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Arywen Schatz

Mrs. Alami

HS American literature

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Write a Letter - The Gettysburg Address

Dear Mr. President Lincoln,

I hope this letter finds you well amidst this time of bloodshed. My name is Tom Westervelt. I am one of the surviving soldiers from the 1st Minnesota Infantry Regiment. I felt compelled to write to you after your speech at the dedication ceremony at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on November 19, 1863.

My heart was heavy with grief and pain that day with the memories of the dying men and the long-aching wish to see this civil war end. For our nation to be whole and united under one flag, one nation once again. But what you said gave me a new spirit and reinvigorated determination. Not only did you ease the pain of the people that day. You gave us a clear vision

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of a new and different life, of liberty and equality for all. You reminded us why we fight and why we will continue to fight. You gave me new pride and greatly honored my dead and living comrades when you said "But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract."

I also appreciate your call to action. While at the same time giving respect to our dead. You said "It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Mr President, I will never forget what you said that day. Wherever I shall go, it will be there with me, carried with me to my last breath. Reminding me on the battlefield why I am here and why I will not stop honoring our dead and ensuring a better future for our children and generations to come. They shall not have died in vain Sir. Never will I let

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that day come when I falter in my devotion to my noble and fallen comrades. I will sacrifice all I can to help the new birth of this nation. Thank you, Mr President, for your courage and unbroken commitment to the cause of our nation. You consoled and rekindled the spirit of our nation with your words of passion, honor, and devotion.

With deep respect and admiration,

Tom Westervelt

1st Minnesota Infantry Regiment