

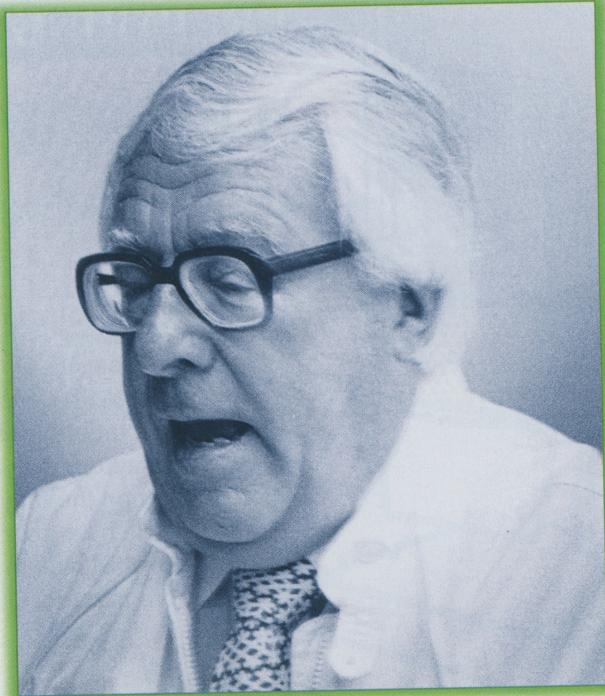
You wrote, **"Success is a continuing process. Failure is a stoppage. The man who keeps moving and working does not fail."**

The average young person you meet today seems to have the motto, "If at first you don't succeed, stop right there." They want to start at the top of their profession and not to learn their art on the way up. That way they miss all the fun. If you write a hundred short stories and they're all bad, that doesn't mean you've failed. You fail only if you stop writing. I've written about 2,000 short stories; I've only published about 300, and I feel I'm still learning. Any man who keeps working is not a failure. He may not be a great writer, but if he applies the old-fashioned virtues of hard, constant labor, he'll eventually make some kind of career for himself as a writer.

**Isn't this hard to do for most people? The rent has to be paid. You have to do mundane<sup>3</sup> things like eat. In your teens you sold newspapers, and between editions you wrote, but didn't you have to give up most of the things people feel they have to have?**

Depends on what you have to have.

You can get along on a very small amount of money. You can give up clothes. You can give up movies and theater. You can eat Kraft Dinner every day of your life. I'm a student of Kraft Dinner. I'm a specialist in Campbell's Tomato Soup. You can go to the market today, and for a few cents you can have a banquet. I still love Campbell's Tomato Soup. This is a free plug for them, and I hope they send me a free can of soup. I'm the cheapest freeloader in the history of mankind. My idea of a real meal is to sit down with a can of tomato soup, a couple glasses of milk, and a half a pound of crackers. I went through a record of expenses I kept during my first year of marriage. At that time I



was making about \$30 a week writing, and my wife was making \$35 at a job to support us so I could get my writing done. We'd go down to Ocean Park at night and have a couple of hot dogs and a Coke. We'd go through the penny arcade, and for 32 cents we'd have a magnificent evening. If you have someone who cares about you, it's very easy to give up things. If you're alone, you buy things to compensate for<sup>4</sup> your loneliness.

Money is not important. The material things are not important. Getting the work done beautifully and proudly is important. If you do that, strangely enough, the money will come as a just reward for work beautifully done. A tape recorder, an automobile, they don't really belong to you. What really belongs to you? Yourself, you. That's all you'll ever have. I am ruthless with anyone around me who doesn't think or create always at the top of his form.

3. **mundane**: ordinary; day-to-day.

4. **compensate for**: make up for.