



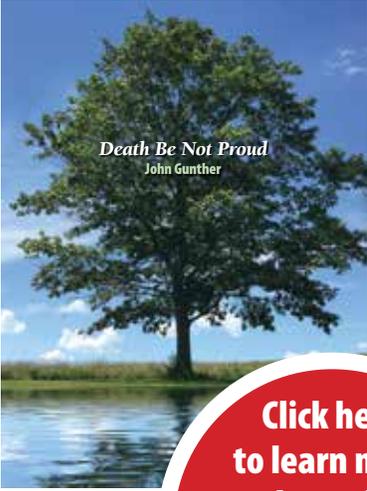
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# Sample

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*Death Be Not Proud*  
**John Gunther**



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## *Response Journal*

### **To The Student**

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

## **Foreword**

1. In the foreword, John Gunther speaks of his son as someone deserving admiration. Write a short paragraph describing someone you know who deserves admiration. As an alternative, write a paragraph about the suffering of someone whom you do not know personally.
2. Johnny's father describes him as having humor, charm and brains. He calls Johnny gallant in his fight for life and tells of his love of animals, the weather, gardening, rocks, magic tricks, and especially science. Write a resume for a person with these qualities and address it to a company looking for an employee with these characteristics.
3. Gunther praises his son's good qualities, saying that Johnny's only fault was an excess of virtue. He calls his son generous to a fault. Write a description of someone you know who is generous and explain why generosity might be considered a fault.

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*Response Journal*

11. Gunther can hardly believe that something can have such devastating effects on the tissue of a human brain. He asks, “What in all sanity and conscience is a brain?” In a paragraph, explain what you think a brain really is, and explain the differences between brain, mind and consciousness.
  
12. Twelve days after the first operation on Johnny’s tumor, he wrote a letter to Albert Einstein in which he expounded upon a theory he developed. Consider a field with which you feel familiar, such as music, electronics or sports. Write a letter to a famous person in the field you choose and give them your ideas on how you feel improvements could be made.

## Chapter 4

27. Gunther speaks of “some invisible bond” that holds us all together. He offers that as an explanation for the accidental telephone call connection that allowed Frances to overhear a conversation between two of Johnny’s doctors. Write a descriptive paragraph of an incident, accidental or otherwise, which has led you to believe we are all held together.
28. Shortly after Johnny’s “miraculous” recovery, he underwent a setback in the form of amnesia. Do you know anyone who has had amnesia? Write a paragraph on what you know about amnesia and how you would deal with a person who has it.
29. Despite the return of the “bulge” in his head, Johnny was determined to follow his dream of going to Harvard, so he applied for admission. In his own handwriting, he wrote an answer to the question, “What are your reasons for going to college and why do you wish particularly to come to Harvard?” Write a letter to a college of your choice. Include in it your reasons for applying and answer the questions that Johnny answered. Would you reveal an illness or impediment you might have? Why or why not?
30. Frances offered her son a Benzedrine tablet on the “grueling” day he took college entrance exams. She hoped it would get him through the ordeal he was about to face. He refused the pill, saying he preferred the terrors of the known to those of the unknown. Write a paragraph describing a time you chose the *unknown* over more familiar dangers. What was the option that represented the “terrors of the known”?

## **W r a p - U p**

42. A poem by John Donne provided the title for John Gunther's book. In the poem, Donne says, "And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!" In a paragraph, explain the meaning of the title, "Death Be Not Proud" and why you think Gunther chose it for the book.
43. John Gunther says that he preferred writing about a courageous struggle rather than a conventional memoir of his son. Then write your own eulogy for Johnny, based on your picture of him from the book.
44. Johnny wrote an "Unbeliever's Prayer." From analyzing his lines, do you think he really was an unbeliever? Why? Write a "prayer" from your own point of view in regard to whatever you believe in.
45. Johnny once told his father, "The worst thing is to worry too little, not too much. Let's keep up a tension." What do you think he meant? Write a note to a friend who may be worrying about the future. Include your advice about worry, and what amount of worry you think is necessary and why.
46. One description of Johnny includes the words *brave*, *patient*, and *humorous*. Write a descriptive "Help Wanted" ad of at least ten lines that searches for a person with these qualities, and name the position to be filled.