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To Harry de Forest Smith - February 12, 1893

Edwin Arlington Robinson

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TO HARRY DE FOREST SMITH

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY,
CAMBRIDGE.**

Sunday, Feb^a 12 '92^b3.

My dear Smith,

It is now five o'clock in the afternoon and I have about three-quarters of an hour before dinner—though it will be a mighty small dinner I shall eat—and I will take this time to write you a few lines and tell you about my mysterious illness, which, I suppose interests you somewhat.

When I wrote a week ago, I had no idea what ailed me and I was pretty well stirred up. Tuesday I went to an M.D. and was informed that I had the "shingles"^c

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Now there is nothing romantic or poetical about the shingles—and I am afraid that I was disappointed for a few minutes,—then I was glad that it was no worse. This may make you laugh, but I assure you it is no laughing matter when a man lies awake for nine hours suffering the tortures of the inquisition, and wondering what the devil he was put here for, anyway^d. But I fancy they are leaving me now, and though I am pretty "ragged" I hope for a better condition soon. I got excused from two examinations, and to-morrow shall go to U. 5 and week's {sic} furlough. Then I shall take a grand loaf, though I shall have to read "Tom Jones" and keep up

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my German after a fashion. Yesterday I took Wm^e Black's "Magic Ink"¹ from the library. It

^a WA adds a period here.

^b The "3" is written directly over the "2" in the holograph. WA transcribes it "'9<2>3."

^c WA adds a period here.

^d WA does not read an underline here.

^e WA adds a period here.

is pitiful drool and I was sorry for the author. In the evening I prowled down to the square and bought "Rudder Grange" (Stockton)² and three cigars. Between the two (or the four) I passed the time quite pleasantly—though the twinges were pretty sharp at times.

I am beginning to be sorry that I was not "educated" to the Nation years ago. It comes harder than Logic to me now. There is something elegantly dry about the sheet that compels my admiration, but I must confess that [I] pass over many columns.

I am hesitating whether to go to chapel this evening and hear the Rev^f Washington Gladden of Ohio.³ I don't think I shall, though I probably ~~w~~e should were I in any kind of shape. I should be tremendously pleased if you could be with me to-night but there is no use in asking for the impossible. So good-bye, and and {sic} write me another sheet of your reflections when you feel in the mood..^g

Sincerely
R.

HCL US, 85-86.

NOTES

1. *The Magic Inkstand and Other Stories* (1892), the most recent work of the author of *Macleod of Dare*.
2. Frank R. Stockton's whimsical novel of fantasy, 1879.
3. Washington Gladden (1836-1918), controversial Congregational clergyman much interested in applied Christianity and social reform.

^f WA adds a period here.

^g WA omits the second period.