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Letter 1970, September 24, James Tate to Gene DeGruson

James Tate

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24 September [1970]

Dear Gene,

I don't think I'll even pretend to have any words of wisdom for you-- I do have affection, respect, and hope for you--but on wisdom I am short lately. There are things to be said, but most have been said on one side of the fence or the other in our 6 year friendship. And I know it no longer consoles to tell you that in truth I am very low also--but I suspect mine could be cured with some rather simple measures. I have done such a good job of repelling friends, either by defensiveness, or "they are not on my level," or else I choose friends who are not in need of my friendship--blough, blough, blough--anyway I've managed all along, with everybody but you almost, manage to make sure I could have no real friends--I mean even rather superficial friendships--I rebel against, by moving, acting proud, acting aloof, stupid, something. Anyway, that's my plight at the moment, feeling doomed to that storybook alienation isolation--which, at least presently, does not seem favorable to creating real work. I think my dream is one of perpetual one-night stands--screwing the dumb blond in Vancouver, and being out of town by 8 am. This I understnad. I function.

My trouble--one of them--is that I have more energy, more imagination and romanticism than most 10 people combined. Really! I think this is what dooms me to "burning up people," then wanting to move on. I am a "sensationalist," and most people cannot handle this--it bugs them, their whole lives.

So--conclusion--I think that we must accept this, and produce as much as possible before we blow a flat, have a heart attack, or blow our brains out. One is inevitable. So realize once again that you are one of the insufferable superior people--There is no place for you, nobody can stand you for long--and continue to believe in your gifts.

