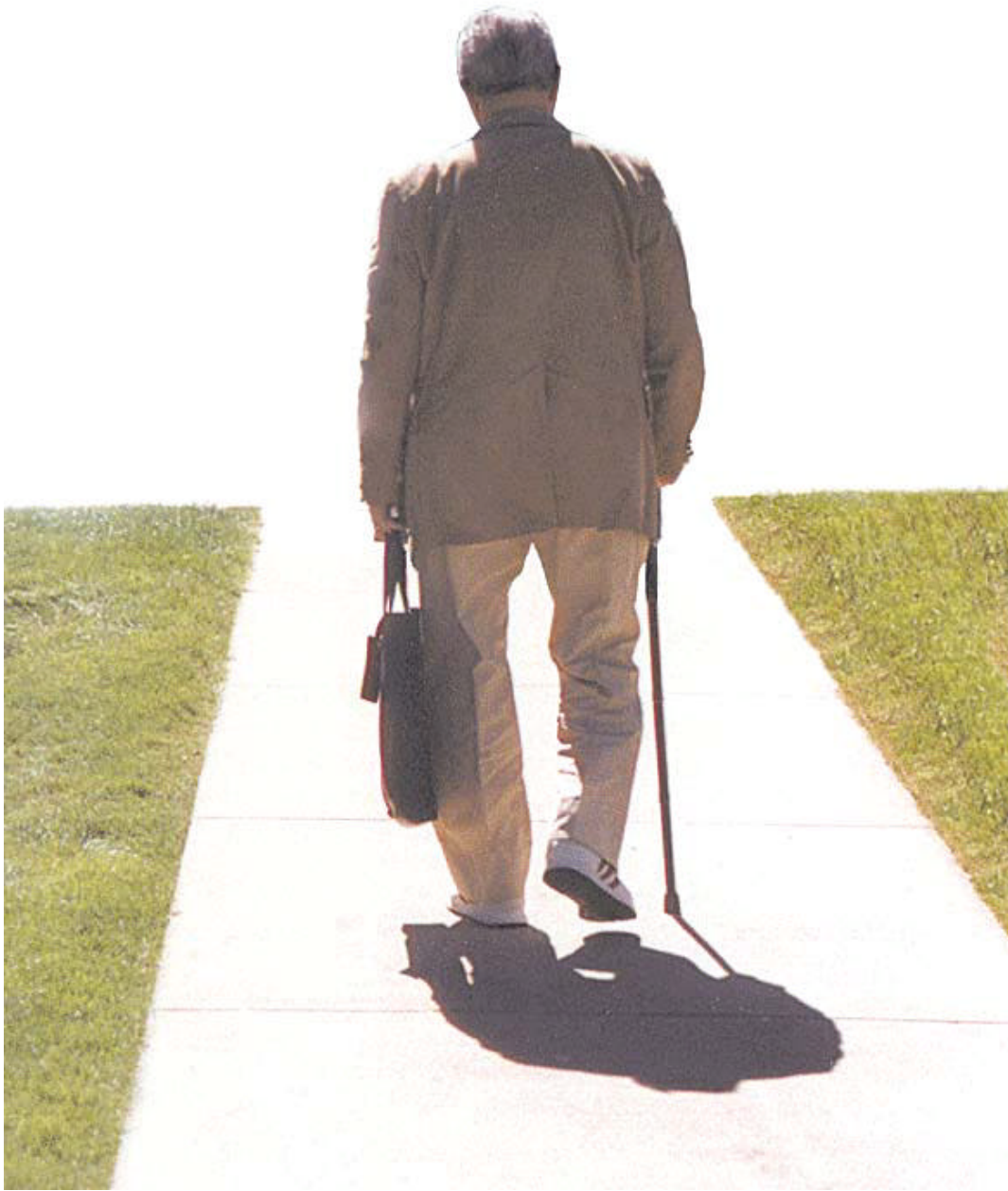


The Day Philosophy Died



Mortimer Jerome Adler
December 28th, 1902 - June 28, 2001

"I have been thinking over one part of your letter, the part about wise men, and have collected this thought about Mortimer. He may not be wise, but he makes other men wise; he is almost the necessary condition for wisdom in others. They resist him, correct him, soften him, relax him, interpret him, and in the process feel superior to him; but there he is all the time, furiously thinking and speaking, and fanatically faithful to the truth—and that is precious too. He has made Scott [Buchanan] wiser—by reaction—than he was, and so I think with each of his friends. He is an angelic dope, and as such they worship him. They could't do what he does even if they tried. Their wisdom has a negative feel when he's around, as God's does maybe, when he contemplates the sons of men. He is greater than they, but only they could make him know it. This, I'm sure, is one reason he loves them. Or put it this way, Mortimer alone among the men we know is irreplaceable. The rest are more or less, but whatever he is, he is absolutely...."

From Mark Van Doren's letter to his son John dated January 25, 1946.