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UA37/44 Diary to Kelly

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April 24, 1969

It isn't often that any disturbance of nature takes out of me as much as did that fearful hailstorm. It is now the sixth day since it came, and I am still far below my usual aplomb. I have never been in the midst of so much destruction before. When I was a student, a fearful fire, down where the parking lot on State Street at Eleventh now is, destroyed a livery stable and, among other things, twenty-three horses. For days the odor of burning horseflesh pervaded the atmosphere. As I now recall it, the carcasses were piled up and burned right there. That gave me a sickening sensation for days, but I was young then and did not actually feel weak. I suspect that only my knowing that so many people are so much worse off than we has done more to set me a little nearer calmness than anything else, but that horrible explosion and the killing of the two children, not too many blocks from us, helped tear down any calm I was trying to build up. Then, right in the midst of it all, a message came that my oldest nephew had died, a big, husky fellow who lived up beyond Cincinnati and worked for a baking company in that city. He had been so large and husky that it was a great sorrow to hear of his breakdown a year or so ago. I really was not surprised at his dying after his younger brother had told me of the various complications that had developed recently. This was the first death among the grandchildren of my parents since 1902, when a little two-year-old niece died. And only one other death of that generation was another small child, the son of my oldest brother, in 1899. It seems silly to let some natural happening like a hailstorm get a fellow down, but I have always suffered with frostbitten vegetation when spring came out a bit too early and paid the consequences. Taut nerves may bring lots of fine joys, but they can also be dreadful things to have around, too.