

7-28-1891

To Arthur R. Gledhill - July 28, 1891

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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Recommended Citation

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TO ARTHUR R. GLEDHILL

Jamaica Plain, July 28--1891--

Dear Art,--

Your letter was forwarded to me a few days ago and in reply will say that "your uncle" is having a hard time. I am having my ear treated in Boston and things do not look very favorable: the drum is destroyed and the bones diseased.¹ If it can be stopped where it is now I shall be able to get along very comfortably but if the trouble keeps working in there will be the devil to pay. However, I do not intend to worry over it more than I can possibly help, and in the end things may turn out better than I think they will now. I shall go home some-

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time this week but I think it rather doubtful as to my visiting you at Southport, much as I would like to do so. Dean will be at work at Iceboro^a and I shall be obliged to remain at home.

Will write again from Gardiner.

Hastily

E. A. Robinson

HCL

1. When EAR was a child in grade school, probably in 1881, a teacher cuffed him on the ear to awaken him from daydreaming. This resulted ultimately in considerable loss of hearing and caused EAR much anguish, physical and psychological. In October 1892 he had an operation for necrosis of the inner ear. See EAR's letters to Smith for October 19 and October 23, 1892.

^a WA placed a question mark in square brackets here, which is usually an indication that he is puzzled by a reference. It is difficult to tell for certain what it was about this reference that he found unclear, but since he probably knew that Iceboro is a village in Maine, it was most likely the allusion to EAR's brother Dean's working in Iceboro that mystified him. Since 1889, and until his death in 1899 at age 42 (most likely by suicide), Dean Robinson is known to have lived at home in the Robinson house, a ruined doctor and an invalid in the grip of a devastating drug addiction. However, he also did odd jobs, and it is probable that Dean had found some temporary work with one of the ice companies operating at Iceboro. (See Donaldson, 69-70 and 161-63 for more about EAR's "much-loved oldest brother.")