

From one of my favorite novels, *Gilead* by Marilynne Robinson. It is a long meditation on life, in the form of letters written from an elderly minister father to his young son, who he will not live to see grow up. It is 1956. This passage is from early in the book:

My father always preached from notes, and I wrote my sermons out word for word. There are boxes of them in the attic, a few recent years of them in stacks in the closet. I've never gone back to see them to see if they were worth anything, if I actually said anything. Pretty nearly my whole life's work is in those boxes, which is an amazing thing to reflect on. I could look through them, maybe find a few I would want you to have. I am a little afraid of them....

There was more to it, of course. For me writing has always felt like praying, even when I wasn't writing prayers, as I was often enough. You feel that you are with someone. I feel I am with you now, whatever that can mean, considering that you're only a little fellow now and when you are a man you might find these letters of no interest. Or they might never reach you, for any number of reasons. Well, but how deeply I regret any sadness you have suffered and how grateful I am in anticipation of any good you have enjoyed. That is to say, I pray for you. And there's an intimacy in it. That's the truth.

Blessings
Barbara