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6-10-1891

## To Harry de Forest Smith - June 10, 1891

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Gardiner, June 10, 1891.

My Dear Smith:

When the latter part of the month of June comes around I always begin to feel queer; and I suppose that the queer feeling is wholly due to the approaching graduations and commencements, although I take no active part in any of them. A kind of sympathy, no doubt, causes me to take a quiet interest in such things. At any rate, when I received your invitation the other day (and you will please accept my most sincere thanks for the same) I experienced a strange sensation as if the world had lost something, - as if Time had taken an unseemly swath with that diabolical scythe of his in fields where he had no business. Perhaps a

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mind like yours will understand me, though I am not confident that I understand myself; but I have a vague idea that I am trying to define an exit from school as a dividing point in a life. Mine was thus divided three years ago, but it seems to still linger around the old gash which somehow is rather slow in healing. It is curious to note the difference in people about such matters: some leave school and think no more about it; they "get a job" and are happy, as the word goes.<sup>a</sup> and their school-days are a thing of the past and they are well rid of them. Upon the whole I

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<sup>a</sup> Read the period as a comma. WA has a comma.

this<sup>b</sup>  
 think ^ is, in most cases, the better way to be constructed; but what the  
 deuce is a man to do if he happens to be compounded differently? I am well  
 aware that memories and ruminations occupy altogether too much of my time,  
 but when I behold one of these excruciatingly active and practical indiv-

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iduals , the same awakens no feeling of awe or admiration within me. This  
 is undoubtedly wrong, but still I have a presentiment that my life is not  
 to be altogether a fiasco. I may be disillusioned, but I shall have the  
 satisfaction of knowing that I am a "drop of the eternal spring" and con-  
 sequently not made in vain.<sup>c</sup> as Coleridge says.<sup>1</sup> When you come home I will  
 pass the hat.

Now nothing would give me more pleasure than to be in Brunswick  
 on Class Day; but circumstances render it impossible. Do not take this as  
 a formal declination, but believe me,

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Robinson<sup>d</sup>

HCL US, 20-21.  
 Typewritten.

#### NOTES

1. Hartley Coleridge, "Not in Vain." EAR's familiarity with the poem undoubtedly stems from William Sharp's collection, *Sonnets of This Century* (London, 1886), p. 48. In Sharp's opinion Hartley Coleridge ranked "among the foremost sonneteers in our language." EAR referred to the poem again in his letter to Smith dated March 11, 1894.

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<sup>b</sup> Written in red ink.

<sup>c</sup> Read the period as a comma. WA has a comma.

<sup>d</sup> The signature is written in red ink.