

*Note from John Younger, introduction by Ian Robertson*

For many of us, myself included, our 70s are halcyon days. A time to indulge grandchildren, see friends, travel, and do things long postponed. For others, myself included, our 70s can be a time of trial. In January of this year, I discovered that decades of robust health were for me over.

Indeed, in early January I was convinced that I would soon know the answer to the mystery of what happens next. A few classmates became aware of my situation and took time to call. These calls were of enormous comfort and wisdom. No one was happier than I was to be able to see these friends in person in New Haven and thank them.

Another Classmate and dear friend, John "Tex" Younger, wanted very much to come to our reunion. Unfortunately he found himself secluded in treatment for his 5<sup>th</sup> clinical depression and was unable to attend our reunion. He wrote a letter to the Class. He describes his love of Yale and his classmates and the joy that comes from seeing them again.

He also describes the hell of his illness, the importance of perseverance, and the extraordinary value of friendship. He urges each of us to reach out to Classmates enduring hardship and adversity, to treat them with compassion, and generosity of spirit.

It is in honor of "Tex" who is in the midst of his valiant battle with depression that I have asked that his letter the Class be posted on our website.

Aloha (with love)

Ian Robertson

-----

To the Class of 1963 on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our graduation from Yale.

Men of Yale, my friends, my brothers, I cannot be with you on this once-in-a-lifetime event, celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> year since we graduated from Yale and, for this, I am deeply saddened.

For over half of a century, I have been privileged to have been one among so many wonderful courageous men who I can count as my friends. Most of us see each other only every five years or so, but when we come together, it is almost like yesterday. I cherish the genuine happy

smiles, the handshakes, the bear hugs and the tears of gratitude and joy that I know will be there and I hate like hell to miss it.

There are also losses, about which I will not know until later. May God bless those valuable, precious men who we no longer see, who are gone from this earth forever, but who live still in our memories.

I wanted to be on campus again, to see the colors of the trees, to smell the smells, to hear the sounds, to see the blue and white tents, to see the caps and jackets distributed to the different classes to experience the magic and the majesty once again. I wanted to hear our wonderful "Whiffs" and to dance and sing to the music of our time, the late 50's and early 60's, when artists produced those great sounds; when music meant something; when it told a story of happiness or of loss and the singers could really sing rather than chant a messages of sex or violence in a monotonous monotone.

I wanted to hear the old stories again, and some new ones; stories of families, of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I wanted to hear the funny things that happened to us, old and new, and to experience the tears of joy as we laughed together, to slap guys on the back and to feel the warmth of the slaps on mine.

And now, to the more serious purpose of this letter and the reason why I have requested that it be read aloud to the entire class at an appropriate time and place.

My serious purpose for wanting to be a part of the reunion was my desire to lead a discussion group on clinical depression, which is a deadly, silent disease that I am presently battling. This is the reason why I cannot be with you on this occasion. This is my 5<sup>th</sup> go-round with this condition and I pray for no more, because I do not know if I have the stamina to fight off a 6<sup>th</sup> one.

Since I am unable to be with you physically, maybe I can be with you in spirit and I have a message that I hope might offer some encouragement to those who suffer from or who might suffer from this disease that has only one purpose-to kill its victims. It will whisper lies, it will cheat, it will steal the hope, joy, ambition, will and light, and sometimes the sanity of its victims. By doing this, it will attempt to kill its victims by telling them that the only way out is fatal self-harm. I know, because I have believed it myself, from time to time. **Don't believe it- IT IS A LIE!! Keep fighting-Do not give up!** Find proper medical attention, exercise, talk to people when every fiber of your being tells you to isolate. **Don't do it!** It is in isolation that this liar is most effective. I have been through 4 of these from start to finish and I know that if I can survive this hell on earth, so can you and your loved ones. Those of you who know me best know that I will never, never, never surrender to this merciless bastard that lives and thrives in the dark places of the human soul.

Do yourself a favor. Look to the right and to the left. Each man you see has suffered losses, some unbearable, about which you know nothing. Reach out to him. Hug him. Let him know you care for him. Let him know that you love him. Let him know that you will be there for him if he needs you. Encourage him to keep fighting, whatever his losses or condition. I hope people will call upon me when they need help with a hopeless, light starved pit in their souls, because I am going to survive and they can too.

As for my present situation, I am located in a remote, desolate part of Arizona, enrolled in what is reputed to be one of the toughest recovery programs, if not the toughest, in the Country. I am the oldest patient in the place by decades. I am on the move from 5:30 a.m. until 8:30 or 9:00 p.m., on every day except Sunday. I cook, wash dishes, sweep, vacuum, mop floors, make beds, take out trash, clean bathrooms and offices of the counselors, just like everyone else here. I have become more humble and appreciate these "smaller" things of which I had taken for granted. Men, our wives do many of these "mundane" chores to make our lives easier. Appreciate them for what they do for us as I am learning to appreciate Chica in more ways.

I am still battling, but I am getting better. I am going to win this fight and I will be there next time. I miss you and I love you, each and every one and there is not a damned thing you can do about it. What I would give to be with you.

May God bless you everyone.

Love, "Tex" Younger '63