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6-5-1892

## To Harry de Forest Smith - June 5, 1892

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

**Harvard University,  
Cambridge**

June 5 – '92

My dear Smith,

Recitations & lectures are over now and the Finals are here. My first one comes Thursday next—Shakspeare. This is the course that I flunked at mid-years and I expect to do the same this week. Not but that I could get a decent mark if I had a mind to grind it up, but as I told Prof. de Sumichrast, the thing does not interest me. An E will not affect me much for next year anyway. Eng<sup>a</sup> A. comes Saturday. With the two dryest courses off my hands I shall feel like celebrating Sat. night. I did a little in that line last night with Peters

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and saw more life than I care to again for some time. I should have to write a book to tell you about it, so will leave it until I see you—which I hope will be the 23d inst. You ought to come down to that game with Barstow. It would do you good. There are nice people in Boston whom you say you would like to see, also. I think we could manage to see them without any great difficulty, though it would make me feel badly to see a High School teacher grow so worldly.

To change the subject, I have been reading a book which has interested me a good deal. I speak of Mr. W.H. Mallock's "New Republic". It is modeled more or less after Plato, as the title {some illegible letters crossed out<sup>b</sup>} would suggest, and it is a remarkably clever

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<sup>a</sup> WA has a period here.

<sup>b</sup> WA omits this.

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thing in its way. It represents a party of fictitious characters who impersonate the the {sic} leading English thinkers of the present time and types of prevailing ideas & theories. The three most successful are perhaps Mr. Rose (Oscar Wilde), Mr. Herbert (John Ruskin) and Mr. Luke (Matthew Arnold). There is a humorous element in the book which is occasionally a little broader than would be in good form in an American drawing-room (if we have such places) and which adds to the general audacity of the motif. Here is a little example:

"We have learned that the aim of life is life; and what does successful life consist in? Simply", said Mr. Rose, . . . in the consciousness of exquisite living—in the making our own the highest thrill of joy

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that the moment offers us—be it some touch of color on the sea or on the mountains, the early dew in the crimson shadows of a rose, the shining of a woman's limbs in clear water, or--"

"Here ~~an unfortunate~~ unfortunately a sound of "Sh!" broke softly from several mouths." etc, etc.<sup>c</sup>

Nothing startling you see, but bright and easy. Well I am so sleepy that I can hardly move my pen, so out of mercy for you I will not attempt to cover another sheet. I doubt if you will be able to read what I have written, but as I have said before, you can guess at it. Come to the game if you can. I "blew in" this morning at 3.30, and now I will go to bed if I can get my clothes off. Burn this up.

Sincerely, R.<sup>d</sup>

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<sup>c</sup> WA reads "etc., etc."

<sup>d</sup> WA places "R." on the next line.

HCL Omitted from US.