

Probably no one who attempts suicide, as Regnier shows in one of his short stories, is fully aware of all his motives, which are usually too complex. At least in my case it is prompted by a vague sense of anxiety, a vague sense of anxiety about my own future.

Over the last two years or so I have thought only of death, and with special interest read a remarkable account of the process of death. While the author did this in abstract terms, I will be as concrete as I can, even to the point of sounding inhuman. At this point I am duty bound to be honest. As for my vague sense of anxiety about my own future, I think I analyzed it all in *A Fool's Life*, except for a social factor, namely the shadow of feudalism cast over my life. This I omitted purposely, not at all certain that I could really clarify the social context in which I lived.

Once deciding on suicide (I do not regard it as a sin, as Westerners do), I worked out the least painful means of carrying it out. Thus I precluded hanging, shooting, leaping, and other manners of suicide for aesthetic and practical reasons. Use of a drug seemed to be perhaps the most satisfactory way. As for place, it had to be my own house, whatever inconvenience to my surviving family. As a sort of springboard I, as Kleist and Racine had done, thought of some company, for instance, a lover or friend, but, having soon grown confident of myself, I decided to go ahead alone. And the last thing I had to weigh was to insure perfect execution without the knowledge of my family. After several months' preparation I have at last become certain of its possibility.

We humans, being human animals, do have an animal fear of death. The so-called vitality is but another name for animal strength. I myself am one of these human animals. And this animal strength, it seems, has gradually drained out of my system, judging by the fact that I am left with little appetite for food and women. The world I am now in is one of diseased nerves, lucid as ice. Such voluntary death must give us peace, if not happiness. Now that I am ready, I find nature more beautiful than ever, paradoxical as this may sound. I have seen, loved, and understood more than others. In this at least I have a measure of satisfaction, despite all the pain I have thus far had to endure.

P.S. Reading a life of Empedocles, I felt how old is this desire to make a god of oneself. This letter, so far as I am conscious, never attempts this. On the contrary, I consider myself one of the most common humans. You may recall those days of twenty years ago when we discussed "Empedocles on Etna" - under the linden trees. In those days I was one who wished to make a god of myself.