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9-29-1894

To Arthur R. Gledhill - September 29, 1894

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO ARTHUR R. GLEDHILL

Gardiner, Sept^a 29 – 1894.

My dear Gledhill,

I feel that I ought not to put off your letter any longer, and yet I feel that I should do you a kindness if I kept silent until I found myself in a better mood. The past month has not been a pleasant one for me and for that reason I have let my friends alone.

As to your very kind and surprising invitation let me say to begin with that it will [be] absolutely impossible^b for^c me to accept it. Even if I were at liberty I do not think my conscience would permit [me] to to {sic} stay with you for more than two or three days. You did

stop

not ~~stop~~ to realize just what you were saying.^d I fear. If I should bring my big bag and my papers & stuff, prepared to settle down with you for two or three weeks, I am afraid that you would never want to see me again after I left you. I know what a house is with a

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baby in it and am sure that I should not care to make a second edition by adding my own long presence. I thank you, all the same, and sincerely hope that I may find an opportunity to visit you in the course of a few years.

The next three or four years must prove me for what I am. This is my opportunity and I doubt if I ever get another. The future looks dark and a little too rough to suit me, but sometimes I think I catch a little glimmer of light—though it is so far away that I am not sure of it. A good friend or two here in Gardiner would make all the difference in the world; but as things are, I have do [=to] do my talking in letters—that is, most of it. Of course there are one or two fellows here who help things along to a great extent but they are not the kind I most need.

Moore is at work again with Wiley, but not for

^a WA adds a period here.

^b WA transcribes the "e".

^c WA transcribes the "o".

^d WA has a comma here instead.

any settled time—so Wiley told me the other day when I walked do{w}n^e the hill with him. I wish for his ow{n}^f sake and his wifes^g that Ed could get settled somewhere. I never see him now, but I like to have my own friends succeed. You seem to be the only one

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of the League of Three who bids fair to make anything remarkable of yourself. I do not speak disparagingly of Ed, but you know as well as I, that he never half learn{e}d^h his trade. And there are other things that make me think that he will not conquer worlds. Will you think any the less of me when I say that one of those ~~that~~ things is the fact that he allowed himself to submit to that wallowing, "Dark Secret" performance of immersion? The thing is altogether too suggestive of initiating something and I often find myself wondering how much the admission fee may be. I am not ungodly nor irreligious, but there are a few things that I cannot stand.

Perhaps the sooner I put an end to this, the better it will be for both of us. This is one of those ~~d~~ cold blowy days that makes a man wonder where his heart is. There is no possibility of keeping warm—even with a fire, which I have not—and for that reason I fancy my mind may be as cold as my fingers. Dontⁱ judge me too hard by this, but look for something better in the near future.

I have not been reading much of anything lately

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—only the Yellow Book¹ and a short piece here & there. Think I shall try Shakspear^j this afternoon after I get something in my stomach.

Write when the spirit moves you and I will do my best to keep up my end.

^e WA transcribes the "w".

^f WA transcribes the "n".

^g WA has "wife's".

^h WA transcribes the "e".

ⁱ WA has "Don't".

^j WA has "Shakspear" and, in the margin, he suggests "Shakspere?"

Sincerely,
E.A.R.^k

HCL

NOTES

1. The highly influential British literary periodical, published between 1894 and 1897, and associated with the literary Decadence and Aestheticism of the Nineties. (SL)

^k WA omits the underline.