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11-26-1894

## To Harry de Forest Smith - November 26, 1894

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

Gardiner, November 26, 1894.

My dear Smith,

I had such a grouch Sunday that I could not write to you or any body else. I do not know just what was the matter with me, but I looked at every thing through blue glass<sup>1</sup>—every thing but literature. My confidence in that sometimes almost discourages me, as it makes me think once in a while of what a collapse there will be some day if it all goes to the devil. I have a confidence in myself regarding that that is hardly natural to me & for that reason I am often wondering how it all will look to [me] five years from now. Christmas Eve goes on at the rate of from 1000 to 1600 words in a forenoon which is faster than I ought to permit myself to write. It makes re-writing all the harder.

Last Saturday I ate beans with your father & mother and enjoyed myself immensely,<sup>a</sup> After the beans I took a small chew of tobacco at your mothers<sup>b</sup> invitation and heard your father tell shark stories. I am likely to write something about sharks almost any day,<sup>c</sup> now. That would be a little out of my usual line, but I think I shall have to do it<sup>d</sup>

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<sup>e</sup>I did my first book-buying for many weeks the other day, sending to Schoenhof for Mon Franc Parler by Coppeef, Le Violon de Faïence by Champfleury & Le Sécrot de l'Echafaud by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam. Not a very expensive lot, but quite an event for me.—And Schoenhof jewed me out of ten cents, which is not like him. Haven't I heard something about a successor to that establishment?

My thoughts this afternoon are pretty much like my handwriting. I grind hard all the morning at my vagabonds and do not seem to have much left for you. That is not just the way to do, and I shall try hereafter to write Sundays as I intend to do, & so treat you like a gentleman.

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

<sup>b</sup> WA has "mother's".

<sup>c</sup> WA omits the comma.

<sup>d</sup> WA adds a period here.

<sup>e</sup> WA begins a new paragraph here, though there is no discernable indent in the holograph.

<sup>f</sup> WA adds the accent mark on the first "e".

I am trying to decide whether to tackle the third Chorus now or to let it go until I finish the dialogue. Somehow I dislike to leave any thing undone, and shall probably go back on what I said in a recent letter to you and strike into it to-morrow. I was caught up now and then in that long scene where every body talks in single lines, but upon the whole it was easy work. The Ox differs some from you rendering in the assignment of lines to the characters but is obviously wrong.

I have seen a good deal of pleasant criticism of  
in  
Songs of Vagabondia<sup>2</sup>—one in particular ~~from~~ Town Topics, which I will send you with some Critics and that Copy of the Outlook.

I purpose to have my hair cut this afternoon—the first time for many long months. I suppose it

-3-g

is a moral duty, but it will seem queer not to have any thing to run my fingers through when I am at {a}<sup>h</sup> loss for a word. <sup>i</sup>That makes me think that I have written a "Ballade of Dead Friends",<sup>3</sup> which will not strike you, probably, as you do not care for that kind of thing. I have also half-written<sup>j</sup> two sonnets which I shall try to finish up befor<sup>e</sup><sup>k</sup> you come home. Life will seem a little more like something when you are here again and I look forward to some profitable sessions. When you come will you be good enough to bring the Yellow Book & if quite convenient, "The Manxman?" I hesitate in asking for the last, and would not hav<sup>e</sup><sup>l</sup> you feel at all obliged to bring it unless you can do so without interfering with any body.

Town Topics will show you Doyle as a "swell."<sup>m</sup> He carries his long coat and keg hat as well as one could expect but I am tired of him in any form. Everett Peacock is quit<sup>e</sup><sup>n</sup> excited

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<sup>g</sup> This page is written vertically.

<sup>h</sup> WA transcribes the "a".

<sup>i</sup> WA omits this space.

<sup>j</sup> WA omits the hyphen.

<sup>k</sup> WA transcribes the "e".

<sup>l</sup> WA transcribes the "e".

<sup>m</sup> WA places the period outside the quotation mark.

<sup>n</sup> WA transcribes the "e".

over Ships that Pass in the Night and has just heard of Trilby. Happy the man who has never heard of it.

My eyes hav{e}<sup>o</sup> been so unsteady of late that I have not got into The Greater Glory, but hope to be-for{e}<sup>p</sup> long. I have not read anything since "The Iron-Master." It will be worth your while to read that in translation, which may be found for a quarter at any news-stand. The book is a trifle long in the first half, but more than makes up in the second.

Very truly yours  
E.A.R.<sup>q</sup>

HCL US, 187-189.

#### NOTES

1. US reads "glasses."
2. *Songs from Vagabondia* by Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey {was published in 1894. It was very popular and was followed by *More Songs from Vagabondia* (1896) and *Last Songs from Vagabondia* (1900).}

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<sup>o</sup> WA transcribes the "e".

<sup>p</sup> WA transcribes the "e".

<sup>q</sup> WA omits the underline.