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4-2-1895

To Arthur R. Gledhill - April 2, 1895

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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Recommended Citation

Robinson, Edwin Arlington, "To Arthur R. Gledhill - April 2, 1895" (1895). *Edwin Arlington Robinson Letters and Transcriptions*. 170.

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TO ARTHUR R. GLEDHILL

[Gardiner, Maine]

My dear Gledhill,

I am ashamed of myself for not having answered your letter before this, and the only excuse that I can give is that I have been most damnably down at the ~~hell~~ heel (there was n{o} particular need of making this^a correction) all winter. I have don{e} a lot of work however such as it is, and I shall keep on with it through the summer. In the fall, or as soon as may be, I I {sic} shall try to place a volume somewhere, but hav{e} no great hope of any success. The thing is a good deal harder than it seems to one not interested and there [are] a thousand obstacles in the way. My courage is pretty good, however, but I do not mean to "give in" until I positively hav{e} to. My great trouble is that I have so many things to contend with outside my regular

-2-

work that that is really the smallest part of the strain that comes on my poor gray matter. Sometimes I am half afraid it will go back on me some day and leave me a damned fool or something worse. But that, I fancy, is a notion that we all have at times, especially when we hav{e} a fit of the blues for three months running and hav{e} to work like the devil through it all to keep our consciences unruffled. I do not pretend that I succeed in keeping mine that way, but I try to bring enough to pass every day to feel that I earn my right to breathe and live another. That right isnt much, as far as I can see, but it is life, and life is not a thing for us to laugh at. If we do, it is sure to hav{e} the laugh back on us with a punch in the neck to boot.

You may be tempted to think that I am getting to be a pessimist, but I am not—nothing of the kind. The universe is a great

^a WA has "the".

thing and the power of evil never put it

-3^b-

together. Of that I am certain and I am just as certain that this life is but one little scene in the big show. I may be something of a fatalist, but I can't help that. It is a misfortune though, when a fellow does a good thing and knows it, not to be able
(on Poe)

to take any credit home to himself. The sonnet ^ which is going to appear som{e}tim{e} in Lippincotts Magazine is, I honestly think, a very good thing, but I could no more help making it than I can help feeling vermin in my hair when anyone mentions the subject in my presence. Wh{e}n I was a kid I had lock-jaw, lupus, leprosy, cancer, elephantiasis, Brights Disease &
swear

fallin{g} of the womb, and all at once; and I ~~swear~~ {?} that I could not help it. It all cam{e} from looking over Dean's medical books and so getting worked up. I can see see som{e} of those infernal pictures now—one in particular where a lupus had left nothing of a mans face but his right eye and a piece of his

-4^c-

forehead. I had leprosy for nearly seven years and won't swear that I havent got it still.

"The Manxma{n}" is a great book, but Daudet's "Jack" is greater. The one great trouble^d {?} with the first named is its prolixity as you doubtless noticed. And the first hundred pages of Trilby are very good. Just now I am reading "L'Impérieuse Bonté (The Good that must be done) by J.-H. Rosny. Ouida ranks it with the world's great novels, but I am not yet ready to agree with her. But it is a strong thing and bids^e fair to warrant the opinion—to some extent, at any rate.

Smith gets married in June and that means the last of my
in Maine
last friend ^ whose minds at all after my fancy. Sic transit &c.

Write when you feel like it and be sure that what you send will be welcome. I may go to Boston this Jun{e} in self defense self-defense. I am "rotting for a little human companionship"

Most sincerely.

^b Written vertically.

^c Written vertically.

^d This is highly uncertain—WA in fact simply makes a line here, with a tentative "tr" and a question mark in brackets.

^e WA has "holds".

E.A.R.

2 April, 1895

HCL