

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO 37 · ILLINOIS

THE COLLEGE

Faculty Exchange,
December 21, 1949.

Dear Kit,

Many thanks for your note, with the many noteworthy items about the local sichashe. I am very sorry to hear about Ted. (Your news explains why I have not been able to get a word out of him for a couple of months. My article on him, by the way, is scheduled to appear in the forthcoming *Kewanee*. It finally ran to 46 ~~m~~ type-written pages. Palmer wrung his hands in anguish, and I told him he was free to reject it since I had gone so much beyond the proper length, but he took it.) I really don't see how Ted can continue at his present very good but very exacting kind of poetry without repeatedly running into difficulties. But let's hope at least that they are at worst merely of a periodic sort, and that he'll be back soon mumbling, bumbling, and conducting classes "off the cuff," as he explained his method.

I knew about Jim Jackson. (In fact, Heilman had written me for a recommendation. And I like to think that Jackson doesn't know of this, and goes ~~on~~ about taking swats at me, at moments when he's exercised, and exercising.) Have also heard that Stanley Kunitz is not very zestful about his present job, and has written to one of the teachers here in ways indicating that he might like to become part of the outfit here. My notion is that he would do quite all right, as his mildly conspiratorial propensities would be lost in this vast mill.

Count me in, for next fall. I'm having a good time out here, I'm glad I came, and I've met, or met again, ~~in~~ many people whom I variously like and admire - but the NJ-Vt trekking seems the norm to me somehow. I have built some kind of a psychic economy around it. So, as long as it's feasible, I dare think fondly of the periodic returns (though, equation-wise, how are we to relate this "periodic" with the one above?).

I'm sorry that Stanley and Shirley have left. And I have warned him that the state of Connecticut is ~~not~~ certainly the most dangerous for a writer. By the logic of the ~~same~~ scene, he should end up working for Luce, and her stories should become coy, admonished Teiresias Cassandrus Burp. But ~~in~~ a good prophet is one who makes his prophecy ~~in~~ ambivalent - so I also held out the hope that they might be spared the logic of the situation because they were both so illogical.

Have recd. galleys of my Rhetoric. It is due to appear probably in late February. Btw. now and the first of the year, when the Winter term starts, I have to read all these galleys, do a review of Francis Fergusson's book on the theatre for Kenyon, dig my way out from under three months of unanswered letters, prepare for a Pre-

ceptorial in the College and a Seminar in the "Division," and line up some out-of-town lectures (five schools in Michigan and Ioway having expressed their willingness to take some punishment from me, along my usual lines). F.F.'s book, by the way, has a very high percentage of good stuff in it - and I want to try to say so, postponing my "however's" for some later date. ~~Psst.~~ The main "however" is that he tried to do too much with the action-passion categories alone. In fact, as against the elaborate definition of tragedy in first paragraph of Chapt. 6 of the Poetics, he wd. reduce to "the imitation of action." Catharsis is directly mentioned only about six times in the book, and the "tragic rhythm" is not specifically analyzed with relation to that. But for a first review, one shd. reduce this bleat to a passing sentence, and shd. salute the book ~~as~~ as a very gratifying piece of critical prose. I suppose catharsis is out here because he wd. treat it rather in the Purgatorio? Anyhow, I hope you won't fail to come to grips with it in your project on The Tempest. Those unburdened months ahead of you, writing about a play so in the way of unburdening - that sounds like a good program, and so, my most affectionate felicitations to you, Kit. Ah! relaxation, I mutter, as I already begin tightening up for the Winter quarter. Good luck to you, on the several months' relaxation ahead. (This is Father Nembatal speaking.)

But now, Out Into the Night, to mail my letters. Best wishes from us, to you both. And seasonal greetings.

Sincerely,

K-2