



WORDS IN AIR

THE COMPLETE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN

ELIZABETH BISHOP

AND ROBERT LOWELL



EDITED BY THOMAS TRAVISANO

WITH SASKIA HAMILTON

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February 25, 1965

Dearest Elizabeth:

The wonderful lithograph² is hanging to the left of our fireplace in the big room. One can stand with one eye fixed on it and the other on the silver slave's fertility decoration we bought in Brazil and have set in the middle of the dining room table—amulets against the evils of New York. Further on in the kitchen hangs the modern primitive banana painting of Keith's friend from Recife. Keith, by the way, has an article in *Commentary* entitled "My Friend Fuentes," in which he makes sure that his personal adoration doesn't blind him to flaws in the thinker and novelist.³ Back a few sentences . . . many thanks for your lovely present. I hope the bundle in customs is our Christmas present, an unworthy return, the complete Gesualdo, two records, one of which I'm sure you already have, and a joke record. I sent them air-mail, hoping that timeliness would make up for their meagerness.

I am back from a month in the sanitarium. It was a quiet stay this time. I went in almost well and so had little of the jolting re-evaluation that usually comes. These attacks seem now almost like something woven in my nervous system and one of the ingredients of my blood-stream, and I blame them less on some fatal personal psychotic flaw. Who knows? They are nothing to be blithe about, but I feel rather composed about it all. Here I am back in the bosom of my family, and back in my study, and getting ready to finish the *Oresteia*. Life and work go on.

One can talk more easily of Randall, now that he has shaved and walks the same earth we do. Gone the noble air of pained, aloof nobility. Something touching and imposing to look at is gone, but what a relief for his friends! I'm afraid I like the perverse savage new poems best: "In Montecito" and "Three Bills," and of the straight serious poems, "Next Day." Most of the opening poems except, I think, for the long "Lost World" are good, and I found I was underlining a lot of lines in poems I didn't entirely like. His worst fault is the repetition of a style and subject, as though Housman had written rather voluminously and slopped up his meter, and strung individual poems out. Endless women, done with a slightly mannered directness, repeated verbal and syntactical tricks, an often perverse and sadistic tender-

¹ Crossed with letter 315.

² Brought to RL by Richard Kelly.

³ Keith Botsford, "My Friend Fuentes," *Commentary* (Feb. 1965).

ness—but I am getting into clichés in describing. I like him better than any of us except you when he is good.

I think and hope and know that I have reached the end of my publicity splash. There's a rather crude, hair-blown series of pictures and remarks by me in *Life*.¹ They threw out most of the quotes I wanted, and chose clumsily and meaninglessly from the pictures they had. Rather better is an interview with me in *Encounter*.² I'm awfully glad and excited that Giroux will soon be bringing out your poems. We have all been waiting, it seems for years and years to get them all together, so many favorites in this last lot, probably your best book.

While I was in the sanitarium, I went into Hartford, our town, and saw a not very good but touching performance of *Uncle Vanya*. On leaving, I heard one of the audience say, "Of course, it's hardly dramatic in our sense." Her friend answered, "Yes, it's like all Russian plays." First voice, "Yes, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Wild Duck* are like this."³ Tomorrow we are going to see the Russian Arts Theater do the *Cherry Orchard*.

Sorry Lota is tired. Maybe you should scoop up a bribe and both come here in the spring.

All my love,
Cal

317.

Rio, March 11th, 1965

Dearest Cal:

How wonderful to hear from you again . . . It is true that I had half-suspected, of course, but kept trying to believe I was wrong. Then just before I heard from you I had a letter from Bob Giroux mentioning your return from Hartford very naturally. He also sent me the pages from LIFE. As you say, they didn't make a very good choice, probably, of either photographs or quotations,—but, then, they never do. And some of the photographs aren't so bad! I rather like the one with both hands up, as if you were being held up (by LIFE), and the one with the actors.⁴ You *do* look a lot like the cousin

¹ "Applause for a Prize Poet," *Life* (Feb. 19, 1965).

² A. Alvarez, "A Talk with Robert Lowell," *Encounter* (Feb. 1965).

³ Anton Chekhov, *Uncle Vanya* (1900) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904); Henrik Ibsen, *The Wild Duck* (1884).

⁴ RL pictured with Roscoe Lee Browne.

Charles R L,¹ now that I study it—the same shaped forehead, the same upper lip. And the hands are good in all of them—very animated! What is this about a trip to Chile?² Is it true, and why, and when, and will you be coming to the east coast, too? I am so glad to hear you are out and about, and you do sound well. Nevertheless, you are probably being brave and stoical about it. But I have a feeling there will soon come a time when the bloodstream you refer to will just refuse to carry the poison one more time and throw it out forever.³ You will then look back and wonder that it ever happened at all, and that will be as miraculous in its way as Hardy writing all that poetry in his old age & better than ever,—only you'll undoubtedly be doing that, too, dear Cal . . .

THE OPPOSITE HOUSE has many beauties—"ganging" is just right, and the noise pigeons make is perfect.⁴ Why didn't someone think of it before, I wonder? And the end, the armored car, etc. I must confess I'm a little puzzled, however—because is it or isn't it abandoned? Or is it really an abandoned police station, but they use it as a blind at night—or someone else is hiding out there and they're raiding it? Forgive my being so literal—I've just been re-reading all the Hopkins letters all over again to get myself through a hideous cold in the head,—and so I am full of these strict questionings he gave all his friends' poems.⁵ The "fireworks"—"set-pieces" we called them—image is fine, too.⁶ In fact it's all brilliantly clear and grimly beautiful, except for this one detail of circumstance that bothers me. Because of the broken windows it would seem to be really abandoned. Well—probably one or two words would make it clear to my literal mind, or perhaps I am somehow missing something—but I don't think so. Azores is a jump from or to Puerto Rico—or Puerto Ricans, which the rest of it brings to mind—but maybe you intend it. And it makes me wonder if NY is that bad, (of course it's probably worse, really). Re-reading, I think my third guess is right—it is being used as a hideout and the police are raiding it? So I may be just dumb, because of this cold.

1 Charles Russell Lowell, pictured in the *Life* article. Of his forebears, RL says, "the one I'd most like to have known is my military cousin, Charles Russell Lowell"; *Life* (Feb. 19, 1965).

2 Probably from Robert Giroux's letter, now missing.

3 See letter 316. Cf. William Empson, "Slowly the poison the whole bloodstream fills"; "Missing Dates," lines 1, 6, 12, and 18.

4 "Pigeons-ganging through / broken windows and cooing / like gangs of children-tooting / empty bottles"; "The Opposite House," lines 6–9 (RL-CP; see also letter 279).

5 *Poems and Prose of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner (1964), *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. Claude Colleer Abbott (1935), and *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Claude Colleer Abbott (1938).

6 "The Opposite House," line 14 (RL-CP).

—Time out while a *tiny* boy—he says he's 13, but I'm sure is much much shorter than your Harriet was at seven—comes to the door with a suitcase of pathetic goods to sell, and sells them to me. I now have a crude potato-peeler, cruder flint gadget for lighting the gas-stove, a blue plastic barrel to keep *something* in, and a huge dead-looking cake of yellow soap, like a small monument, that I'm sure the maid will turn up her nose at . . . Poor little boy—he had to go up and down in the elevator twice, to make change, and I think cheated himself a bit at the end. But so bright and animated and *at home*—the Brazilian type I like best. He says he goes to night school and is in the 4th grade. Well—he probably made about ten cents.— He called me "Miss Girl."

Well, yes, now that you bring it up—I *did* have the ARCHIVE Gesualdo—I got it in London last summer. But that doesn't matter a bit, because a real imported Archive is worth a lot here, and I can turn it in for two or three other records—so it is all to the good. And the other one has several I hadn't heard before, as well as the beautiful other side I've already spoken about. But I did say, too, once, I think how much he reminds me of you—that sustaining of the impossible, free, strange or wild, but never disintegrating. It's a wonderful form, really. Webern was doing something a bit like it again, I think. The hardest thing in the world to do—no rules at all—just immense skill and sensibility—and willingness to say something once and *stop*, let it go. Did you know—you probably did!—that Milton admired him and took his music back to England?

Yes, I agree with what you say of Randall—exactly. I did write him with all the compliments I could truthfully pay—now I think I have some more and shall write again. I dislike the ones on "women"—more than you do, no doubt—and wonder where he *gets* these women—they seem to be like none I—or you—know. But still & all,—he's so much better than anyone else one reads, almost. He does write about a class of American life that is strange to me—perhaps it is the "west." He makes me feel scarcely American at all, and yet I am, through and through.

Giroux is being very nice about my book, I think, and I wish I felt better about its contents. I decided I'd put in "In the Village," too—to go with the several Nova Scotian poems.— At first he said no, it was imitating you too much (it was)—but then when he'd read the story he changed his mind, and is now all for including it. IF Houghton Mifflin will release it, etc. He sent me a copy of the Court Circular about Eliot's funeral—and told about Pound's

1 *Questions of Travel* (1967).

appearing, etc. Robie was there, I see. With the Stravinsky music, etc., it must have been wonderfully impressive.¹

We are planning to go back to Italy for a month this spring, probably—if Lota can get away. But it's still uncertain. Kelly arrives again today (the lighting man). He's bringing me a Sony TV—larger size. I dread it, although we have to have one, because of the maid—and also Lota likes to watch the politicians late at night—and come the next revolution we'll want it, I suppose. But I never thought I'd buy one. It is hideously hot and two of our Brazilian-made air-conditioners barely work—and no one will work to repair them. Wages are so high now that the workers' ideas of consumption haven't caught up with them—it is impossible to get anything done, here or up in the country—where we are trying to finish the garage (very handsome). But the men will only show up two or three times a week—or work a week and stop, saying naively that they have enough money! I suppose it is a stage the country *has* to go through—or this section of it.—But work gets sloppier than ever, if possible, and Lota has an awful time, with the hundreds she has in the park.

I did a piece (just for money) for the *NY Times*—magazine—last Sunday, I think. But if you didn't see it, please *don't*. First they wanted only 2,500 words—then more, then more, & more—and I hate to think how they stuck it all together finally. They're as bad as *LIFE*—spent \$100's in cables—4 or 5, I think—before they got through. So silly. But I'm glad I did it because I *did* it, and rather quickly, for me—and now I feel I can try more sketches, and possibly better ones. I don't remember if I've told you or not that I've *said* I'll go to teach at Un. of Washington, Seattle—2 terms, next spring? Lota is against it (I was hoping she'd join me for part of it and we could see some of that—west I've never seen), and I am beginning to get cold feet when I hear how rude students are these days! Sometime next week I may go to Minas again for a week or ten days. I fell in love with a small place there, Tirandentes, and want very much to get a lot of photographs and write something or other about it.

Send me some more poems! That's what I love getting—I'm sorry the one for you² won't make this book—damn. Maybe they'll slip it in. Will you be going to Maine or what? Do take care of yourself—I am so happy you are better again.

Love, Elizabeth

¹ The memorial service for T. S. Eliot was held at Westminster Abbey on February 4, 1965.

² Possibly "Apartment in Leme," *EB-EAP*.

318.

[Postcard: Photograph of the Space Needle, Mt. Rainier in the distance]

[Seattle, Wash.
p.m. May 23, 1965]

Dearest Elizabeth:

I'm here for the moment for the Roethke memorial reading. Met a nice deaf old man who thinks you are the best poet in the world.¹ Everyone is looking forward to your presence here tremendously. You'll like the calm & landscape.

Love,
Cal

Did you get a Rockefeller application?

319.

June 15, 1965

Dearest Elizabeth:

Heavens, this is the longest gap, I think, in our letters! This has been a belated winter. I finished up the second of the *Oresteia* plays and now must do the third. They will be put on at the Lincoln Center all a year from this fall. I doubt if my versing has much inspiration, but the barbarous archaic grandeur of the *Agamemnon* at least is still overwhelming in my lines, the second play is exciting. But the third seems tame to me, and I fear little will be there once I have lost the genuineness of the Greek. Still a task is welcome. I plan a piece on Eliot for Tate's *Sewanee Review* number, and have started a rambling impressionistic prose essay on emblematic New England figures, the Pilgrims, Mather, Melville, Colonel Shaw, etc.² Thus the summer is blocked out and we go to Maine next Monday.

I've had a lot of curious publicity lately. I stumbled into accepting an invitation to read at the White House Arts' Festival, a rather meaningless mélange with Phyllis McGinley as my fellow poet, then decided that I couldn't go and wrote a public letter of refusal. The papers were full of headlines such as *poet snubs President*.³ Letters piled in and invitations to address all sorts of

¹ Victor L. O. Chittick.

² See "Two Controversial Questions," *Sewanee Review* (Winter 1966), and "New England and Further" (*RL-CPR*).

³ *RL* used the letter to express his opposition to the Johnson administration's policies in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic (see *RL-Letters*, 459, and *RL-CPR*, 370-71).

protesting groups. But I've had my say and want to go no further. Almost everyone I know is frightened, stunned and angry about what we are doing in our foreign policy. All may cool off. Or maybe this is the beginning of a push of American force that [will] last longer than all of us will. I feel lucky that I've been able to do the one thing that I can probably do suitably, i.e. make a personal act and statement. Now the job is to get back to my own kind of writing, which is only imaginatively controversial. I mean I still feel free, if only inspiration blows, to write or not to on national matters, if they enter my experience and find a form.

I've been remiss about saying something to you about a Rockefeller Fellowship. Did you get an application? Kunitz and I are on an advisory committee and I think could promise you a grant, if you sent in your request. The awards, however, have been made for the moment. I'm not sure what we can do to determine grants in the future, or even if more will be given, but I think the odds are that anything reasonable you ask for (up to ten or twelve thousand) will be given. Please write in.

I rather hope you'll take on the Washington job. You'll like the landscape and the relative quiet for America, and I think Heilman, the head of the department, will shape the conditions [to] suit you. He did marvels with Ted Roethke and has since had such unacademic shy people as Henry Reed and Vernon Watkins. Everyone seems terribly excited and eager for your arrival. Where you are known—it's now very wide—you have about the most convinced and authentic fans of anyone writing. I know you must have a thousand hesitations. Of course, you mustn't push yourself beyond what is tolerable and enjoyable, but you quite likely would find that teaching both gives you more of the country and by giving you a routine makes everything here more digestible. In my classes, I read poems aloud, comment, ramble and ask questions, oh and also listen. The students have either anthologies or mimeographed copies of the poems so there's no question of a performance or declamation. Classes are not lectures so much as arranged conversations, and you need do nothing but take things casually and trust yourself to your humor, sense, knowledge and personal interests.

Oh dear, I never write the sort of natural letter I would like to. This is the messy last city week. Our good Spanish maid has departed for Spain for an ear operation. Harriet has passed through the second grade "arch" and is on vacation until she enters the third grade next fall. She does things we can't, cartwheels, flips from the diving board, shows a knack for mathematics. Under the muscle and fragility of her eight years, there's so much sweetness, invention and sense.

After all the fuss of my letter, I found myself getting a doctor's degree at Williams with Allen Dulles, Luce and Adlai Stevenson. Luce greeted me with, "I like your poetry better than your politics." I felt like saying I felt the same about his, but I was polite and he was polite. Stevenson said, "I've been following your new public life with interest and I must say some satisfaction." Write me in Castine. Harriet and I are off to a Cary Grant comedy called "Father Goose."¹

All my love,
Cal

320.

Rio, July 6th, 1965

Dearest Cal:

I'm afraid I have much to answer for—and in 45 minutes I'm taking off for a week in Bahia, but at least I'm all packed, and I have saved this time to write you a note. (I think you stopped over at Bahia, didn't you? I've never been there, after all this time here.) First, I got your card from Egypt,² then one from Seattle, then two week-ends ago I found a letter from you in Samambaia, and the record of *Benito Cereno* . . .³ I had a wonderful time going to the theatre on a bright Sunday morning—I played it two times over. I have a MSS of it somewhere but couldn't locate it and now I am eager to see the book to see how they had cut it—I supposed they must have. It comes off *wonderfully*—but as you know this already, it is very late for me to say so. I like the voice of BC himself best, I think—the Capt. good but I waited to see if he'd get that Bostonian A right every time! But the whole thing somehow seems to mean more and more and more when I hear it—and it is the one thing I regret having missed in NY the past season. In fact, so apropos does it seem that I've already suggested it to the most "advanced theatre" here—I hope you don't mind. Nothing whatever may come of it—you know how inert people can be here—but I have suggested it to one poet who's helping in this theatre—and he thinks, and I think, and L thinks, and Flávio thinks—it would be a fine thing to have Brazilians see right now, at this stage in the awful game . . . Perhaps on a double bill with—well, what was suggested was *Zoo Story* (Flávio did a good translation of that 2 years ago—he could do your play, too, with my help.) However—I'll tell you more when I get back

¹ *Father Goose*, dir. Ralph Nelson (1964).

² The postcard does not survive.

³ The American Place Theatre's production of *Benito Cereno*, dir. Jonathan Miller (Columbia DOL 319).

Castine, Maine
July 16, 1965

My dearest Elizabeth:

Here are my sentences for your book. Not good, I fear, in comparison with yours for me, in which a marvelous image jumps into the universal, into the world. I had a pleasant day in my barn composing it.

"I am sure no living poet is as curious and observant as Miss Bishop. What cuts so deep is that each poem is inspired by her own tone, a tone of large, grave tenderness and sorrowing amusement. She is too sure of herself for empty mastery and breezy plagiarism, too interested for confession and musical monotony, too powerful for mismanaged fire, and too civilized for idiosyncratic incoherence. She has a humorous, commanding genius for picking up the unnoticed, now making something sprightly and right, and now a great monument. Once her poems, each shining, were too few. Now they are many. When we read her, we enter the classical serenity of a new country."

I hope you'll like this, and that a few phrases will stick in the minds of reviewers. Your *Life Studies* blurb is still being quoted by reviewers of my last book and counteracts an unfortunate phrase by Alvarez that somehow got on my jacket that I was too good to be criticized. But what else makes a reviewer's life livable!

I feel very guilty about not having let you in on the Rockefeller business earlier. I wasn't writing letters, and may have had a probably ill-judged hunch that Washington would be good for you. But why should you go there? The Brazil book will be something permanent, and sounds just like what you should do and only you could.

I've finished nothing worth keeping for a year. But suddenly when I got up here with letters and long distance calls still swarming in about my White House business, I got going. I enclose the long poem I wrote.¹ It sounds good, I think, and is rather witty and tragic. I guess the only thing to do is to keep writing, but only publish what has a spark in it. I am old enough almost to wait.

For the last few days the Castine flags have been at half-mast for poor Stevenson.² I got a degree when he did at Williams, and he said, "I've been following your new public life with interest, and I must say some enjoy-

ment." God knows what he meant. Contradictory reports are coming out about what he really thought about his duties at the UN. Like Louis MacNeice, whom I also saw a few weeks before his death, Stevenson looked unusually healthily red and relaxed. Reading his first volume of speeches, I was disappointed and thought such a man could only make his mark by being elected. Yet I was wrong; he graced our harsh scene with a kind of kindness, nuance, everything tinged with himself, the most attractive American statesman in our lifetimes. Yet what he said no longer had great importance, and sometimes seemed merely a rather wistful rephrasing of Washington, his nuance, but not his heart. Still such modesty, an ambitious but still true modesty, offers a lesson, though one may fail to follow it.

Glad you like *Benito*. Yes, the Spanish Captain dominates; he has a voice as perfect as a good opera singer. On the stage, he looked like a tall El Greco, but moved little (both by his own nature and his part,) and the star was Babu,¹ inexhaustibly agile, able to improvise and to change from tender servility to royal barbarism. On the TV, a non-commercial filming, the American Captain is the most important.² Most of the scenes are from the shoulder up, show few actors, often only one. Hope they do it in Rio. There's some talk of a double bill in London, maybe with a wild negro thing by LeRoi Jones.³

I don't have a copy of my statement. It's not so much, but the little personal turns of phrase are everything. Murray Kempton quoted it entire in his column as an example of courteous independence. I'll mail you a copy when I get back to the city. You might find [it] in the New York *Times* that came out Thursday, a week and a half before the 14th of June. (This last was the Arts Festival Day, and that's why I have this odd way of remembering the date of the *Times* statement.) Marvelous, your details about the poor Brazilian soldiers. I can't, of course, say what ought to be done, but feel nearly certain we are embogged in tragic futility. Maybe even Johnson can do nothing, certainly he can't, I think, psychologically. A wounded bull who doesn't know he's wounded. Still every brake helps, qualification too is part of our National character.

Your Brazil book sounds terrific. I'll write Freund⁴ today. You ask me not to be overcomplimentary. I fear in my sentences I've too literally followed your advice. Still, a careful reading will show that I make huge claims that anyone should accept.

¹ Roscoe Lee Browne.

² Lester Rawlins.

³ LeRoi Jones, *Dutchman* (1964).

⁴ Gerald Freund, a director at the Rockefeller Foundation from 1960 to 1969.

¹ "Walking Early Sunday Morning" (RL-CP).

² Adlai Stevenson died on July 14, 1965.

Today I am answering mail, though nothing except writing to you is of much moment. Then I hope to quietly reread old New England classics, Thoreau, Melville etc. With the idea of writing a New England essay. I thought of a good phrase for Hawthorne— . . . “poor Hawthorne, his life like Mallarmé’s and many another’s, too long for comfort and too brief for perfection.” If I do nothing, the reading will sink into dry sand, or I hope dry fertile earth, like Maine in this summer, good for the vacationer, but a drought for farmers.

How wonderful you are Dear, and how wonderful that you write me letters. I had a rather glowing account of you and Lota from Sylvia Marlowe. In this mid-summer moment I feel at peace, and that we both have more or less lived up to our so different natures and destinies. What a block of life has passed since we first met in New York and Washington! How much I love my little, not very well treated and indomitable family!

Love,
Cal

P.S. My poem is 112 lines and I just haven’t the heart to make a copy now. Can I mail one of the New York *Review* copies next week? Since I ended this letter I’ve answered a month’s mail. Telegraphic little post-cards mostly, but enough to tire me of typing. We had an interesting night yesterday listening to Charles Ives records, enough to make me a patriot almost. If you don’t have him and would like, let me mail some records next fall.

322.

Rio, August 2nd, 1965

Dearest Cal:

I should have written to you several days ago, I know—I think I have been so overcome by your paragraph about me that I couldn’t concentrate on a simple letter. You should have seen me, shedding big tears. I thought, no, this is *too* good, I’ll have to tone it down . . . It came to Petrópolis and Mary read it to me over the telephone; then we went up last week end, a day or so later, and I saw it with my own eyes—also Bob already had it printed up, so the whole jacket, more or less, was there. He was naturally very pleased, too, thought it “terrific.” I like especially of course, being “curious” and “sprightly”—both words I hope I really live up to. I only wish the book were worth it.— I honestly do not think it is—about 4 poems please me, that’s all. I don’t think I told you—but I finally decided to put your name

under the Armadillo poem, since you have liked it. I have a longer, grimmer one, about Copacabana beach, too, that is to be dedicated to you—but I didn’t get it done in time and I did want to mention you somehow or other in this book. Well when it appears, it may be a bit better than “The Armadillo.” And well—we may be a terrible pair of log-rollers, I don’t know—however—I do know that I meant every word I said and I think you do too, in the kindness of your heart. I’ve just read straight through a huge anthology—*A Controversy of Poets*—and your familiar three poems in that are the ONLY ones I’d—well, cross the street for.¹ Possibly one or two others are good, but not even comparable, really. The whole book I find awfully depressing and it makes me feel so *demodée*, as Lota says.— I *must* write some prose using *f*— and *sh*— and so on, I see that . . .—and isn’t it odd, out of all the nerves & troubles that something fairly “serene” does come? Well—now I don’t even care if it is badly received—what you say is enough!

I’ve also just read Sylvia Plath’s last book,² and Auden’s—and wonder what you think of those. Sylvia P. seems like a tragic loss to me—although I can scarcely bear to read her poems through, they are so agonized. A bit formless for my taste, too—but really a talent, don’t you think? And Auden seems to be enjoying a sort of premature old age a little too much . . . There are a couple of good ones, though. I like the one to MacNeice—most of it—³

Yes, I felt very badly about Stevenson, too—and then I’d just seen a poem in the last *POETRY* by Robert Duncan speaking of “the look of Stevenson lying” (in the UN) “that the nation keep face.”⁴ I somehow can’t believe that. I do believe he was misinformed about the Cuban invasion . . . I hope to goodness so, at least. Dr. Baumann sent me a whole batch of newspaper clippings—a lot of them about you, the President’s luncheon or arts festival, etc., etc.—so now I am better informed. I like very much your considered and reasonable tone—and it certainly made a sensation! (I also rather liked what Dwight McD said, if true—according to *TIME*—“I’m the bad fairy at the christening”) But oh I wish they wouldn’t use that idiotic expression “teach-in” . . . (I’ve been getting some reports about those things, too.) Here, I just never know what to say to people and try to avoid saying anything most of the time. Probably it was just as well Stevenson was never President—I think he was too thoughtful and subtle-minded for that job.

I’m getting my Rockefeller letter off at last today—a very simple state-

1 *A Controversy of Poets*, ed. Paris Leary and Robert Kelly (1965).

2 Sylvia Plath, *Ariel* (Faber edition, 1965).

3 W. H. Auden, “Epilogue,” *About the House* (1965).

4 Robert Duncan, “The Fire,” lines 81–82, *Poetry* (April 1965).

in Baltimore. (No one else knows this). He finally wrote her that he couldn't cope with life unless he went home to Mary. He should have had a doctor who made clear to him that getting over his manic depressive attack had nothing to do with returning to his wife—my doctor has always made that point, even to the extreme of once several years ago letting me go from the hospital to an apartment where I went on with my affair, and then went back to Lizzie, knowing that I really wanted to in my soul's center. Of course the new girl would have probably have been like Randall's other wives, but she might have tided him back to health. Nothing on earth can be as bad as ending your own life—I mean medically not morally—except murder. Well, and there was a bang up quarrel with Mary just before he went to the hospital for the last time, not mental but to have ice treatments on his wrist, made much worse by an unsuccessful operation in September. There's a small chance of accident—he was planning to have dinner with his step-daughter the next day, had begun teaching, had written one or two people that he was well and writing again, and had notes on a review of your poems which he was very keen on. In his pocket a bottle of Demerol, pain-killer, that might have fuzzed his senses. I think it was suicide, and so does every one else, who knew him well. Hannah said to me, "What is so awful was that it was so fitting." Mary was in California when he died, and didn't drive him to the hospital. The Taylors didn't think she was coming back. They are very bitter. Mary's story is that he was well, and had only temporarily turned on her in his manic state—no one knows about the suicide attempt, and she insists that the death was an accident—naturally, I guess. He seems to have been begging her for a divorce, *before* he was sick last fall. I want to stay out of it all. I've just written a ten page memorial and *éloge* for the *Review*, which I'll have them mail you, and which I hope you'll like.¹ His worst flaw was forcing his wives into becoming false assents to himself, agreeing on everything, having the same critical opinions, etc., making them dishonest, as one of his poem[s] even says.² When Peter called up Mackie, she was astonished that Randall had ever been sick, then she said, "This may sound strange, but I think this means more to you than it does to me." She meant Randall's death, not his illness. Oh, but he was an absolutely gifted, and noble man, poisoned and killed, though I can't prove it, by our tasteless, superficial, brutal culture.

¹ "Randall Jarrell: 1914–1965," *The New York Review of Books* (Nov. 25, 1965); see RL-CPR.

² Possibly Randall Jarrell, "Hope," *The Lost World* (1965).

Dear heart, I see you've had another *golpe*¹—unhappy Americas, unhappy world! Hope there's nothing ominous for you and Lota.

All my love,
Cal

What a full and glorious book, even grander than I foresaw, thinking of the poems in ones and twos. There are marvelous things in poems I haven't mentioned—I think particularly of the title poem.²

327.

Rio, November 18th, 1965

Dearest Cal:

I have so much to write you about and so many things to thank you for, I scarcely know where to begin. I have also put off writing to you too long. I stayed away in Ouro Preto for over 2 months and when I came back—Lota came up and got me, finally, which touched me very much since it's a nine hour drive—there was an awful lot to attend to, and I haven't been well—bad stretch of asthma, don't know why—but I'm recovered now. When I did get back, your letter about Randall was here, and the one about my book came soon after. I've also got the book of plays and thank you very much for that, too.

I felt awful about Randall. We had just seemed to be getting in touch again, too, after a long silence. What do you suppose went wrong with him and had he talked to you at all frankly lately or since he was sick? I feel it must have been an accident of an unconscious-suicide kind, a sudden impulse when he was really quite out of his head—because surely it was most unlike him to make some innocent motorist responsible for his death. I feel sorry for whoever it was. When I heard about it, in Ouro Preto—and then saw it in *TIME* a day or so later—I tried and tried to write to Mary, but didn't. Now, after what you wrote me, I don't know whether to or not—perhaps I shall, just conventionally. Demerol is a strong drug—at least the sleeping pills are. Maybe he'd taken some and kept going, which would certainly make anyone "fuzzy," as you say.— It is too sad, really. I hope he got the two letters I

¹ *Coup d'état*. RL had seen "President Castelo Branco, in Sweeping Decree, Dissolves Political Parties, Increases Executive Powers, and Opens Judiciary to Appointment of New Judges," *The New York Times* (Oct. 28, 1965).

² "Questions of Travel" (EB-CP).

wrote him about his book and that I managed to say something he wanted said. Another thing I found when I got back was the unbound MMS from Pantheon of his children's book for me to read¹—it came by boat, and so had taken ages to get here. I haven't had the heart to read it yet. Don't send me anything for Christmas please!—I have no way of getting anything in safely at present.

You are awfully kind about my book and your letter was a great comfort to me. I was wheezing away and full of adrenalin and feeling just too foolish, at this advanced age, to be in such a state—when it came. I love your expression, "the bomb in it in a delicate way!" That was my idea exactly, I suppose. I haven't seen that new maple leaf flag yet but hear it is ugly—too pale, and on a white ground? Well—*Trollope* was actually an anti-Eisenhower poem, I think—although it's really almost all Trollope—phrase after phrase. You are too generous to go over the same old but so short list. I think the book itself is pretty, but the contents too slight. *TIME* came again—same Mr. Denis. I wanted to use the old ones of you & me² since they are better than he usually does, but they insisted so I finally gave in, and he was kind enough to let me see proof[s]. He's a nice man, but a dreadful photographer—about 85% of them had me with my eyes shut, looking exactly like both my grandmothers put together. (He said that I blinked "unusually fast"—that's a new one). I have a horrible feeling they're preparing to tear me limb from limb because of my quarrels with them.

I see your name everywhere, everywhere—Marianne's, too—and she is moving, or has already moved by now. I have an old Nova Scotian superstition—but it's world-wide, I think—that that is a very bad sign. I saw pictures of Pound at Spoleto looking extremely old, too—and read about his silence, etc. Who is Barbara Guest—the only other American besides Allen? That's about the only place I'd like to go to, to a "conference" I think—Calder has talked about it to us a lot.

I haven't heard anything from the Rockefellers and you seem to imply that perhaps they aren't giving any more fellowships. However, I think I'll write a note just to see if they ever got my application—letters from Ouro Preto seemed more subject to loss than from here, even. In the meantime I made up my mind to go to Seattle—a few days after Christmas. I don't want to one bit, but need the money and probably it will be good for me or some-

thing!—They are running a big risk, I think, since I've never taught before and all their forms and letters just confuse me more and more. I try to think seriously for a while every day, like Isherwood, on *what poetry is all about*, etc.—but my mind wanders . . . However—they do sound nice and friendly and I do want to see the BIG TREES and Mt. Rainier—so it will probably be all right. However—if you have any ideas on the subject of textbooks (!) good anthologies, etc.—or *anything at all*—I'd be extremely grateful. They keep writing me about them (textbooks) and I don't know what to say. I'm not as dumb as I sound here, I'm sure, and I certainly see enough books—too many by far—but can't think of any all-round one, or even two or three. I've re-read all of Saintsbury on Prosody,¹ just for fun—it is a marvellous book, I think—all 3 volumes—so *funny*—and good until he meets Swinburne—or maybe we're wrong about *him*.

I'm hoping that Lota will come up for the last month and then we can do a bit of traveling and go to San Francisco, etc. She says no—she'll never be able to get away—but I hope she'll weaken. She hates having me go—very nice of her—but after a sad scene she is now resigned!—and she is so awfully busy she really misses me only for about an hour at dinner-time or on long week-ends. She is now President of the board to run the park—the "Foundation"—until 1968. Takes office Monday. But it has been a hideous stretch and I am utterly sick of Brazilian politics, big and little, at the moment. She is a fighter, after all, and in some ways enjoys all the bloodshed, I think—but a while ago I was afraid it would really kill us both before the thing got finished. As L. says—the people are *primary*—one has to spend too much time on what they should know already.

Right now I'm in a sort of quandary—I've been invited to the Embassy for lunch to meet *Mrs.* Rusk. I try to go once a year or so just so I'll get asked when someone interesting turns up—not that they ever do. I was going to refuse, being so opposed to the OEA² (you have the letters around in English differently, I think) in general—but then I read in the papers that she never goes anywhere with him, hates it, and just came this time because she wants to see Rio. And his *wife* may be innocent, after all—and there are to be (says the secretary) "40 ladies—no hats"—Oh dear. Last night was the opening of the big conference. There was a very small highbrow demonstration in front of the Copacabana Palace Hotel and two or three men I know were ar-

¹ Randall Jarrell, *The Animal Family* (1965).

² EB and RL on the beach in Rio de Janeiro, August 1962.

¹ George Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody* (1906–10).

² Organization of American States.

rested. However—I am not too sympathetic to them, either. It is NOT a “dictatorship” here—I think they all just want to be martyred, really. On the other hand—it looks as though our Latin American diplomacy had really broken down completely and they have turned it all over to the Pentagon—this is really just a military rally, I feel. Bobby Kennedy arrives next—but you didn’t say anything useful about your meeting with him: (In case I do).

I have been reading all about the blackout and wonder what happened to you and your family during it—you do have fireplaces and, I hope, had candles.¹ We are so used to them here—sometimes they are even scheduled—and there are no buildings higher than 12 floors, at least. It must have been weird and rather wonderful—and maybe a good idea, in a way—to show everyone how helpless they are without *juice*. I like Ouro Prêto because everything there was made on the spot, by hand, of stone, iron, copper, wood—and they had to invent a lot—and everything has lasted perfectly well for almost three hundred years now.— I used to think this was just sentimental of me—now I’m beginning to take it more seriously. Well—I am curious to see my native land again. I must say I hate it in *The New Yorker*. I did a couple of poems lately—one will be in that magazine soon, I think.² Do tell me what you are doing—at Harvard again? And I am *dying to see you & talk to you*.

Love,
Elizabeth

(Please give me your ZONE number!)

328.

[November 24, 1965]

Dearest—

Why not use De la Mare’s *Come Hither* or *Love*? My favorite orthodox anthology of English poetry is the Auden and Pearson five volume Viking Portable. For modern poetry, how about the Tate and Herbert Read—Scribner’s or Oxford?³

¹ The Northeast Blackout of November 9, 1965.

² “Under the Window: Ouro Prêto (for Lilli Correia de Araújo),” *The New Yorker* (Dec. 24, 1966); see EB-GP.

³ *Come Hither*, ed. Walter de la Mare (1923); *Love*, ed. Walter de la Mare (1943); *Poets of the English Language*, ed. W. H. Auden and Norman Pearson (1950); Allen Tate coedited *Modern Verse in English, 1900–1950* (1958) with David Cecil, not Herbert Read.

I read “Armadillo” along with Auden’s “Shield of Achilles,” two Randall and one Sylvia Plath at Harvard’s Sanders Theatre.

You are very subtle about dictatorships, etc. On the one hand our embassy run by the Pentagon, on the other, your General “not a dictator.” I know I think what you mean and more or less agree. Washington is now even more like your Trollope poem. Why isn’t it yours if you rimed and metered it so beautifully? Oh, the poems I read of yours were the Pound and “Armadillo”—the Pound is overwhelming decently read aloud. I too love Saintsbury. His book on prose, prose rhythm, etc., on the same plan as the prosody but only one volume, is lovely too.¹ He’s right in a way about Swinburne, and so are we. The great Victorians for me are Tennyson, Browning, Lear, Fitzgerald, Arnold and Hopkins. I just love Marianne. We did a Pound television program together, then she came to dinner with Bob Giroux and Eliot’s widow. The most *powerful* poet now writing in English!

Do Dear, take the Washington. They’ll be kindness and gentleness itself. Why not read aloud from Saintsbury in your class? Marvelous portrait of Stevenson by Severeid² in *Look* on Adlai Stevenson. Stev. says on Rusk, “Oh, I don’t know . . . I can’t make him out, . . . He is so sort of wooden.” Oh, see Mrs. Rusk! Oh I think Fulbright and Bobby are our best senators, but I never met him—it was Teddy I met last summer.

Ah, what’s the black-out after summers in Maine with that sort of thing happening thrice a summer. Awful, though, for the people trapped in subways and elevators. How much better candles are for restaurant eating, or conversation during the evening. Hartford was like Ouro Prêto, an island of its own light, and in Cambridge, there [are] glowing DC current houses.

I’m zone 23.³ In our society, it [is] almost a duty for people like us to teach a *little*.— You are not being sentimental, I think, about Ouro Prêto.

I have a four hundred line sequence poem which might make a book, twenty pages on a New England essay, and my obituary on Randall. Thank God, we two still breathe the air of the living.

All my love,
Cal

¹ George Saintsbury, *A History of English Prose Rhythm* (1912).

² Eric Severeid, “Adlai Stevenson: His Final Troubled Hours,” *Look* (Nov. 3, 1965).

³ Postal zone.

Apt. 212, 4135 Brooklyn Ave., N.E.
Seattle, Washington, 98105
Washington's Birthday
[Feb. 23, 1966]

Dearest Cal:

That Carolyn Kizer . . . She called me up late one night and told me you had been elected to the Oxford post, and in my excitement I sent off a cable, telegram, I mean, that same night—and it wasn't until two days later I read the true account in the papers here.¹ I hope you didn't think I was wool-gathering . . . although come to think of it, I certainly was, the first few weeks, and as you see, I am just getting around to writing letters *now*. I am awfully sorry you didn't get the appointment, but you undoubtedly will next time, anyway—I have been sent clippings about it and you from all over the country, I think, lots from New York, of course. Bob Giroux kept me—keeps me—quite well informed. His last letter, he had just had lunch with you and said you were very well. I am awfully glad and hope all goes well with you. Are you teaching, too, I wonder, or what?

I don't know where to begin. You are much admired here and several of my "students" (I have to keep putting everything in quotes because none of it seems quite real to me, even now) are using you for their term-papers . . . you are being compared (to his discredit) frequently with Eliot, I think—Henry Reed is here—a bright spot in my life, I must say. I had dinner with him last night and he told me how he had heard a beautiful reading of SKUNK HOUR in England—and was reported in the papers as having said in a loud aside, "That's the only poem worth a damn this whole evening." He was sorry not to have met you here and would very much like to when he goes to New York.—I'm not sure when. He is extremely funny—referred to Olivier in OTHELLO as "The Nigger of the Narcissus," to give you an idea of his wit. I shall make so bold as to give him your address. He has done a few beautiful poems since "Naming of Parts" ("to which I owe my livelihood," he says)² he has shown me—but I think writes really very little. I read my class your wonderful piece on Randall one day—I had missed that copy in Brazil, of the *NY Review*—and they were very moved by it, obviously. I have also read them a lot of Randall's poems—and I did send off a few sentences for that occasion at Yale I think you were reading at, not long

¹ The telegram does not survive. RL was nominated for the Oxford Professorship of Poetry, a five-year post that would have obliged him to lecture three times a year. Edmund Blunden, an Oxonian candidate, was elected instead.

² Henry Reed, "Lessons of the War: I. Naming of Parts," *A Map of Verona* (1946).

ago—no—the 28th, I think—?¹ I'm not sure that they would serve, though. You really said it all much better in your piece. He doesn't seem very well known here, so I am bringing in him—and Berryman—and a few others every chance I get. They are so wrapped up in Roethke, still, and he also left an anti-Pound, anti-Eliot heritage—but I go blithely on giving them things they look blasé about—even Tennyson and Keats. This eastern influence!—only here it's west. One boy gave me 200 haikus—or haikai, as I believe the plural is. (They are all too familiar with the oriental languages—and it certainly has a disastrous effect on METER.)

Well, I was never meant to be a teacher and would never like it—but I do like the "students" (children, I call them to myself)—even if they seem awfully lacking in joie de vivre and keep telling me about their experiences with LSD and "pot" etc., and (2 girls) how they are "on the PILL"—I think this was to convince me they are serious about writing! The boys are all over six feet—some girls are, too—and the girls have huge legs—& have blue eyes; one *left-handed*—what is this high percentage of left-handedness, I wonder? Henry said he'd been warned about the *bosom* in the front row—but not about the large bare knee that starts creeping up over the edge of the table . . . I have a few extremely bright students, however—thank goodness. And they all couldn't be nicer to me,—protective, almost. Some of them found this place for me and *moved* me—even provided a lot of odd furniture. I had been quite wretched in a hotel, and a motel—this is quiet and private, and I have 2 rooms.

Now that I have at last started writing you, I realize *how* much I miss you and would love to see you; and I do hope you are feeling all well again, Cal. I see I am up for the National B A—but doubt I'll get it, since I remember you once told me that Phyllis McGinley had told you she couldn't "see a thing" in my poetry! I'd like to get it for 2 reasons: 1. for Lota—these things mean a lot there. 2. It would mean a trip to New York. But I imagine Eberhart will get it, so I don't need to worry about public appearances, etc.

Everyone has been awfully kind to me. That darling old Mr. Chittick—the "deaf old man" you wrote me a postcard from here about once—wrote after you were here, welcoming me—but alas, I didn't get it. It would have helped, too.

Bob said you had some wonderful poems for your next book²—I wonder

¹ Tribute to Randall Jarrell on February 28, 1966, with RL, John Berryman, Richard Eberhart, John Hollander, Mary Jarrell, Stanley Kuniz, William Meredith, Adrienne Rich, Peter Taylor, Robert Penn Warren, and Richard Wilbur.

² *Near the Ocean* (1967).

if I have seen them all? and certainly want to. I am not taking my good reviews or any of it very seriously, really—I know quite well it is all just because you have desisted, in a gentlemanly way, from publishing a book this year . . .

And ye gods—how good your poems are when I really get to work on one—“Between the Porch & the Altar!” was the last—with that class—and they read such feeble stuff in comparison by a lot of poets I don’t know. For a while I felt if I really wanted to get away all I’d have to do would be to stand up and pull my hair one day and scream I HATE ROETHKE. However, the head of the Dept., to whom I confided this, said it wouldn’t work. “A great many people would agree with you.” I don’t really, anyway—but one hates feeling like his ghost—and I think *some* of his influence has been very bad—although at the same time I think he attracted a lot of good potential poets here—and I am still getting some of those.

Seattle—well—those billows and billows of little wooden houses, each different, and those swooshing free-ways all over the place—I found it strange and upsetting at first; now I am getting used to it, somewhat. And the biggest seagulls I ever saw—*silent* seagulls. I like the waterfront—have been there only twice, however. I really have to work awfully hard to keep a nose ahead of the classes. I am just not used to work, anyway, and realize what a lazy and pampered life I have led—but I am enjoying most of the reading I have to do—things I should have read before, probably—and some of the social life, especially the more Bohemian friends I have made—not so much the academic ones—although everyone is KIND. Westerners are really different—it took a little getting used to. We were so genteel at Vassar, really. I don’t expect to think of a poem of my own, for a moment, until June.

How are Harriet and Elizabeth? I read the latter in the *N.Y. Review*¹ and shall probably soon be reading the former.—Please write me, Cal dear, if you have time—I can imagine how busy you are—I think of you with great pride and affection and try not to talk about you too much!

Love,

Elizabeth

Saw about Bill Alfred’s play in TIME²—still don’t read it here, the newspapers so poor—

Dearest Elizabeth:

Wonderful your letters are pouring out again. I had terrible pictures of you despondent and lost in the new toil of teaching—lonely, cold, at sea. Lizzie taught last term at Barnard for the first time in her life. Her first comment was “the students aren’t very good, but I am.” She gave them various non-fiction books such as Lévi-Strauss and *In the American Grain*¹ and found them agape. Then they almost all wrote A papers, and she got quite enthused, had another offer from Bryn Mawr and got her Barnard salary raised. Then you can now teach probably almost anywhere, more or less on your own terms, and a year here might be a pleasant change for you and Lota. New cars are cheaper.

You are too good as always about my writing. I’ve just been through agonies hammering out a three page introduction to Sylvia Plath.² I think it does now, but the first few drafts were beneath any of my graduate student papers. No, I am laborious, too much like everyone else, and a bit harsh and perverse. While you . . . Your book is another species from most everything else. I think even the reviewers now see that there’s no one, except Marianne Moore, at all comparable to you. I guess I struck Roethke under a bit more favorable circumstance. I mean last year when I came to Seattle, I was to give the Roethke Memorial reading and had worked myself into the proper state of awe. I gave a Yeats reading at Columbia at about the same time, and my head rang with resonance, all of which may show in the long, metered Marvell couplet thing I wrote all last summer.³ Ted’s worst fault was a sort of tender hard-heartedness, too great a wish to be big, so that much of the poetry is a little dead under the ringing cadences. But then he really was big and it took great courage to burn out with such a big flare—nothing much left then to his body, and very like a drunken baby to meet here on visits.

Bobby Kennedy never showed up for the dinner, but Jackie did, full of wild vignettes spoken in her breathless, almost parody voice. I thought Lizzie was horrified and discovered she was charmed. Once in a blue moon—I thought this about Alice Longworth—someone from the grand world is really delightful. Sometimes, I think I would die, if it weren’t for a

1 William Carlos Williams, *In the American Grain* (1925).

2 “Sylvia Plath’s *Ariel*,” *The New York Review of Books* (May 12, 1966), reprinted as a foreword to *Ariel* (1966).

3 “Waking Early Sunday Morning” (RL-CP).

1 Elizabeth Hardwick, “Theater in New York,” *The New York Review of Books* (Jan. 6, 1966).

2 “The Unfabulous Invalid,” *Time* (Feb. 18, 1966), about William Alfred’s *Hogan’s Goat*.

few platonic relations with women. Adrienne Rich used to come out twice a week to see me in the Boston hospital, and a couple of hours would whirl by in what seemed like a few minutes of talk.

I have a formidable new doctor, Kurt Eissler, sounding (I mean just his name) like a Nazi in a film, and of course out of Germany with forty volume sets of Goethe, Wieland, etc. and books of his own on Goethe, Genius and Environment, Depression, etc.¹ Maybe I'll get well. This doctor is the first I've had who is really much like an artist, though it took several days for us to speak a language intelligible to the other.

I pray you get the National Book Award. Did you say the day was the Fifth? I don't leave for Florida till the 10th. You must stay with us. You wouldn't know us, we are so soften[ed] by our doctors and guinea pigs. When we drink together, we talk about how well we get on, squeaks in the background, even splintering hopping sounds from our little laconic birds, long angora (pig) hairs on the sofa, now sinking into fluff from Harriet's turns on it.

Do tell Reed to come and see us. He must have saved your heart in exile. What a difference an intelligent voice makes. Our Guadeloupe beach was restoring, but one felt stupider than the stupidest tourist—and was!

All my love,
Cal

331.

Castine, Maine
July 16, 1966

Dearest Elizabeth:

It seems months and months since I've written you, and it is, though we've talked on the phone, and you seemed during your Washington months close in a way . . . a visit, but one I almost missed. I have a guilty feeling of almost having let something die—in me, I guess. Do you have moments of relaxing,—a relaxing to let in life, that may be a letting go?

All this comes to me on a clear day, bush and grass in the sun, bush and grass in the shadow, the sea high, like a lake shore, a few feet off now from my window. For about a month, ever since coming here, I have been working steadily on an expanded prose version of the *Prometheus*.² Now a first full draft is done, almost seventy pages, and I wonder why I buried myself in it

¹ K. R. Eissler, *Goethe: A Psychoanalytic Study, 1775-1786* (1963).

² *Prometheus Bound* (1969).

so, five days a week, and sometimes six. Can any truth come through the old Greek plot, the few, ever-recurring grand words? Somehow though, I find myself in a rut, where it's easier to write than not to. Oh, to break away for months! (And sometimes I feel very tired, in a not quite physical way) find ways to dream—I am always dreaming inside myself—do nothing! And I do, but am made glazed, stiff and nervous by the near at hand. I have been thinking of Whitman's huge sweep, mostly in his thirties and forties, lines pouring out, a hundred poems a year, yet with long, idle afternoons of sauntering, chatting, at ease nearly with what the eye fell on.

A couple of days ago Delmore Schwartz died from a heart-attack, just outside his room in a cheap New York hotel¹—alone, out of touch, for a year, a shadow, a rumor seen here and there, gone underground, after he vanished and hid from Syracuse University, angry that he hadn't been given tenure. Maybe the heat killed him; the death-rate has risen lately in New York, but really his end was in the cards for long, too much drinking, a paranoia that cut him off from jobs, and even friends—for a day, there was no one to claim the body. I think back on the time when Caroline Gordon said, "This is the one mature young man I've ever met." This hurt me, but I felt dismissed with a great swarm of other young men. And it seemed true in a way. *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities* had just come out,² and reasonable, intuitive essays, the old new criticism, but with a new touch, in all the Quarterlies. He was much more bruised and swollen, when I knew him well, an intimate grueling year, a year or so before you and I met—Jean and he and I, sedentary, indoors souls, talking about books and literary gossip over glasses of milk, strengthened with Maine vodka, the milk intended to restore what the vodka tore down—Delmore in an unpressed mustard gabardine, a little winded, husky voiced, unhealthy, but with a carton of varied vitamin bottles, the color of oil, quickening with Jewish humor, and in-the-knowness, and his own genius, every person, every book—motives for everything, Freud in his blood, great webs of causation, then suspicion, then rushes of rage. He was more reasonable than us, but obsessed, a much better mind, but one really chasing the dust—it was like living with a sluggish, sometimes angry spider—no hurry, no motion, Delmore's voice, almost inaudible, dead, intuitive, pointing somewhere, then the strings tightening, the roar of rage—too much, too much for us! Nothing haunts me more than breaking with friends. I used to think he was the only one I broke with.

¹ On July 11, 1966.

² Published in 1938.

Are you glad to be back in Rio, or are you up in the hills? I feel I had a hand in your going to Seattle, though I didn't really, and didn't suggest it. It must have been trying and empty a lot of the time, but aren't you glad—I sound like my Mother—that now you know how simple teaching is, that you can always fall back on it? Write soon and tell me about yourself, what you did then, what you are doing now. Are you and Lota going to Italy this fall? We may go to Spain next summer. Lizzie is at work on two books: one we are supposed to do together, a high school English and world literature textbook for Harcourt Brace, the other hers, a book on poverty from five or six parts of the country, helped out with a tape-recorder. She has been going shyly and sharply around with it, no, mostly shy, to our local figures, the laundress, the caretaker's widow, Phil Booth—hard to unearth the Maine poor, or rather open them up, for they are everywhere. When the debris is finally sorted, I think she will have something brilliant, but starting is hard. I am dying to hear more of and see your Brazilian book. I suppose life is at our fingertips, millions talking prose all their lives, if one could only, not gather, but arrange it!¹

I miss you so much, Dear, and feel a third of me is dead, when we stop writing.

Our love to you and dear Lota, all mine to you!

Cal

P.S. I don't know when this will arrive, all the air lines, except, oddly enough, Maine's eccentric Northeast, are on strike.

332.

15 West 67 St., NYC
September 15, 1966

Dearest Elizabeth:

What's up? It seems almost a year since I've had anything in writing from you. I spent a summer almost without event or narrative: work through the day, two hours of doubles, evenings at home or with our undrama-torn Castine friends, though no one is untorn. I can think of almost nothing. In mid-summer, following my desire and ignoring my better judgment, I went to a birthday party for Jackie Kennedy—white turrety inn building at Cotuit,

¹ Cf. "Par ma foi il y a plus de quarante ans que je dis de la prose sans que j'en susse rien"; Molière, *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670).

rooms rented for the guests by our hostess Mrs. Paul Mellon, through the afternoon glimpses of what must be fellow guests, women with hair a foot high, smiles but no introductions, information that the launch would arrive for us at eight, that we could have a free drink, or drinks, a solitary swim—water after the ice of Maine—a solitary dull drive through Cotuit, return to assembling and drinking guests, the nearest I came to knowing any were Mike Nichols, Charles Addams, and Jerome Robbins—most of them were people like Forrestal's son, Paley, the CBS president, people with names like big figures in news, business or politics, but often not related, or poor cousins. Launch with champagne in paper cups, harbor boat pacing our boat, wonderful sunset over Cotuit accredited to Mrs. Mellon's plans—then landing, swarms of new known-unknowns with lanterns, big tent, air of very expensive rustic simplicity. Hours of waiting, feeling that no one was known from our world to any of the other guests except Mike Nichols. Air of drama and waiting for Jackie, the chartered plane (chartered by my old friend Blair Clark) for Lillian Hellman and the Styrons. After a while, Jackie suddenly present and talking to Mike Nichols, Hellman group there, both Senator Kennedys, McNamara. Later, a luxuriously simple dinner, all I can remember are blood-red lamb chops, Mike Nichols next to Jackie, later, middle-aged people dancing the new dances, not very wildly, but too young for me, a slightly tawdry untimely Marie Antoinette feeling of a festival when the age for being whole-hearted about such things had passed, the flash of the jet-set, a little lurid and in bad taste in a world of poverty and blood, a certain real ease—meeting with McNamara, Jackie putting her hand over my mouth and telling me to be polite, and I saying something awkward about liking him, but not his policy, then Jackie saying, "How impossibly banal. You should say you adore his policy, but find him dull." Few minutes talk with Styron and me arguing with McNamara, no great impact on either side, except that McNamara seemed a simple brilliant administrative soul, who [has] given little thought to moral complications, and who might have even taken the usual liberal line against Viet Nam more easily than I would. The party didn't get into the news, but somehow a month later, a gossip column in Norfolk, Virginia reported that I stayed up till five with McNamara and we had gotten on famously, and the columnist hoped I'd learned something—all nonsense. A vague feeling of a heterogeneous opposition to Johnson group. The most interesting person to talk to was Bobby Kennedy, but like Carlos, there is a scary feeling of ambition and power about him, along with frankness. Well, next day, driving rather dull and stunned back to Provincetown and the Stanley Kunitzes, I was parked in traffic, looking at a road-map to find some less

traveled road, something more like the backwater of Castine, when suddenly I moved forward with a jolt, found the car had stopped, a hole through the windshield, a little of my hair in the spider web of smashed glass, the car no longer able to move. The car ahead of me wasn't damaged, no blood drawn from me, though \$500 injury to my car, paid by Hertz insurance. After hours of waiting, papers, police, a wrecker, I am off to Provincetown again in an *Avis* car—the Hertz and Avis booths touched each other and I was at both, making out accident papers at one, and car-rental papers at the other. Two days later I had to appear at the Barnstable Court for inattentive driving, a roomful of indicted, adolescent carelessness, I by now in fear of losing my license, taking from my pocket a birthday poem written by William Jay Smith to Francis Biddle, beginning "In Life's great court all men are judged." Relief. I plead "Nolo," and get a twenty-five dollar fine.¹ That night I lectured at Harvard on the dead, Randall, Roethke and Delmore Schwartz, and reflected that I myself might have been dead without even knowing it. Then home and back to work. In the course of the summer, I have finished *Prometheus* at last—how like him I felt as I labored on interminably—and my new book of poems heavily revised.²

Now Harriet's school, my teaching and everything is starting. It's exhilarating to be still alive. Hope you will do something on Randall, the deadline has been pushed forward to May. And do write!

All our love to you and Lota,
Cal

P.S. Forgive me for sending off this little gulp of incident. If I waited for a second wind to go on, it might be days.

333.

Samambaia, September 25th, 1966

Dearest Cal:

At last I am sitting down to write to you—I have hundreds, it seems, of unanswered letters weighing on my conscience, and I only answer the business ones from time to time, never write to my friends any more . . . You do know that I'm naturally rather a letter-writer, & this [is] one of the things I didn't like about my "job." In fact,—don't repeat this where it might get

¹ Cf. "Flight to New York: No Messiah," line 12 (RL-CP).

² *Near the Ocean* (1967).

back to *them*—but I felt it was much too hard work . . . or else I took it too hard; and then its being the first time made it much harder. Also I think those poor "kids" (as the other teachers all called them) are so badly prepared and so confused, most of them, in the vastness & impersonality of such a big university. I grew very fond of a lot of them, however & had some very good graduate students in the "Types of Poetry" course . . . The writing one I think is a dreadful idea—but I really knew that before I started out. The "boss" asked me what I'd like to teach if ever I went back, and I think I upset him somewhat by replying "Remedial English." At least one would feel one was getting someplace . . . I got back the first part of July—came up here—then stayed up in Ouro Preto seeing how my old OLD house is getting along—slowly, beautifully, and sucking up money like a sponge—but my it is lovely, and I hope sometime we can sit together on my little blue balcony overlooking the whole town, and watch the fireworks in honor of some saint or other . . . I think I owe you at least three letters. What is your secret? Do you simply have a secretary? I am experimenting with a tape recorder to see if I can get off business letters that way, but so far all I can produce are very Canadian R's—and it is hard to get a typist here whose English is good enough.

Your account of Mrs. K's birthday party is fascinating but kind of awful . . . I have a feeling she is probably a Vassar type I used to know—in fact still have a few friends of my own generation of that sort. I have been reading Schlesinger's *1,000 Days* for about a month now—just finished it—I suppose you read it?¹ In some ways it is very good, and I wish a lot of young radicals who think they could change things for the better *easily* would read it, too—but I finally began to think that S. found almost everyone just a bit too brilliant, sympathetic, hard-working, witty, lovely, etc. . . . Up here I've just read *Is Paris Burning?*²—quite hair-raising. I have a MMS of your poems here and maybe tonight I'll re-read those. I did, of course, in Seattle, several times, but never wrote you—never wrote anyone much except Lota. I am worried to death about her. I was hoping to find her in better shape when I got back, and Brazil as well—but everything seems much much worse and she has been in bed off & on for a month—what they used to call a "nervous breakdown" I think. She does now have 45 days off, and if we possibly can we are going to Europe—just the Netherlands, where we've never been, and London, where she has never been, and to visit friends in Sussex.³ We'd leave

¹ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (1965).

² Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Is Paris Burning?* (1965).

³ Kit and Ilse Barker.

around October 10th—I'll let you know. Do you have any recommendations for Amsterdam, or is that all too long ago? I'm dying to look at paintings for a while.

Are you teaching at the New School, or where? I want to begin work on the Brazil book—have quite a few chapters done, more or less—and think it m[ay] even be moderately diverting and enlightening—if I can get some good photographs, too. I'll ask the Rockefellers for a month's leave of absence from work, however, if the trip abroad materializes—I feel L's health comes first of all now, and she has really had blow after blow here. Don't ever go into politics, or anything to do with city-management—in any country—I'm sure they're all equally bad, heart-breaking, crooked, lethargic, etc. . . . I believe more in the old-fashioned idea of a "change" I think, than pills and vitamins . . . we'll see. I might see Henry Reed in London. He was a wonderful comfort to me in Seattle—and I think I was to him, too. He is a sad man, though, perhaps because he hasn't been able to work for so long—I don't really know—but funny as can be at the same time. We cheered each other up through exams by midnight telephone calls telling each other the best things we'd found. He was teaching "Romeo & Juliet" to about 60 freshmen, poor dear. My favorite of his was a girl's paper that began "Lady Capulet is definitely older than her daughter but she remains a woman." One boy: "Romeo was determined to sleep in the tomb of the Catapults" . . . etc.— Henry is going back for the winter term of the job I had, again. He wants to settle in the USA, being very romantically fond of it, I think, although he's seen nothing at all except some of the west coast. I think he is a wonderful teacher—too good, really for Un. of W.—if you have any ideas of a course he could give somewhere else I wish you'd let me know . . . I think I'll write Dick Wilbur. I know nothing of these Wesleyan things, but perhaps when my grant is over and that book is done, I might apply for one. I think it would do both Lota and me a lot of good to stay in Connecticut for a few months!—seeing New York, but not IN it. I don't think I'll ever feel tough enough for New York again, somehow.

I am curious to hear about Visnesky¹ (?)—have ordered that book of poems. You know [I] didn't even know Delmore had died—how did I miss that? I was sorry to see about Frank O'Hara in TIME²—I liked him a lot the 2 times I saw him, even if he was drunk and a bit disorderly . . . I'd like to have heard your talk on our recent dead—but oh dear, one hears so much

about Roethke where I was—too much—and I think his influence was not at all for the good. I was entirely too sane and sober for the students' tastes after him and other legendary characters they'd had lately who got arrested, gave drinks to minors, and so on . . .

I am so sorry to hear about your accident—and another trouble of L's is that she had one, too—the first in 30 some years of driving, and not her fault—a bunch of crazy boys in a Volkswagen. I wasn't with her—a friend was—they weren't hurt at all but her little open sports car, the joy of her life, was damaged—not seriously, but in this country any repair takes months, it seems. It is beautiful up here and I wish I could stay on for months working in this nice study—but she has to get back to Rio tomorrow—and I don't like it there at all, I'm afraid. However, we'll be getting ready to go away, probably, and that is cheering. Please write me to Rio—I may not get up here again—apto 1101 Rua Antônio Vieira 5, Leme, Rio de Janeiro G B / that is quicker now. Please keep well and don't think for a moment I've forgotten you! I'll be back to normal soon

—Much much love,
Elizabeth

Do you have an address for Philip Booth?—I'd like to thank him for the nice review—6 months old now.¹

334.

October 2, 1966

Dearest Elizabeth:

How lovely to hear from you again in all your old leisurely fullness. Sorry though that Seattle was a grind and that Lota has had so much too much work. I have to fly up to Harvard soon for my weekly classes there, so will just dash off this letter, trying to answer and comment on your letter. The man in charge of Wesleyan is Paul Horgan, a Colorado or Arizona novelist. We know him quite well, and will get in touch with him, if you and Lota & Henry Reed are really interested. It's a queer place, about a dozen people in residence, some with wives, some without, an office, rooms or a house. Lizzie and I were offered about \$20,000 to stay there a year, but so far have held off, not wanting to change Harriet's school, preferring to be in New York. It can be rather melancholy, but all depends on who is there—

¹ Andrey Voznesensky, *Antiworlds: Poetry*, trans. W. H. Auden and others (1966).

² Frank O'Hara died on July 25, 1966.

¹ Philip Booth, "The Poet as Voyager," *The Christian Science Monitor* (Jan. 6, 1966).

usually several people from Europe, ages older and more uniformly distinguished than Yaddo. The I. A. Richards are there now, later the Spenders are coming. Always someone. No duties, though it's suggested that you informally meet students. It might be perfect for you both. Let me know, and I'll start writing and calling people. For Holland, I have a lot of names of old dear friends, but have lost the addresses except for one—no, wait, I'll call Adrienne Rich, who knows them all more recently, and now lives a few blocks away—. . . Line's busy, so I'll go on a minute. We loved Amsterdam, a bricky baroque Boston, humanly much coarser and more solid, wonderful untouched 17th century canal center, a delicacy, a grossness, everyone we knew speaking English as well as we do, knowing English, American, German and above all French writing. You will find many who know your poetry. Randall and the Conrads¹ (Richs) loved them as much as we. . . Here are the names: W. F. van Leeuwen, psychiatrist and literary critic, my age, one of my best friends; wife Judith,² younger, poet and critic, Adrienne thinks she has reviewed you, and is a great admirer; Hans Gomperts, very lively critic and poet; (Oh the van Leeuwens' address is Vondel Straat 75 A, telephone 02-732893); de Groot, Prinsengracht 1019 A, I don't know him, but he is a distinguished physicist, and his wife an anthropologist and expert on Surinam; Bep du Perron (I have no more addresses) wife of a very distinguished writer³ who died in the war and was a friend of Malraux, looks like Virginia Woolf, and is very charming. I guess this will do. You will get in touch with everyone through the Van Leeuwens. I'd think a lot of places would like to have Henry Reed. Everyone speaks well of him, and he is quite famous and admired for his one book. He's a great friend of our friend the actress Irene Worth. Philip Booth's address is Dept. of English, Syracuse, N.Y. This is no letter, but let me get it off in time. May you both get a good rest. How I miss you!

All my love,
Cal

(over)

Oh yes, you are more or less right about J Kennedy, yet she's quite bright and charming; Arthur sees everyone on his side that is in power with a super-

¹ Adrienne Rich was married to Alfred H. Conrad.

² Judith Herzberg.

³ Edgar du Perron.

natural glow. Politics here are in a state of groggy confusion; everyone hates Johnson nearly in our world, but fears something worse. Who knows what the Viet Nam War will lead to. Maybe it will all simmer off, but no one can be sure. An uncertain winter ahead, but personally we are untroubled and happy. Liz sends her love.

335.

[Postcard: Night view of the Glória Church, Rio]

[Rio

October 23, 1966]

Thank you for your letter and suggestions—we haven't been able to get away until today—the 23rd—but are taking off this PM to be gone as long as the money lasts—a month or six weeks—we have been seeing Nathalie Babel here. This is all for now except to thank you and say I'll try to write somewhere along the line. I hope you and the family are all well—with much love,

E

336.

[Postcard: Contemporary Portrait of Richard II, Westminster Abbey]

London, November 10th [1966]

We're cutting our visit short & going home tomorrow—because of L's health—hope to get back next year, however. Have written in Spender's BOOK, etc.—but not done very much, really. L disapproves highly of Trafalgar Sq. & the British ladies' dress—but enjoyed the Abbey as sort of "black humor," I think. I'll TYPE a long letter next week.—I do hope you are well—

Much love,
E. Bishop

337.

Friday, February 26, 1967

Dearest Elizabeth—

I gather from Dr. Baumann you've been going through a sea of troubles—asthma, a hospital, trouble with Lota, God knows what. I've been

keeping informed as best I can, but really don't know too much. I dread thinking of you in trouble, exposed, and a-wash in Rio. Somehow another country, language, Spanish nuns, etc. make it all seem more grueling and uncertain. My yearly attacks, tho bruising and troubling to everyone, and even to a degree unpredictable, *do* seem to fall into a groove of repetition, making everything easier to handle. I've just gotten over another. Nothing new worth writing about, except that I have another doctor now, and there seems to be real hope that my manic seizures can be handled by a new drug, Lithium, and that all my giddy reelings come from a kind of periodic salt deficiency in some lower part of the brain. At least, this drug is now working with many.

I'll have Giroux send you my new book.¹ There are quite a few changes from the version you saw, translations added, and pictures, which you may not like, tho I do. Nolan² has done over a hundred, mostly in color illustrations for my *Imitations*, much more ambitious and inspired than these.

The day after tomorrow, I'll be fifty, and Lizzie is arranging a party of almost thirty, our big room lined with long tables. Doubt if I can rise to the occasion—tho I guess still being around and hale, is a triumph for our stricken generation of poets. Last fall, Berryman wrote a marvelous sequence of new dream poems, entitled, *Opus Posthumous*³—they really seem *ex humo*, from beyond the tomb. I thought he was gone, but the experience seems to have resurrected him. In four days, I fly to London for the opening of my *Benito Cereno*.⁴ I wish you could see it done; it moves very slowly, and at least on the stage, surely. One reviewer said it was unconventional in that it had nothing shocking, no sex, no perversion, just the explosion of a country, 170 years in the past.

I've been writing like a beaver for the last week revising and re-typing my *Prometheus*, pages and pages of words. It will either stun, and stupefy an audience, [or] it doesn't work. It's a sort of Shelley, or generic European declamatory romantic poem—alive maybe, if anything can breathe under the formidable armor of its rhetoric and stance.

I hear rumors that you may come here. I'll welcome you with open arms, joy, and whatever stability and wisdom my hereditary granite New England morality still retains.

¹ *Near the Ocean* (1967).

² Sidney Nolan.

³ John Berryman, "Opus Posthumous," nos. 1-2 and 7-13, *The Times Literary Supplement* (Dec. 1, 1966), and nos. 3-6, *The New York Review of Books* (Dec. 8, 1966).

⁴ *Benito Cereno*, dir. Jonathan Miller, opened at the Mermaid Theatre on March 12.

All my love. Do let me hear, do let me know how I can be of help.

Love again,
Cal

P.S. I carry your "Under the Window" in my billfold,¹ and even read it aloud to Dr. Baumann late in December before I went off to the hospital. Much to say. Your style never seems mannered, just marvelous, unguessable description, now as natural as your letters, but full of design and compression. Yes, you have man's journey, his seven ages, many wonderful flashes, like the second car's syphilitic nose, all the way thru, then the great rise, just where it is needed, with the *Morpho*.² It's like going on the pilgrimage of your Fish, or the poem ending awful and wonderful,³ yet the journey is as utterly new and surprising as a first discovery of what life is all about. And so it is. If I can't stop what, I've already done, I must stop. Maybe, if I carry your "Window" around long enough, I'll learn. It's a kind of patience and freshness.

338.

March 3rd, 1967

Dearest Cal:

Well, now I know when your birthday is—I had never known before—Feb. 28th, *não ê?*⁴ A Pisces, like Lota. Many happy returns. I minded being 35 very much, I remember, but haven't been able to give a damn since—there are too many other things that one can do a *little* something about, possibly. I have owed you a letter for so long now & I can't remember when I wrote you last, although I do think I got off some postcards on our trip to Amsterdam, London, etc. . . . but some seem not to have arrived—the ones from Amsterdam, with its wonderful P.O. arranged like a lounge, *clean* ash-trays and so on . . . And now you are probably in London and I hope the play is a great success. I'll be reading all about it in my English reviews, a month from now, no doubt . . .

I've heard several times from dear Anny—and she did tell me you had been sick again, but were rapidly getting better. I am touched by the "reading" of my poem . . . my only poem in a year or more. Well, it is nice of you

¹ "Under the Window: Ouro Preto (for Lilli Correia de Araújo)," *The New Yorker* (Dec. 24, 1966); EB-CP.

² See "Under the Window: Ouro Preto," lines 38-40 and 46-52 (EB-CP).

³ "All the untidy activity continues / awful but cheerful"; "The Bight," lines 35-36 (EB-CP).

⁴ Isn't it? (RL's birthday was actually March 1.)

when nothing seems addressed to me, and nothing I say is heard—maddening when you think what you said is quite good, or the subject is one you feel could be referred to you. At times I think of Randall in his off-moods, though Mary is never discourteous, and like what I imagine Mama Anna must be like, compared with the dark Randall.

I never got to New York, tho I might have tried, if I'd known you were staying on into July. It would have been such joy to see you there. It is very hard to leave here; we get so comfortable and set and unset for any other life.

I had a feeling many times that all had turned out about as well for you as we can hope or want at our age. Not that our age isn't in ways our best; I feel I know more, or at least hold on to more of what I want to know. I miss the long roll of years ahead of me. I meant to say how much we liked Suzanne!

What has happened? A dead young seal with its head gnawn off floated up on my beach—the color of a pig and hard to identify. I got some children to bury it. With the Wests, we went to a Democratic rally in Portland. Rather fun, seeing the delegates in action; they seemed to care for nothing but absolute (yellow dog) democratic loyalty. Nice clambake. We all got ourselves in the local papers and television, but did nothing and were allowed to do nothing. Lizzie's trying to get signatures for a fourth party. McCarthy nearly visited us, and we had authentic plainclothesmen inspecting my house and barn.² Then he couldn't come. I don't know whether our tiny prestige in the village has risen or dropped. I think we've held our own.

Loneliness; I miss you so much, as ever. I wish you were sitting here now. We could be looking out on the very blue high tide and very clear sky—and talking shop and much else and doing much else. Lizzie sends her best love to you both—I too.

All my love,
Cal

P.S. Thanks for talking to Bob and Michael³; often I don't know what to think of my poem.

¹ Randall Jarrell's mother.

² RL supported Senator Eugene McCarthy's anti-Vietnam War campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination.

³ Robert Giroux and Michael di Capua.

August 23, [1968]

Dear Heart:

(This is a name that I use at special times for both Lizzie and Harriet.)

If I had more time (I seem to only write when I have no time), I'd tell you about another deadly day with the Eberharts. I arrived at the same time with Dick's brother-in-law and two daughters, then sat on a dwindling strip of grass overlooking ocean, filled with binoculars; Dick had small ones he handed to guests, and a big one he didn't hand to guests—talking to a Mr. and Mrs. Batty (Sounding exactly like Beaty, in Betty Eberhart) fresh from Saigon, USIS, hard to tell whether they were hawk or dove, but easy to tell they were uninteresting—above us flapping the flag of our country, but topped by the flag of the UN, gesture almost of treason by Betty, who by the way said nothing the whole long day that wasn't either demonstrably false or doggedly banal (I mean cheerfully false)—arrival of neighboring clergyman's wife, conversation mostly about the nearest tennis court—arrival of Dan Hoffman, poet living a mile away, thin, emaciated, intelligent, rather too dry and quivering to be interesting; sharing few virtues with Dick and fewer vices, and who with his similar wife had set his heart all summer on having all of us visit them without telling the Eberharts (they'd learn a week later), their idea, a climb up a huge knot similar to the Eberharts, but in sight of no man probably since the retreat of the glacier. Somehow Lizzie has never grabbed at this day, but I suppose anyone who lived near Dick and Betty. I won't go on. Thousands came, in ones and twos, in different costumes all dull, except Buckminster Fuller, the point of the visit, who, however, was deaf, so the conversation was . . . his. Very Cambridge yankee, with a quaint old-fashioned brilliance and knowledge of science.

Dear, I can't write anything serious (after this) about [the] Czech hideous business,¹ or about myself. I've done nothing much this summer, and everything, 38 more sections. Things worked out much better with Mary, but her guests are almost as dull and as many as the Eberharts: I faint at the thought of what has passed through here: American common market people with French names and American fortunes; all summer, the sweet, drunken, never silent widow of George Orwell; Kevin² with children from two marriages . . .

¹ The USSR and Warsaw Pact allies invaded Czechoslovakia on August 21 to suppress Czech liberalization and put an end to the "Prague Spring." See "Prague 1968" (RL-CP).

² Mary McCarthy's brother.

Tomorrow, I'm going to Washington to go to Chicago with McCarthy.¹ We have no chance, of course. Today, I go with Harriet and her best friend to the fish hatchery; last night we had ghosts (very kind ones) at the cemetery. We leave here on the tenth. I guess I love New York, but at this moment I'd as soon stick my head in a plastic sack. This has been the most lovely summer I've ever known. But never in the world will I see enough of you.

Love to Suzanne, and all to you,
Cal

358.

If Mary is still there, remember me to her—

August 28th, 1968^[8]

Dearest Cal:

I have rented a TV for the duration of the conventions—& can scarcely wait to get the damned thing out of the house, to tell the truth—but the last few days I've been watching it & hoping to catch a glimpse of *you* . . . however, you are probably rarely in that mad and boring scene, but in hotel rooms or bars talking to, I hope, more interesting people. I've seen McCarthy a good many times now—listened to him, that is—and he is just too sensible to be true—one just naturally agrees with almost everything he says. Common sense and sincerity (one hates the word) are so rare—and he'll never never get elected, of course. What a pity. I watched Humphrey the other night, and heard a very cross diatribe from him last night, too—he seems bitter, mean-tempered, cross because no one loves him any more—and I hate the, I thought, calculating sidewise looks he keeps giving—oh dear—and I suppose we're stuck with him now. Ginsberg, Burroughs, Mailer—& Genet!—it is all too weird—this listing in the papers here, but not mentioning you so far—the only one who makes any sense—oh, I suppose Mailer does, a *little*. I'd love sometime to hear about your encounters with these new critics of the political scene . . .

I just read the profiles of Ginsberg in *The New Yorker*²—I find him rather admirable, except for his writing!—but feel a little like an old-fashioned Southerner about the Negro—all right as long as he keeps his place . . . Haight/Ashbury here—I went once to see it and once to go to a reading—is just too sad and awful now; I couldn't bear to go there again. The stories of

the police in Chicago today are too awful, too. Well—I don't know what is happening to us at all. (I've returned to trying to finish a poem I started about Charlemagne years ago—based on the Einhard Life¹—and it is strange the way things that struck me as unbelievably naive and pathetic in their intellectual pretensions then, (700 AD) now seem, after about 20 years, idealistic and honest.)

I've been so pleased to get two letters from you—my summer was pretty wretched, mostly because of health and then heat (the health is better now, but that infection took forever before I felt normal again)—then since we got back we have been re-painting this whole fairly big apartment—couldn't stand our Chinese landlord's color scheme and wall-to-wall carpeting any longer. Now it is looking nice & cheerful—we got it just about all done the day before Suzanne's baby came back—day before yesterday—now two visitors, and then, God willing, maybe I'll be able to get back to work. I haven't done anything, really, for well over two years, and not much before that. I just don't seem to have any talent for protecting myself or my working time the way I should. S is very good to me and does a lot or all of the business part of things, etc.—and I'm hoping eventually we will have a solid routine—not too severe, but I really have to have one of sorts to get anything done at all. I must confess I'm pretty gloomy, however—but don't repeat it—what can one do, or should one do—I don't know. I don't think I could bear NY alone. I adore Ouro Preto, but 2 or 3 months at a time is plenty there—and I don't have many real friends in Brazil, much as I love the country . . . And this place. Well, I've met some of the poets—and the only one I still really like is Thom Gunn . . . We went to dinner with someone named Schevill—pleasant, but such awful poetry he gave me—and then Rexroth, who seemed to be in a pet about something—there had obviously been a scene just before we got there between him and his female followers. It took me all evening to sort them out—(I'll gossip, too). There was a visiting lady-poet who was very acid. I said something sociable, just to get the ball rolling, and she jerked away from my direction and said "I can't endure any form of graciousness any more . . ." leaving me feeling like an airplane hostess . . . Rexroth wasn't at table—had to be coaxed back to finish dinner—attacked me for being late, although both S and I had clearly understood him to say "anytime after 7:30" and it was barely 8 . . . Oh well. He was a bit nicer after a while and quite funny—but I lost quite a bit of the conversation because

¹ For the 1968 Democratic National Convention, August 26 to August 29.

² Jane Kramer, "Paterfamilias—II," *The New Yorker* (Aug. 24, 1968).

¹ Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni* (ca. 830–833). "Charlemagne," in the "Key West Notebook II" (Vassar, folder 75.4b).

they are all so familiar with the *Japanese* . . . Well, what to do—I don't think this part of the world will ever suit me, somehow. It is a pretty city, if self-conscious—but I went to one of the beaches yesterday, went to a famous park, etc.—and realize that after Brazil I am quite spoiled for California scenery. I just admire away and keep my real opinions to myself. What I've seen of the coast so far is pretty much ruined—I think I'd like to go up into the Sierras sometime, however. They may have fewer hot dogs and tamales and cars.

Since I am being so gossipy—I loved your account of yr. visit to Mr Rubberheart (as Henry R calls him). Much worse than my simple evening sallies here . . . It was particularly funny since I had just had a letter from him—Mr R—I received two copies of his last book and felt I had to say something, so wrote him a very brief note managing to say *something* honest, I thought.¹ In return I got a long letter all about people I never heard of with names like Tricksy and Adam . . . Grandma and Mrs. Crosby “both 79,” etc, etc. It is marvellous and his life must just go on as you describe it day after day after day. Perhaps if one can write poetry in his mystical way one can manage to live like this at the same time—the overmind at Undercliff just clashes off high beautiful mysterious insights while feeding Grandma and flirting with Tricksy . . . And that's enough un-Christian feeling for one day. Oh I can't resist: he says he “caught scent of” me in Seattle . . . and that his son is “strong, deep, and bearded . . .” Oh well—*coitado*, is all I shd. say . . . (I miss Lota more every day of my life I'm afraid, but again please don't repeat this—and what can one do? It is so hard to get to feeling again that anything at all is really worth the doing—but then I don't feel like that all the time, of course—there are better days, or hours.) I saw a lot of Marianne—and that is an awful worry, but not anything one can do much about. She cried when she kissed me goodbye and was more affectionate than she has ever been before—really wanted me to stay in New York, I think. She does have plenty of money, thank goodness—in spite of her complaints—and good friends looking out for her interests—but she won't have anyone stay with her nights. And I also have a profound mistrust of a young man named Andreas,² who now seems to have taken over the Gotham B M—some of her stories about him made me—and other friends—highly suspicious. That flat of hers is just too full of valuable mementos lying about—and she is very wandering in the head from time to time . . . (Do you know anything of him?)

¹ Richard Eberhart, *Shifts of Being* (1968).

² Andreas Brown.

I am so glad you had “the most lovely summer” you have ever known—since I think my own was just about the saddest and most futile. Well—things surely will improve. Bill A called up yesterday and I think I'll be flying back to read at Harvard on October 16th or some following Wednesday—it was nice to hear [from] him. Susanne Langer is coming here the 2nd—a friend of a friend—philosophers, especially German ones, terrify me, but I met her once and she was rather nice—although not interesting like Hannah A—A Mr. Daluna (from the moon) comes today—helping some with that dismal anthology—he is Portuguese, jailed twice, can't go back, tried Brazil and hated that—a very nice little gentleman, young, brought me roses—& his Portuguese and manners made me homesick—he calls me “Dona Elizabeth, Madame”—all of them—every phrase.

I acquired a young mynah bird—too young to speak yet. I seem to be a bit allergic to him and his, well, merde so I don't know if I can keep him or not, but I hope to—a very entertaining and tame bird. I am going to teach him—or did I tell you—to say “*I too dislike it*”—let's see, what would be a good line [of] yours. They have to be a certain length & rhythm, or the bird will fill it in with nonsense syllables of his own—isn't that queer?

Oh—speaking of speaking—an outfit called SPOKEN ARTS has been hounding me—mostly long distance calls—for months now. They offered \$25.00—when I said that wouldn't do at all, the man said to me: “We have almost 100 poets—think of the book keeping”! Well, Brandt & Brandt says one shd get a flat \$500 fee or up to 18 cents a record. I may not have this quite right, Suzanne has the details—but they sent me their list, with you on it, too—and I gather they have just gone around more or less stealing recordings and only one or two poets have ever questioned them about it at all . . . This is boring, I know, but if I suffer through any of those things, it is only to make some money from them—a fair price, at least—so I wonder if you remember anything about it? They really are incredibly overbearing on the telephone & in their letters, but so many people are, ah me . . . NO—S says the co. turned down the flat fee but will pay 18 cents per record for 2 bands—so that is what all the poets shd. be getting . . . They complained that I was the only poet who had raised objections “except Frost & Eliot and they are dead”!

We were robbed while we were away—just a day or two after we left—and are fairly sure we know the man who did it—someone brought here once, whom we couldn't stand, and who kept calling me up all the time. Two cameras including the Rolleiflex I've had for years—Suzanne's hi-fi—a piece or two of not very valuable jewelry, and a CASSEROLE . . . The man we suspect left for Africa shortly afterwards. We were insured but even so I

don't think I'll ever be able to afford another such camera . . . (too good for me, anyway)—I have acquired a better hi-fi, however, a KLH—very good. Suzanne has lots of good records—mostly opera, of which she's very fond—fortunately our musical tastes are pretty similar—but I left all mine in Ouro Preto—AND about 4,000 books, etc.—and what to do with it all . . . I wanted to leave some sort of foundation in Lota's name—and we had planned something like that together for years—but after my experience in that country of charming irresponsibles and crooks I just can't figure out how to go about it . . . I'm going to see a good WILL lawyer here—but I'm sure he won't have any idea, either. Any suggestions as to what to do with my vast property and wealth for the good of the world—or preferably [for] some Brazilian students, etc.—would be welcome . . . I must get it settled very soon. I can't get any information (or money) out of Brazil—I've had one account since I've left—8 months—and L's sister is still carrying on blaming me, I gather, & telling Rio society that I stole the family jewels! Flávio does write me nice letters, poor boy—but I'm afraid there is too much of his mother in him & not quite enough of his aunt . . .

Now I have talked & talked Cal—you are just about the only person I still CAN talk to, my dear, do you realize that. I simply hate talking about myself, more & more, the older I get—I'm afraid it is not very interesting. I hope the old brains and feelings will revive after a while—once in a while I even catch myself having an idea, I think . . . It would be lovely if you just happen to be at Harvard when I make that trip—I'll let you know the date. I doubt I'll go on to NY—I hope Elizabeth & Harriet are fine and full of good spirits. Please let me know whatever you can about Chicago—but I *do* know how busy and sought after you are. With much love always—

Elizabeth

359.

September 5, 1968

Darling Elizabeth:

Let me answer the thing I can in a word or two: I'll certainly be at Harvard for your reading, and look forward to introducing you to New York, whenever it is. The guy at the Gotham seems pleasant and capable met in passing, but I really know nothing. Eberhart had a good poem, I think, in the last book: "Cape Rosier Wedding."¹

¹ Richard Eberhart, "A Wedding on Cape Rosier," *Shifts of Being* (1968).

Oh I've had a lovely summer, but when I look inside it's sad and acid: age, death of friends, aging of everything in sight, the bad immediate future of this country, most countries, talents and decency misused, etc. The stuff of life always. And now for a second, as I sat on my dry grass lifted above the harbor, and reread your letter, I was almost you—at least I could remember back last fall and Rio. The things that cannot be done twice! I think of my parents, the *I* who lived then! Ah courage!

Chicago was as it seemed. I wasn't at the Amphitheater, or in the marches.¹ I spent much of my time in McCarthy's apartment, chatting, watching him throw an orange to his brother, hearing his rather beatnik daughter say we would have to have our gas and pistols now, and maybe, tanks. The rest of the time, I spent with Lizzie, Styron, Mailer etc. In bars. Every so often I went out into the park and sidewalks by the Hilton. One night boys with bloodied heads were brought into staff headquarters, the next our staff headquarters were raided by about twenty policemen, because some probably imaginary beer cans were thrown out the window. A club was broken. One boy had twenty stitches, another six. It was horrible and looked like the old Gestapo movies. We were terrorized. The demonstrators, on the whole, behaved beautifully, about as dangerous as a church congregation. Still, I can't sympathize much with the people who sent them in to be bashed.² Gene did nobly, I think, the only man of importance in either party to defy the parties, nor did he overdo it. His defeat in the voting was no surprise, but the violence was.

Five more days here. I feel my book is done, and I must read Shakespeare for Harvard, so it's not untimely. But it's hard as giving up whiskey, to give up seeing and hearing live things at every turn of the head. Oh, and to see my friends again—lovely, but so turbulent. Death to politics! The jargon is migraine; and they all seem to be activist. I seem to stumble into actions—not grand enough to suit the imagination of Keith Botsford, but I have no faith. I don't suppose Harvard will erupt on Bill Alfred, Harry Levin, and me.

Imagine two very cheerful paragraphs I was intending to write. I must get this into the mail. I feel sore since Chicago, as if a man had hit Harriet.

Look forward so to your visit.

Love,
Cal

¹ The police used tear gas and truncheons against antiwar protesters (and some journalists), and arrested more than 600 people. The violence began on August 25 but was at its worst on August 28, while peace delegates were defeated in debate in the International Amphitheater and Vice President Hubert Humphrey was nominated for the presidency.

² See "After the Democratic Convention" (RL-CP).

Perron, Edgar du (1899–40), Dutch writer and poet
 Perron-de Roos, Elisabeth du (Bep), Dutch literary critic
 Perse, Saint-John: *see* Léger, Alexis
 Pessoa, Fernando (1888–1935), Portuguese poet
 Pfeiffer, Virginia, friend of EB
 Phelan, Kappo, literary critic
 Phillips, William (1907–2002), coeditor of *Partisan Review*
 Picasso, Pablo (1881–1973), Spanish painter and sculptor
 Piero della Francesca (ca. 1420–92), Italian painter
 Pindar (ca. 522–ca. 438 BC), Greek poet
 Piñon, Nélida (b. 1936), Brazilian writer
 Pius XII (1876–1958), pope (1939–58)
 Plarr, Victor (1863–1929), British poet
 Plath, Sylvia (1932–63), poet
 Plato (ca. 428–348 or 347 BC), Greek philosopher
 Plutarch (ca. AD 46–after 119), Greek biographer and moralist
 Podhoretz, Norman (b. 1930), editor in chief of *Commentary* (1960–95)
 Poe, Edgar Allan (1809–49), poet and writer
 Polin, Herbert Spencer, chemist
 Pollaiuolo, Antonio (1432–98), Italian painter
 Pollock, Jackson (1912–56), painter
 Ponge, Francis (1899–1988), French poet
 Popa, Vasko (1922–91), Serbian poet
 Pope, Alexander (1688–1744), British poet
 Pope-Hennessy, John (1913–94), British art historian
 Porter, Cole (1891–1964), songwriter
 Porter, Katherine Anne (1890–1980), writer
 Portinari, Candido (1903–62), Brazilian painter
 Potter, Beatrix (1866–1943), British writer and illustrator
 Poulenc, Francis (1899–1963), French composer
 Pound, Dorothy Shakespear (1886–1973), British artist
 Pound, Ezra (1885–1972), poet
 Pound, Omar (b. 1925), poet and translator, son of Ezra and Dorothy Pound
 Poussin, Nicolas (1594–1665), French painter
 Powers, J. F. (1917–99), writer
 Praz, Mario (1896–1982), Italian literary scholar
 Prentiss, Eleanor, EB's teacher
 Prévert, Jacques (1900–77), French poet
 Price, Leontyne (b. 1927), soprano
 Pritchett, V. S. (1900–97), British writer
 Propertius, Sextus (ca. 50–ca. 15 BC), Roman poet
 Proust, Marcel (1871–1922), French novelist
 Purcell, Henry (1659–95), British composer

Q

Quadros, Jânio (1917–92), president of Brazil (1961)
 Queiroz, Rachel de (b. 1910), Brazilian novelist and journalist
 Quindlen, Anna (b. 1952), journalist

R

Rachewiltz, Mary de (b. 1925), poet and daughter of Ezra Pound and Olga Rudge
 Rachewiltz, Siegfried Walter de (b. 1947), writer and translator
 Racine, Jean (1639–99), French dramatist
 Rahv, Nathalie Swan, architect, Philip Rahv's wife
 Rahv, Philip (1908–73), critic and editor of *Partisan Review*
 Raine, Kathleen (1908–2003), British poet and literary scholar
 Rand, Sally (1904–79), dancer and actress
 Randolph, John (1773–1833), statesman
 Ransom, John Crowe (1888–1974), poet and literary critic
 Raphael (1483–1520), Italian painter
 Raskin, Marcus (b. 1934), social critic
 Rawlins, Lester (1924–88), actor
 Read, Herbert (1893–1968), British poet and writer
 Reagan, Ronald (1911–2004), governor of California (1967–75) and U.S. president (1981–89)
 Redding, J. Saunders (1906–88), literary critic
 Reed, Henry (1914–86), British poet
 Reidy, Affonso Eduardo (1909–64), Brazilian architect
 Rembrandt (1606–69), Dutch painter
 Rémy: *see* Renault, Gilbert
 Renault, Gilbert (1904–84), member of the French Resistance
 Renoir, Pierre-Auguste (1841–1919), French painter
 Revere, Paul (1735–1818), patriot and silversmith
 Reynolds, Joshua (1723–92), British painter
 Rexroth, Kenneth (1905–82), poet
 Rexroth, Marie Kass, Kenneth Rexroth's second wife
 Rhu, Lawrence F., literary scholar
 Rhys, Jean (1890–1979), Caribbean novelist
 Ribeiro, Darcy (1922–97), Brazilian anthropologist and politician
 Rice, Elmer (1892–1967), playwright
 Rich, Adrienne (b. 1929), poet
 Richards, I. A. (1893–1979), British literary critic and poet
 Richardson, Samuel (1689–1761), British novelist
 Richman, Robert (1915–87), arts administrator
 Richter, Sviatoslav (1915–97), Russian pianist
 Ridge, Lola (1873–1941), poet and feminist
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 Rilke, Rainer Maria (1875–1926), German poet
 Rimbaud, Arthur (1854–91), French poet
 Ritchie, Margaret (1903–69), British soprano
 Rizza, Peggy: *see* Ellsberg, Margaret Rizza
 Rizzardi, Alfredo (b. 1927), Italian poet and translator
 Robbins, Jerome (1918–98), choreographer
 Robeson, Paul (1898–1976), bass-baritone and actor
 Robinson, Edwin Arlington (1869–1935), poet
 Rodin, Auguste (1840–1917), French sculptor
 Rodman, Maria Wojciechowska (1927–2002), children's book writer
 Rodman, Selden (1909–2002), poet and critic
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 Roethke, Theodore (1908–63), poet

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SEP. 7, [1948]

DEAR ELIZABETH;

A DELICATE MATTER - THE
POT CALLING THE KETTLE BLACK - IT'S
BEEN SAID TO ME BY ALL MY FRIENDS
REPEATEDLY, AND I KNOW I'M MYSELF
BEYOND SELF-HELP; BUT! I SOMETIMES
HAVE TO USE THE LINES YOU COPIED
OUT FROM CHAUCER AND EBERTHART AS
MAY TO ILLEGIBLE WORDS - AT TIMES IN
VAIN.

SINCE MY LAST LETTER IT HAS
BECOME AUTUMNAL (NICE BUT MUFFY) AND
I'VE READ BLACK ARROW, WEAIR OF HANS HOGANST
ON, THE MASTON OF BALLANTRAE, AND
GRAVES' ABRIDGMENT OF DAVID COPPERFIELD.
I'VE READ BLACK ARROW AS A MOVIE TOO - IT'S
A CUMBERSOME POT-BOILED AT BEST, BUT
REDONE WITH THE PLOT OF A WESTERN
THRILLER IT IS IS - WORDS FAIL ME. HAD
A DRUNKEN DISCUSSION WITH TWO ENGLISH IN
WHICH TWO ENGLISHMEN IN WHICH I TRIED
TO USE THE SOCRATIC METHOD, BUT ONLY
DISCOVERED THAT NONE OF US COULD DEFINE

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ROBERT LOWELL
239 MARLBOROUGH STREET
BOSTON 16, MASSACHUSETTS

October 25, 1957

My Darling receding Elizabeth:

I guess I can match
Miss Moore in explosive openings! However, you never
recede and I seem to be always with you in the doorway
of your aunt's brown apartment, ringing the bell for her
to open the door again. You are with me always.
Otherwise, my poems
still go on. I now have a jail one, a three and a
half page one about my being five-year-old and
seeing my Uncle Devereux for the last time (at my
Grandfather's country place) before he died of
Hodgekin's disease, another on my Father, one on
flying to Rapallo for Mother's dying--all very
personal! I'll type them out next week and mail them
along with the others, to you. I sent Skunk Hour with
fear and trembling to Randall--he's never acknowledged
the existence of my autobiography chapter. However,
he's the most incredible reader--I have been looking
over his comments on drafts of my old Lord Weary
poems, so witty and enthusiastic. "This certainly is
a just right poem; you were smart not to put in any
of the unpleasant, stomach-upsetting details you love.
(You and me both, for that matter.)" Re my Exile's Return. Well, he's delighted and wrote me back air mail
saying, "I like the poem very much. The motion really
has changed and is much clearer and easier." You know
Randall has his own flippant natural language--I'll
never forget John Ransome's writing an essay attacking
Shakespeare's sonnets (with which Randall couldn't
have been more in disagreement with) and ~~Ransome~~
Ransome sat talking one evening and every minute Rand
got more enthusiastic about Shakespeare and more & more
breezy about Ransome's critical points. At the end
Ransome said, "That boy just doesn't have a critical
vocabulary." Well, I couldn't be more pleased, so
I'll mail (with fear and trepidation) my other poems
to the consultant in Washington. Poor fellow, he's been
quite sick for the last two months with flu and some
kind of respiratory infection. We talked on the phone
and he sounded very croaking at first, but then he was
soon the old Randall, telling me "You know I've just
read Dostoyevsky through. He was a very bad man, it
seems."

Yaddo, January 26th, 1951

See telephone # 444-3487

May 1948

Sturday

Dear Col:

To my great surprise, Lawrence
has accepted the invitation to have
dinner before your wedding - when I
talked to her the other day she
said that she believed on such oc-
casions one should stay severely
close for several hours ahead of time,
in order to 'freeze the face' properly.
Of course I innocently suggested a
shot of novocaine - At any rate, she
lets her. Lots my much, and she

Dear Cal:

I'm not sure who owes whom what, but I can't re-
member thanking you & Elizabeth for the lovely Chardin -
I immediately tacked it up on the closet door - room
side out, of course - over the set of Yaddo rules & regula-
tions which was beginning to get on my nerves and it covers
it perfectly. It must be a beautiful picture - I must have
seen it but I don't remember it at all. I've been told he
did a whole series of them - others besides this and the one
in the National Gallery. The little boy looks rather wicked
to me.

Kenyon Review came yesterday and I think the
Kavanaugh's looks most impressive. I've just been over count-
ing stanzas - I thought you'd shortened it - same number, though,
as in my typescript, but I haven't gone through it yet for
other changes if any. I'm sort of glad you left off the quot-
ations at the beginning - I was altogether happy about them -
or at least about all of them. If I hadn't chosen this piece
of stationary I'd send you my poem on the Prodigal Son, fin-
ished at last - but then the Kavanaugh's came to spoil my
pleasure, because what I can only keep on doing for twice 14
lines I'm sure you could have kept up for pages & pages. How-
ever, I think I've almost got a book now, about 2 more to go
- and please send me a title. I'm going crazy trying to
think of one. Probably it will end up being "23 Poems" or
something inspired like that.

I can't hope to compete with Florence, of course,
but I'll just have to give you the simple facts of the simple
life here. The Fellows meeting is Feb 8th & 9th - I'm going
down. Miss Armstrong wrote me yesterday that the Poets'
Room is that no longer - Mrs. Whittall has endowed it for
\$100,000. & it's being completely re-done in the grandest way
- now called the "Poet's Corner" I believe or maybe that was
Miss A's or Conrad's little joke. They're camping out in sepa-
rate offices down the hall. I'll tell you more when I've
been there.

Here we have the same people as before, with the
exception of the composer Alexei Haiff, and a little tiny
novelist of 25, with 2 babies, not along, named Peggy Pennett.
Wallace Fowle comes tonight, and Tuesday Alex's friend &
my old college & cell-mate, Eleanor Clark - both just
back from Rome. Fred Dupee was coming but couldn't at the last
minute and that's the only one I wanted to see at all, I've
always liked him. I have been doing a lot of work, for me -
the holidays were rather bad and I got very blue but every-
thing is fine now. I am in negotiations with a travel agency
to get me passage on a freighter around March 20th - or if I
make any money I may even fly, the winter rates are so re-
duced. I'm not sure whether I'll go 1st to France or Italy.
Tom Wanning is thinking of coming with me, but I'm sure that
three months notice is much too short for him to prepare him-
self mentally for such a move. Well, let's see - we play
wild card games almost every evening with something to drink
2 or 3 times a week usually, but everyone (except pampered
me) is very broke. Tonight I am providing wine and roast
chestnuts. We're in the midst of a January thaw and it's just
as foggy as Maine - quite beautiful - & when a churchbell
rang downtown I realized that unconsciously I was just taking
for granted it was a bell-bouy. Love to you & Elizabeth -

Elizabeth