful when they sincerely engage with me. The old have a shadowy and doubtful existence for the young, right?

I read Aristotle and other philosophers seem less original. I should have read Aristotle sooner, just for context. Aristotle is the sober philosopher, telling it how it is, eschewing literary games. Such games aren't always bad, but there's something special about just saying it.

Never seek to tell thy love. Put it in the mouth of a character. Make the character a villain or a clown.

A bright young girl. The role he played with her. Accept that he was old. Accept that Im an old man. Bright young girl.