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**Title:** "Some Reflections upon my Early Life" by Allen Tanner

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# Some reflections upon my early life

what particular kind. I was born into a family all of whose members had phenomenal musical gifts. My elder sisters had magnificent voices, fantastic musical ears, very good looks and marvellous natural musical instincts. But somehow they were (hereditarily) afflicted-with a strange and tragic "blind spot" in their characters, their wills, their visions...or call it <sup>rather</sup> their "picture of life before them"...<sup>and</sup> the pursuit of their Destiny, -so that all their talent, promise, <sup>artistic</sup> dispositions were actually-as Time went on,-wasted away, vitiated, diffused and <sup>became</sup> deteriorated-by their complete lack of the knowledge of work and enterprise-towards career or accomplishment. (It took me years to learn the value and meaning....and the technique of work, but I <sup>had the luck</sup> to be propelled onwards by other forces, etc.) As a boy I expected them to build their lives and talents into something fine and big, couldn't understand why they didn't, was demoralized myself by their failure to do so, and actually frustrated by it. I tried (in my boyish way) to goad them, encourage them, push them, but always they failed me since they did not actually know how or what to do about it: typical victims of the small American town! But they bore, -unmistakably-the "signature" of a kind of genius, and I <sup>so young</sup> could never fathom why they never assumed the roles Destiny had so obviously prescribed for them. I <sup>so</sup> needed <sup>also</sup> a companionship of growth, progress, accomplishment-and above all of doing the very right <sup>and</sup> accurate things in the right directions. But, as I say, the poor things, <sup>though</sup> always brimming with talent, beauty-and all the right ingredients-always failed me, <sup>probably sheer</sup> out of ignorance and naivete, (most of all) I imagine! Or perhaps (more tragically still) a <sup>fatal</sup> instinctive insensate predisposition towards retrogression? It was terribly and desperately lonely for me, their unfortunate lack of constructive activity, and <sup>wise still</sup> it had to my young ears (even the fateful sound of doom-of Time and Life lost, <sup>ob</sup> Destiny unfulfilled,-and of personal lives wrecked and ruined, because <sup>so</sup> unfulfilled! Now, having lived my long life, and having-in spite of much,-accomplished not a little, but still always needing that "sister" or "companion" who is at the same time the great expert-(I never stand still, there is always much <sup>more learn and</sup> to accomplish the more one does and "knows")-and <sup>an expert</sup> "related" by musical blood and sensitivity, (or it could be a man...a "brother"-but I've never found one....male musicians are always too vain and envious) I THOUGHT I had-perhaps-found this in Moura the first time I saw her. She was simple, gracious, kind and warm and seemed to perceive that I was no ordinary mortal...and that (I hoped) I was deserving of the kind of attention she could and should give. I have repeatedly said I understood her frantic life (the virtuoso and all its requirements-the lack of time etc.etc.) But I felt that she could have given some indication that-in the "off moments" (which everyone does have, and she seems to have plenty-too) there would <sup>perhaps</sup> be a little time for friendship-and <sup>even for</sup> mutual service! Her indifference (to me)-towards you and me-is not only disappointing-but actually rather offensive! She cannot be so stupid and mindless that she does not even suspect what rare Beings we are! And if she is, then it is all so much the worse! But even then, with a little niceness and sweetness, (and <sup>with also</sup> our understanding,) she could at least try to learn how-to have a higher better relationship, <sup>and even</sup> to improve herself and her nature thusly, <sup>while</sup> ~~also~~ giving <sup>ing</sup> pleasure-at the same time! But I fear she prefers the kind of second-class bourgeois "international society" she frequents...to ours! I met a lady the other day, (who slightly resembles her in some ways) but who towers above her in every other way, and I wish you could meet her <sup>too</sup>-and know her. (I even believe she might be the answer to your prayers for

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the "fine rapture" that you so desire and need! I was quite bowled over-by her looks and personality. She is handsome (and 50-ish in age) (with an impressive profile, <sup>very</sup> aquiline nose) very high "Pompadour" blonde hair, lovely kind expressive and understanding eyes, a commanding aristocratic bearing and presence, and the quick ready sensitivity and intelligence of the exceptional Frenchwoman! And she was a <sup>very</sup> fine pianist, a pupil (and assistant to) Phillipe, --(played with Poulenc the first performance of the 2 piano Concerto...and certain new things of Ravel, with both of whom she was very intimate) and she is the widow of Ravel's favorite Conductor-the well-known Portugese Pedro de Freitas-Bronco, whom I heard often in Paris, and knew of-very well. She is travelling now, because she says "it is the only thing when one is unhappy," and is now in Mexico. Her maiden name was Marie Leveque, and I am certain I heard her play in those days in Paris. What a woman! I can well understand how a man (or woman) <sup>could</sup> fall head over heels in love with such a magnificence...so intelligent, steeped in culture, distinguished, suave and so warm and human! She lives in Lisbon....so if you ever go there....!!!

You see, if she were to stay in America (but will not) there would be the perfect "professional sister" for me to go to for help and inspiration, with my musical problems. For she is generous....but Moura has let me down in all this....so you see why I have been <sup>can surely</sup> ~~decu~~ by her lack of interest. You cannot say I'm selfish, since I <sup>it's because</sup> was ready to give her as much in return-in <sup>many</sup> other ways. I wrote to her-several times,-and very beautifully,-showered her with attention-<sup>5</sup>-but she couldn't even send me, ever, a postcard ~~even~~ as she promised....and her <sup>rank</sup> failure - <sup>in the face of</sup> in such close proximity to you in the south of France) to do anything about getting to know you,-was, I feel, stupid-and unpardonable! How could one NOT be put out-by such indifference, I ask you?! It is irksome, annoying, exasperating, and in spite of all <sup>the</sup> extenuations, there is actually-in the long run-no excuse for it: except rank unconcern and indifference.

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Edith's autobiography, with the exception of the chapters on Dylan Thomas and Roy Campbell and America and Hollywood, <sup>is</sup> quite idiotic and silly and very boring and bad. Heavy British (regional) humor with bourgeoisie as target and butt, revolting repulsive descriptions of physiques and personalities, and the chapter on Pavlik, (I feel) quite disrespectful inaccurate and displeasing. Also much too brief, curt and flimsy! Pavlik valait mieux que cela...but I suspect that was her way of "taking care

à la "Punch" (!!!) (over)

Lynn Marger conducted the other day. You will find it in "The Other Day" - Thursday

Please this last  
five violation of our  
page arrangement - but I didn't  
margin agreement - but I went ahead page  
agreement to use another without  
want to use margin as part of did  
and stupidly that I might have  
and used the margin to me  
it even occurred that I might have  
afterwards) I hope I shall be careful  
used a small appendant piece of too much  
paper. I hope I shall be careful  
your eyes - and shall be careful  
not to err - and shall be careful  
future!"

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[top of page—upside down]

Lorin Maazel conducted "Poème de l'Extase" thrillingly—the other day. You never told me if you liked the one by Dimitrio Nitropolos—I sent you!

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Please forgive this last page violation of our margin arrangement arrangement—but I didn't want to use another page and stupidly went ahead and used the margin without it ever occurring to me (as it did afterwards) that I might have used a small appendant piece of paper. I hope it won't tire—too much—your eyes—and shall be careful not to err thusly—in the future!!