

It is a private concern of mine. It is an altogether selfish concern of mine. I want to live while I am alive, that is all. I want at least to try. We have not yet been able to find out if it is possible for us really to live during all the seasons, all the changes of climate, all the stages of growth, each with its own fierce and magnificent problems, but we have the right to want to try. We don't really care if it kills us, just so we are allowed to try and not be interrupted by some irritating idiocy such as war which comes about through the same despair in duller men finding a different outlet. We want to go about it quietly, privately, without cannon booming, without oratory, without transportation, aviation, war tactics, abnormal pain, abnormal heroism, abnormal greatness. We want to go about it in some small part of the world we know, in which we have lived, and we want every part of this small landscape to be real to us, to become a part of us, and we want every God-damn tree in the place, every patch of empty earth, every plant with leaves, every stream, every moment of sky, every hour of light in the world, every ounce of pressure of air, every mouthful of food and water and wine, to mean something to us, to be a part of our seeking to be alive immortally. We want to have the time it takes and we don't want any interruption.

William Saroyan, *The Little Dog Laughed to See Such Sport*, 1963.