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To Arthur R. Gledhill - July 24, 1890

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO ARTHUR R. GLEDHILL

Gardiner, July 24 - 1890

Dear Friend Art;

I have been running with the idea that you have been owing me a letter for some time, but I may be mistaken, so will try to smooth things over by writing a little something myself. Of course there is really nothing to hinder my writing anytime. I happen to ~~feel~~ feel like it, but you know how it is—we neglect things in this world. Dean is weighing in down to Smithtown, for Knickerbocker's,¹ and consequently I am left here alone with ~~m~~Mother to take care of the "farm" and look after my father. He is no better, and taking things all around my life is rather a dull one, though of course I cannot complain. But still it makes one uneasy to realize that he is sliding off into his majority and as far as a regular occupation is concerned is nothing but a drone, with no particular opening for the future. I tell you what it is, Art, sometimes a week or ten days goes by without my seeing one of the boys or girls (I believe I never saw much of them, anyway) unless I happen across them down street in the afternoon for a minute or two. I never was much of a light in company, but

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it hardly suits me to become a genuine eremite. Perhaps if I had something like your "anchor" to take up my thoughts, life would seem different but such a state of affairs is hardly probable, and besides, Hypolito² never meddled with females.

probable

I guess there is "no ~~possible~~, possible shadow of doubt" but that Gustavus Edward³ has glued his nose to the grindstone. Is he to be pitied or congratulated? But then—there is no use in my beating about the bush ("stick to your bush!") at this rate; I will mak{e} my confession and leave you to judge me as you will. When we look back into the past and recall all the old scenes and incidents and friendships, some particular light must naturally shine brighter than others; some tender link that has joined the hearts of friends must take its strain in after days and the mighty question is at hand—will it yield? or will it remain firm? I will deceive you no longer;--it yielded. I have left off chewing tobacco! The last graduation & reception brought a train of thoughts into my head with the above result. Beats the devil, don't it? Keep on with your pedagogic work and go through college

if you can; and sometimes when you are strolling around the campus after twilight, alone (with a big chew in, I hope) you may think of the fellow down east who never seemed to amount to much in school (or anywhere else) but who was proud to believe that

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he was not altogether a nincompoop. He never had a great many friends, this fellow, but those he did have he has never forgotten, and never will. He could forget a petty insult or injury very easily but somehow or other he never could forget a favor, however small. Living by himself as he does with a father who can hardly walk a step without his help it is not so strange that he should occasionally
something

have an attack of ^ bordering on the "blues." You know nothing about it, and I hope you never will. . . . I suppose I have no business in squirting a stream like this into what I intended for a friendly note, but I guess you understand me well enough to put a reasonable meaning to it. Dont think that I am growing despondent; I can "Moore" than laugh yet, when I think of some of our exploits. Oh, no; I am not getting down in the mouth—only I have to think a little sometimes. Wouldn't it make a corpse laugh to think of that political symposium down in the Pines? By the way I understand that John Sawyer is very sick in Monmouth: will try to get the particulars. If one of our old set should drop out there would be something gone from our own lives. Longfellow says, "Something is gone from nature since they died

And summer is not summer, nor can be."⁴

That would be the case; but I hope there is no reason for such thoughts. Write when you can and tell me about yourself--and your TREES.

Yours truly E.A.R.

HCL Previously published, in part, in *SL*, pp. 4-5.^a

NOTES

1. The Knickerbocker Ice Company of Philadelphia, which after 1868 harvested a major portion of its ice from the Kennebec and Penobscot Rivers in Maine. The Smithtown icehouse was on the Kennebec. According to Donaldson, it was "the largest ice producer in Maine," and both Dean and EAR, "along with many other local citizens, found part-time employment on the river during the six weeks or so—from late January to early March—when the ice was cut and collected" (30-31). Clearly, since EAR refers to Dean working in July, there were employment opportunities outside of this window as well. (SL)

^a This note has been edited slightly from WA's manuscript for consistency and readability.

2. Apparently a nickname of EAR's. (SL)
- 3.^b Moore.
4. Longfellow's "Three Friends of Mine."

^b This and the following note are WA's notes 1 and 2, respectively.