



Mr. Hirschfeld insures himself a quiet hereafter

You learn you have TEN MINUTES TO LIVE

A choice of opinions on how to conduct oneself when the time runs perilously short

It is impossible to answer the question. In order to make anything but a clever answer one would in fact need to know he had only ten minutes more to live. I think you will find that the last ten minutes of most people's lives are terribly insignificant and meaningless in that they are either asleep, in a coma, or in pain so great as to make nonentities of themselves. Death is the entity here, and not any specific person. Nobody who hasn't died knows anything personal about the experience of dying. Death is death and has nothing whatever to do with life, or living, being beyond the life continuity. It is easy to be witty about what any of us brave souls would do or think or feel if we had only ten minutes to live and knew it because we know we have an unknowable amount of time to live and generally a firm belief that the amount of time left is so great as to be no part of our concern at all.

If all this is dull and fatuous, let me join the others with these meaningless replies:

1. Nothing. 2. Exercise. 3. Breathe deeply. 4. Live for 20 minutes. 5. Start writing a new play. 6. Write a book called *My Life, I Believe*, making every three words suitable for the end of the book. 7. Bet the next race and wait for the results. 8. Call in a new doctor, preferably a quack. 9. Listen to the *Andante Movement* of Mozart's *Concerto in C Major* for piano and orchestra. 10. Lie down. 11. Go for a long walk. 12. Swear. 13. Pray. 14. Take a nap. 15. Start killing a bottle of Johnny Walker Black Label. 16. Pick a fight with my wife and spank my children. 17. Tell my wife and children how I managed to stay alive so long and make so much of myself. 18. Forget it. 19. Telephone the U.N. and complain about how little they did for me. 20. Telegraph George Bernard Shaw for advice.

But as you see the answers are endless. The very best answers are not printable of course. And the only true answer to the question that any man can really make is this one: Die.

WILLIAM SAROYAN