

Mrs. Thelma D. Toole
c/o Louisiana State University Press
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April 22, 1981

Dear Mrs. Toole,

You are a woman of great love and courage
who has done a noble thing for her son.

The large sadness and glory of your's and your
son's story filled me with awe and great hurt
when I heard of him for the first time as
his name was spoken as the winner of a
Pulitzer Prize.

The hardness of your lives choked-off in me
all the philosophising attempts to understand
why things had to be as they were; and then
I wrote a poem to remember a moment
when I understood. May I share it with
you, great lady.

With my respect,

Todd R. Houser

John Kennedy Toole

Set the round full circle of his life complete, unused.
Death was hard.

Death was easy.

Sure was bound the quiet torrent of lost resolve
When last afternoons gave way to quiet and final empty.

And the darkest interval then brought relief,
Without the hope.

As purpose pressed against infinity's cold and neutral brink;
Til death became.

And came a life from this to speak his word,
And live.

And some would know the care and pain on aching,
Dying heart had given-up to holy time.
And some would weep.

And I, unknowing of his time or strife,
In silence understood;

And thought the best of quiet prayers for him,
And slept, and was not sad,
But glad that he had come.

written on the announcement of his Pulitzer Prize.