

# Colby



Colby Quarterly

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## Index Benefactorum

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810 Washington Avenue  
Brooklyn, April 29, 1920

My dear Mr. Barbe,

I may as well be honest at the outset and tell you that your question as to why American colleges do not produce more poets and novelists is one that I cannot answer. Barrett Wendell once asked me if I had taken the regular course in English composition at Harvard, and when I told him that I had taken only one year of it, he said, "You're damned lucky." This was more than twenty years ago; and since then, so far as one can see, no overpowering literary geniuses have emerged from Harvard, or from anywhere else. I'm afraid the only answer is that they don't happen very often—though let us hope that a few may be growing somewhere on earth. I believe in colleges, but I doubt if they have much to do with the genesis of literature, except in indirect ways.

Yours sincerely,

E. A. Robinson<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This letter is among the Waitman Barbe papers in the West Virginia University Library. It is used with the permission of that library and the poet's niece, Mrs. Ruth Nivison.



### INDEX BENEFACTORUM

DAUNTLESS investigation of space yields daily triumphs to un-  
pent cosmologists, who have now succeeded in photographing galaxies six billion light years away. The space problems of a diffident, earthbound editor touch no such terrifying proportions, but they have a certain discomfort of their own—there are only so many pages per issue per annum in which to cram everything that needs to be said and must so often be excised. More than occasionally we sigh in envy of the infinitude into which moon-haunted scientists can launch their ideas.

Frequent victim of our procrustean space allowance is a detailed account of gifts received from our loyal, farflung constituency. How we love to dwell upon the excellencies, the minute and seductive points of the numerous books and manuscripts that come to us in welcome flood. And how ruefully

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we consign these neatly typed sheets to oblivion's bin as the aborning issue takes shape and press of space inexorably forces them out. Once again the periodical frustration besets us. There is not room enough to elaborate on the individual items so kindly bestowed, but (O minimum mitigation!) we can at least inscribe the names of our benefactors and address most ardent thanks to them collectively. Follows a listing of Colby friends who, during the past year, have swelled our accumulations of rare books, manuscripts, special collections, reference works, and materials for general circulation. We beseech the indulgence of those mishaply omitted and of that fondly intangible soul, Anonymous, whose heart is large and whose residence at large.

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