Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale

Citation Information

Hale, Emily, 1891-1969
Eliot, T.S. (Thomas Stearns), 1888-1965

Letters from T.S. Eliot to Emily Hale

1 folder

Contact Information

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Dearest Emily.

Cochin Feb. 2nd

9 January 1956.

I suppose that your holiday - so brief - ended last week, and that you are very busy, and walking over to the school very early in the morning in very severe weather and perhaps deep snow. There has been a little snow, even in London; flakes are falling at the moment and melting the moment they touch the street. I do hope that you got some rest and peace between Christmas and the New Year.

You will be sorry to hear that Fr. Cheetham, or Prebendary Cheetham as he now is, has had to retire very suddenly under doctor's orders - his rheumatic heart, of course. Tomorrow he leaves for a voyage to Bombay and back, and will be officially out from the first of March. This has created some confusion, as neither the churchwardens nor anyone else here knew what the procedure should be - we have had several meetings. This evening I and Sir Andrew Clark (who is a well-known Q.C. and is proving invaluable at this juncture) are visiting the patron of the living - that is to say the representative, for the living belongs to the Guild of All Souls, and this Fr. Shaw is the chairman or president thereof, to discuss the question of a successor. Meanwhile an old retired parson is acting as temporary curate,

I had to go to the Fabers for the New Year's weekend, as it was their 35th wedding anniversary and they were very urgent that I should go. I had rather hoped that my doctor would forbid it, but he didn't: the weather was beautiful, the house was well heated (to my surprise, for houses in the country so seldom are) and I was none the worse for it. I shan't go anywhere else until the spring - presumably not until I sail for New York on April 17th. I was the only guest: I prepared myself and made a short speech in proposing their health.

I have now done the first rough draft of my Act II and am retyping it with minor improvements. I shall try to get Act III outlined, before I have to break off and write a lecture for Minneapolis, but that is as far as I can hope to get before the summer; but with any luck I ought to have something to show in the autumn, which could be offered for acceptance or rejection for Edinburgh 1957. That seems a long long time ahead, especially with all the uncertainties with which 1956 opens. The American president ill, the English Prime Minister apparently weak and vacillating, chaos in France, bungling in Cyprus and the Middle East, trades unions quite irresponsible: it's a gloomy outlook.

I hope I shall hear from you as soon as the first rush of duties is over.

Lovingly Tom

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AIR LETTER
AEROGRAMME

Miss Emily Hale,
35 A School Street,
ANDOVER,
Massachusetts,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

First fold here

Second fold here

Sender's name and address: T.S. Eliot
19, Carlyle Mansions
Cheyne Walk
London S.W.3.

AN AIR LETTER SHOULD NOT CONTAIN ANY ENCLOSURE; IF IT DOES IT WILL BE SURCHARGED OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL.

To open cut here

TELEGRAMS:
FOREIGN: CLINHOME, LONDON.
INLAND: CLINHOME, WESDO, LONDON
TELEPHONE:
WELBECK 4444

THE LONDON CLINIC,
20. DEVONSHIRE PLACE,
LONDON W.1.

rec'd Feb 15

10.2.56

Dearest Emily

This is just a note to explain why I have not written before to thank you for yours of Feb. 2nd. An attack of bronchitis brought me low, & brought on tachycardia. The combination calls for patience; as the bronchitis, which proved tenacious, had to be cured first, as the coughing interfered with the rectification of the heart. But a fortunate illness in a way, as my housekeeper was very ill with influenza at the same time, and

the situation at Carlyle Mansions must have been difficult enough without me.

I am much better this morning, & will answer your letter as soon as I can sit out of bed.

With fondest love

Tom.

Dearest Emily.

7 March 1956.

This is just a hasty note to tell you that I am now at home, and have been for a week. Now I am just beginning to to my office for a few hours a day. I have never felt so weak after an illness as this time, but am stronger every day. At first I could not sit upright for more than a few minutes without my back aching.

As the pencilled note to you was the only letter I wrote to anyone (Marian and Theresa heard about me from Mary Trevelyan who got her information from John Hayward who got his from the doctor) you'll understand that I have plenty of arrears to work off. And At the same time trying to get a lecture written - which I had intended to write during the month of February) for Minneapolis. The doctor says that he sees in reason why I should not carry out my visit. That means that I sail on the Queen Mary on April 19. I spend a cojple of nights in New York and then go to Minneapolis, come back by way of Chicago and perhaps pay a brief visit to Washington, and then have between two and three weeks in Cambridge. So I should be in Cambridge about the middle of May.

Now I must be off to the dentist (stopping came out of one of my three teeth, while in the Clinic) and then to see the doctor.

I was glad you were able to say that your doctor thought you in good condition. I imagine that No. 90 becomes increasingly difficult. She wrote to me about the death of Miss Anderson. That is one of the letters that I must answer quickly.

Lovingly Tom

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AIR LETTER
AEROGRAMME

CHELSEA
7 15PM
7 MCH
1956
S.W.3.

rec'd March 20

Miss Emily Hale,
35 A School Street,
ANDOVER,
Massachusetts,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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19, Carlyle Mansions,
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Dearest Emily

18 March 1956.

I have a breathing space now, as I have finished re-writing my lecture for Minneapolis and have a chance to catch up on correspondence. I have sent you a copy of the "Church Times" with my notice (I almost said obituary!) of Fr. Cheetham. It was the last thing I did before I took to my bed in January, but owing to the typographers' strike (still going on) they could not print it till now. A Parish Council meeting this morning (in the absence of a vicar, I have to take the chair as senior warden) - we arewaiting for the Guild of All Souls (who hold the advowson) to nominate a vicar - then we discuss it with them and the bishop who adjudicates in case of any dispute. No end of complicated business incidental - such as the "vicarage" which has never been used as such but is let to people who haven't paid the rent - and so on - we leave this largely in the hands of our barrister member, Sir Andrew Clark, who has been very active and useful, and I think enjoys straightening out such legal complications. Next weekend (Palm Sunday) I probably go to Littlehampton to walk up and down the beach as usual, according to doctor's orders in convalescence.

Aunt Edith has just sent me your excellent memorial of Miss Anderson, a cutting from the Portland paper. I have written to her, by theway. I hope your Easter holidays will give you some rest and relief, and freedom. You don't say how long you are to be in the Virgin Islands (that used to be the Danish West Indies, didn't it?) but I am very glad you are going there.(oh yes, you said a week - I wish it could be three weeks). I sometimes find it hard to read your last sentence or two, written across other writing: may I suggest that there are two flaps available for last words???

With much love

Tom

ale. March 20

Miss Emily Hale,

35 A School Street,

ANDOVER,

Massachusetts,

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Dearest Emily

14 April 1956.

The date of departure approaches: the Q. Mary sails on the 19th. I arrive in New York on the 25th, for two days at Robert Giroux'(219 E. 66th); then to Minneapolis on the 28th, stayimg I dont know where, at the house of some friend of Allen Tate (only address c/O Professor Tate, the Univ. of Minnesota); then for three nights, on May 1st, to Chicago (c/o Prof. John Nef, 5650 Dorchester Avenue); then back to Giroux for two nights; then to Washington from the 9th c/o William R. Castle, 2200 S Street, N.W.; and thence to Theresa's by the 14th - moving later to Eleanor's. I trust that your number is still Andover (Mass.) 2195 M., as I hope to telephone on the 14th.

A very busy time of it, this last fortnight. Difficulties with the patrons of the living; and American visitors - the Clarence Littles last week, the Leon Littles on Monday. And a visit to my lawyer and a visit to my doctor on Monday also, and to give lunch to a Harcourt Brace man.

I much enjoyed your account of the West Indies. How I wish you could have had at least a fortnight of that balmy climate.

In haste

Lovingly

Tom

Miss Emily Hale,

35 A School Street,

ANDOVER,

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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To open cut here

Dearest Emily -

2 July 1956.

a la fuelle

Thank you very much for your letter of the 24th and for going to Margaret's funeral, and for reporting so fully about it. (I did not know that Theresa did not go to such services; and unless she was ill, or unless she has a very serious neurosis about funerals I am really shocked by such negligence. Curiously, I have had no letter from her since Margaret's death: can she be ill?) I have also heard from Eleanor, and from Frederick, whom I have written to thank for all he has done. I do not know what would have happened to Marian without him (I am glad to say that her doctor is complaining to the police about the brutal way in which she was notified. It is providential (1) that Margaret seems to have died suddenly, probably of a stroke (2) that Frederick and Elizabeth were in Cambridge - a little before, he was in California; a month later, and they might have been away for the summer. And Marian appears to have stood the shock and strain very well. To tell the truth, I am greatly relieved. I was seriously alarmed by Margaret's mental condition - her memory had failed badly, and while I was there she found she had mislaid not only her spectacles but her teeth - I only saw her once, for she kept postponing seeing me - I realised afterwards that probably the poor soul could not grasp the fact that my visit was of limited duration. And I knew that she was a constant anxiety to Marian, who felt that she could not leave Cambridge until Margaret went into a home - which she would have kept on postponing to the end.

Thank you also for the note from Dudley Fitts and for the poem (please explain - it has no heading and no author's name). I shall write again shortly and tell you about the absurd drama of my return from Southampton and the intrusions of the press.

I wish you were to get away sooner - I fear that it is now very hot indeed. And it has been very chilly here! My cousin Will has died, at 90, of a stroke. I wonder if Aunt Edith has heard of this. I caught a slight chill going to De la Mare's funeral, so did not go to Max Beerbohm's the next day.

I still have masses of letters to write, & to thank for notes of enquiry & of condolence.

With much love

Tom

BY AIR MAIL

PAR AVION

AIR LETTER

AEROGRAMME

CHELSEA
7 15PM
2 JLY
1956
S.W.3.

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35 A School Street,

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To open cut here

Dearest Emily

20 July 1956.

early July 59

I was glad to get your letter of the 16th yesterday. I am glad to know that you wrote me a steamer letter, but very sorry that it did not reach me - I suppose it reached the boat in time, otherwise it would I presume have been returned to you by now. It's true that I was worrying about my pulse having jumped to double rate on my way to the pier, but I did note the absence of a letter. Perhaps that accounts also for your not mentioning the bag - I had meant to ask you when I last wrote whether it was the sort you wanted, and to express the hope that you would take it back to the shop and change it if it was not what you wanted. But I seem to be suffering from lapses of memory, if I never thanked you for the Christmas cheese or for the Christmas poem. I hope I acknowledged the receipt of your enclosure of Dudley Fitts's letter. I have had a letter from Eleanor explaining very sympathetically and satisfactorily Theresa's absence from the fnueral. I have thanked Frederick for the noble way in which he took charge of everything: I believe that Marian would have collapsed if she had had to manage all alone in Cambridge. A little earlier, and Fred and Elizabeth would have been in California; later, they might have been at their camp.

I am very glad you had a restful week at Mount Desert - I only wish it had been longer. Won't Southern California be pretty hot in summer? Nevertheless, I know you love that part of the world and I am sure you will enjoy the change, and I imagine that cross-continent air travel is quite safe at this time of year.

Tomorrow I go to Cambridge for the annual college feast. Every year I dislike moving about more and more, and therefore feel that it is my duty to do so from time to time. I leave for Switzerland on August 14, where my headquarters will be c/o J.K. Clement, 1 rue de l'Evêché, Geneva, as usual: I shall probably be about 3 weeks with them and a week at my little hotel at Chardonne, in the middle. Until then, pretty busy: the London Library meeting on Tuesday - my first public words since Andover. And endless difficulties and complications over the appointment of a new vicar - it's been very worrying indeed, and will be still more so if the Sequestrators (that is, my fellow churchwarden and myself) are forced by the bishop to start court proceedings to evict the tenant of the vicarage. (Fr. Cheetham was last heard from at Hong Kong!) But I am supposed to be about normal by now, in health -

With much love

Tom

BY AIR MAIL

PAR AVION

AIR LETTER

AEROGRAMME

CHELSEA
7 15PM
20 JLY
1956
S.W.3.

Summer address

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35 A School Street,

ANDOVER,

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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To open cut here

Geoffrey Faber, Chairman. Richard de la Mare, Vice Chairman
Morley Kennerley (U.S.A.), T.S. Eliot, W.J. Crawley, P.F. du Sautoy

FABER AND FABER LIMITED

PUBLISHERS

24 Russell Square London W.C.1.

Fabbaf Westcent London Museum 9543

Dearest Emily,

11 August 1956.

I have been slow in writing, because your last letter, telling of your approaching departure, did not reach me in time to write back. So this letter, together probably with several picture postcards of the Waterspout at Geneva, will probably be awaiting you on your return, whenever that is. It made me rather dizzy to read of your itinerary . I am glad at least that you are not flying across the Rockies. And at least you will be inaccessible and a change of scene, with congenial companionship (and presumably seeing old friends in the West?) may even do you more good than the repose of Grand Manan.

This is a letter instead of an "air letter", in order to return the letter from Cheetham. Poor Man! He is indeed right in saying that he came, providentially, to be of immense service to me at a very difficult time in my life - but oh dear! How little he realises the mess he left behind him for his churchwardens - a great worry to me for the last six months. It never seems to have occurred to him that there would be no place for a new vicar to live in - he's kept his little flat, and as for the vicarage, which he let, it's probably going to take a lawsuit to get the tenants out. So it's not at the moment a very desirable living. At the end of this month the patrons' advowson runs out, and the Bishop can then appoint someone - if he can find a man; and he can also order the sequestrators (that's the two churchwardens and the rural dean) to take the vicarage matter to court. All this time, we have had a good little retired priest of 76 carrying on single-handed; he's just gone on holiday for three weeks and another retired priest, who looks still older, is filling in for him.

I also was very sad on learning of the death of my cousin Will. As I wrote to his daughter Ruth, I had never really known him till we met in St.Louis in 1953, and they came to London later. But I thought him a real pet - intelligent, alert, wellbred, and deeply religious. I am very happy to have known him a little before his death. I wrote and thanked your aunt for sending me the (excellent) funeral tribute by the minister in Portland.

It is a relief to know that you liked the evening bag. The saleswoman told me that it could easily be cleaned if it got dirty.

My holiday is to be a quiet one compared to yours. I go to Geneva on Tuesday - chez Clement, 1 rue de l'Evêché as usual - and will be with them until September 12, except for a week from

Sept. 1 to Sept. 8 at the Hôtel Belle Vue, Chardonne sur Vevey, where I have been before. That gives me a week altogether in the country; and as I want a month's holiday, and as I don't think it proper to sponge on friends for more than three weeks (the Clements refuse to let me pay for my board) that seems a good arrangement. So I hope to lead a vegetable life for four weeks. I would have done well, perhaps, to take a holiday as convalescence, but there were engagements from the middle of July, and I did not want to miss Theodora.

I am glad you were able to spend a night with Eleanor. I enjoy staying there; and she has in the last year or so become a much better correspondent than she used to be.

I return on the 12th September; you return, I presume, soon after that, and I shall look forward to hearing about your odyssey. I do hope you will come back fresh and strong.

Ever lovingly Don

It'scurious that neither to you, nor to anyone else, have I remembered in letters to say anything about the revival of the "Family Reunion". But I wish you could have seen it. Sybil Thorndike (Amy) Lewis Casson (Warburton) and two minor characters, David Horne as Charles and Corbett (hitherto quite unknown to me) as Downing, were all as good as gould be; but Paul Schofield as Harry is the first actor to make the character living and likable - the first to present Harry as a really haunted man, instead of a selfish cad. They spoke their lines well, too. Only Gwen Ffrancon Davies (Agatha) and Olive Craig (Mary) were not quite to my liking. It is running a month longer than the original 8 weeks arranged for, ending on Sept. 1st.

FABER AND FABER LIMITED
PUBLISHERS
24 Russell Square London W.C.1.
Fabbaf Westcent London Museum 9543

21. VIII. 56

My dear Emily

I was glad to get your letter of the 15th and hasten to reply, though I doubt whether this will arrive before you leave. I had written to Lindower before leaving England, having no other address. I am happy to know that you are travelling in comfort and are enjoying your holiday. I have been leading the usual quiet life here in Geneva, weather sometimes good and in any case better than in England. As for letters, I have no preference over Princeton, of Harvard or elsewhere. I think 50 years settled up in the right period, but I will write more fully on that point when I return to London. If this note is delayed I hope it will be forwarded according to directions on envelope, but meanwhile love Tom

15 September 1956.

I was very glad to get your letter of the 9th (it seems to have taken rather longer in transit than usual) and to know that your travels had been wholly successful. It is true that you were obviously enjoying your halt in the Canadian Rockies, but I feared that your whistle-stop programme might be very exhausting. Obviously the change and the new scenes, congenial company and inaccessibility to the frictions of Boston more than made up for any fatigue. I am very glad.

It was also a good letter for which I thank you. You are quite right in your advice, however difficult it be to carry out. I must however, put in a word for Theresa, who has been very considerate. The only people she has asked to meals have been people whom I felt obliged to see anyway (Sheff and Frederick and Elizabeth). She did hint that she would like me to sit for a friend of hers who is a painter, but that I should decline - sitting is more tiring than artists always realise, apart from the fact that it would be absurd of me to come to Cambridge and spend my time sitting to a portrait painter. There was, actually, more social activity while I was at Eleanor's. Another time I should not have the fatigue of visits to poor dear Margaret (though this time, you know, she kept putting me off so that I only saw her once). But my best plan for the future, I think, would be to make speaking (reading) engagements only in Boston and vicinity (such places as Brandeis I had in mind). Certainly the western trip was fatiguing, and having to stop in Chicago.

I did not have a very successful holiday. The weather in Switzerland was cold and very rainy. I cancelled my week at Chardonne. And I had not been in Geneva long before I got an abcess on my hip (some injection had gone wrong) which kept giving me little temperatures. So I was a week in the clinic having it syringed out. But of course I am always happy with the Clements, even under such adverse conditions.

I was glad to know that you got my letter in Berkeley, as otherwise we were out of communication for so long. I shall probably think of thigs I have omitted to mention wafter I have closed this letter. I hear that Cheetham is back - he has not communicated either with me or my fellow warden since February. And he is probably still unaware of the frightful mess that he left behind for us to clear up - but fortunately now the Rural Dean of Kensington has ~~now~~ become aware that he also is a sequestrator and is taking things in hand. We can't get a vicar until we can get somewhere for him to live! And as the vicarage is no business of the churchwardens until the incumbent dies or retires, we were completely ignorant of the muddles he had made.

With fond love Tom

P.T.O.

This letter reads like only the fragment of a letter.... I hear that the B.B.C. want to do a performance of Dudley Fitts's Lysistrata, next year, starring Marylyn Monroe!

First fold here

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AIR LETTER
AEROGRAMME

CHELSEA
7 15PM
15 SEP
1956
S.W.3.

Miss Emily Hale,
35 A School Street,
ANDOVER,
Massachusetts,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Second fold here

Sender's name and address: T.S. Eliot
19, Carlyle Mansions
Cheyne Walk,
London S.W.3.

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To open cut here

15 September 1956.

I felt sure that I should think of something I had forgotten to say. But Never before have I forgotten to write

Dearest Emily

at the top!

Lovingly Ann

BY AIR MAIL

PAR AVION

AIR LETTER

AEROGRAMME

CHELSEA
7 15PM
15 SEP
1956
S.W.3.

POSTAGE POSTAGE
E R
6D SIXPENCE 6D

Miss Emily Hale,

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ANDOVER,

Massachusetts,

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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19, Carlyle Mansions

Cheyne Walk

London S.W.3.

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To open cut here

Dear of Emily

6 October 1956.

I have not heard from you for some time, and hope that it is no more than the normal beginning-of-term pressure, and that nothing has gone wrong with your health after the so successful tour of the West Country, or that there have been difficulties at 1000 Beacon Street. I have been busy enough, and the complications left by Father Cheetham continue to be very worrying. It is odd that he has never communicated with me or with my fellow warden since February. Yet he has been back in England and gone away again. The little old Father Howard who has been carrying on manfully since the beginning of February, but he is 76, a retired man who came in for the emergency. And the fact that Cheetham has left us with nothing in the way of a vicarage or domicile for a new man deters clergy who might otherwise accept the living. I am afraid that Fr. Cheetham is beginning to be less popular with some of the congregation than he was, which is a pity. He sent a most unfortunate letter, blandly ignoring our difficulties, to be put into the parish magazine - I shall ask Fr. Howeard, if any more such communications come, to show them to me and Becker first. I am afraid, alas, that Fr. Cheetham is more self-centred than his friends could wish.

However, that's just one worry. Politics is a pretty severe strain at present - with (as it seems to me and to some other people) a weak Prime Minister, and a reckless and irresponsible opposition; and with Dulles blowing hot and cold over Suez, We do hope and pray that after the election, whoever is elected, the United States Government will have a foreign policy - I feel it would be better to have one that did not suit Western Europe, rather than, as at present, none upon which other nations can depend.

I shall try to put some of these matters out of my mind in a few weeks time, when I am able to resume work on my play, which had got such a little way in January. My abscess is still rather a nuisance, and will probably have to be drained again - unless he decides to have it lanced - which means, I think, a general anaesthetic. But it'snot really painful. I do hope you will be able to write soon and give me news of yourself.

I have thought over the question of the letters. Many of them contain comments on living people; I should not like the letters to be made public until everyone whose feelings could be hurt, or whose interests damaged in any way, are dead. Fifty years is the usual time; and they couldn't be published before then without the consent of my literary executors. I have arranged for a continuing executorship - there will always be a member of the firm of Bird & Bird in charge. But if they were made available to students earlier than 50 years after, although they could not be published, a great deal would get out, and it might not be possible to deal with those who quoted from the letters until the mischief was done. P.T.O.

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AIR LETTER
AEROGRAMME

CHELSEA
9.15 AM
8 OCT
1956
S.W.3.

POSTAGE POSTAGE
6D SIXPENCE 6D

OUR DEFENCE
JOIN NOW

Miss Emily Hale,
35 A School Street,
ANDOVER,
Massachusetts,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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19, Carlyle Mansions
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To open cut here

That seems to be the end of this letter! Do write again soon.

Little Amelia's Tom

Dudley Fitts's FROGS was broadcast on the Third Programme, I believe with success, but alas I had to be out that evening and couldn't listen.

Dearest Emily

14 October 1956.

NO! Please address me as Esquire, even if you omit the O.M. In any case, an O.M. is an esquire, as my patent from the King is addressed to his trusty and well-beloved servant Thomas Stearns Eliot Esquire. Theoretically, it is only barristers, I think fellows of Oxford and Cambridge colleges, heads of landed gentry families, holders of certain orders and perhaps a few other categories, but in practice nowadays one puts it on a letter to anybody one is addressing as an equal, in this country. I am glad to be reassured that your silence is due to beginning of term obstacles and not so far to ill health - which would be very disappointing after your exhilarating circular tour of America. I am also interest in your new method of tuition - it seems to give the girls a sort of responsibility for teaching themselves something, and to make them less passive learners. And it's also interesting that your play girls want to do something so serious as the play you describe.

It would be my intention, on my next visit to the States, to try to arrange just enough readings in the near vicinity of Boston to cover expenses, and not travel at all widely - perhaps avoid any sojourn in New York and visit to Washington. Then stay a little longer in Cambridge and refuse more than one engagement a day. It is difficult, of course. Eleanor only let me into one heavy engagement - dinner with the Constables - but it came on the same day as that on which we had arranged to go out to lunch with my friends the Pickmans in Bedford. And the next day, I lunched with the Signet and dined with the society of fellows, What complicates life for me there is having several layers of friends and acquaintances: those dating from my youth, those acquired in 1932-33, and more recent ones.

As for the letters despatched to Princeton (it makes me feel as if I was already dead, or ought to be!) are they being read by the Thorps and perhaps others, or are they sealed up? If my current letters are to be added year by year, I shall have to think of things to say which might interest future researchers. You don't refer to my comment on the question of the length of time during which they should remain inaccessible - I wonder if one letter of mine has gone astray?

I'm afraid I cant supply the "Prufrock" volume or the Lancelot Andrewes volume - I have never bothered about keeping copies of any books of mine except those in print. I would gladly send anything you want for Abbott that is wanted, if it is something that we keep in stock.

Alas, I'm afraid my visits to the United States can never be "a rest". If I did not have to earn money while there, and could come as I did in 1936 - in the summer - that would be within the bounds of possibility.

With much love Tom

ush
Oct. 19

BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AIR LETTER
AEROGRAMME

CHELSEA
7 15PM
15 OCT
1956
S.W.3.

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EIIR
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Dearest Emily

On your birthday: 1956.

No, please, not ESQUIRE in full except when you want to pull my leg. I only wanted you to know that I was a genuine ESQUIRE. I dont mind in the least being addressed as Mr. (but not Mister in full, please).

If I had known the date of Aunt E.'s birthday I would have written for it. I am struck by what you say of a change in her. Now as for the letters sent to Princeton. I hope you will not think I am being fussy, and I do want to say this (and whatever eye looks at the letters first, at some future date, I should like to fall on this letter first, if you will add it): It isn't the intimate and personal things that I would wish to conceal from the curious reader, when we are all gone - let the whole world see that. One is not ashamed of one's intense and passionate moments, but of the petty gossip, the exhibition of vanity, boastfulness, peevishness, perhaps even malice unconscious - and of all the callow and mistaken judgments upon people that one has made in the past. But a correspondence should not be edited to show the writer in the most favourable light! And the great reason for delay is the avoidance of pain to anyone stil living . [For instance (this is my small machine which I use because the other is out of order) I may easily have expressed my loathing for Lytton Strachey - I am quite fond of his niece Janey Bussy, who is young enough to outlive me for many years, if she lives to be as old as her mother is now]. And it's no good just forbidding publication, if letters can be examined by researchers who will go to the library where they are housed. When James Joyce died, his papers, including all the letters from his correspondents, were sold lock stock & barrel to Buffalo University. I was able to look at a projection of a microfilm of my letters to him at the British Museum; and I thought, how fortunate that I did not know Joyce intimately enough to have made personal revelations or to have expressed adverse opinions, or repeated gossip or scandal, about living people!

But what do you mean by saying that long ago I made you feel the necessity of regarding me as a Public Figure? I certainly hope that I do not see myself as a Public Figure!

Yes, there was a birthday cake - and Meg has lunched with me more recently, and she is now rejoicing because the oculist has reassured her about hereyes. She had fallen down stairs some time ago and landed bump on the base of her spine, and it seems that some small blood vessels at the back of her eyes were ruptured; but the specialist says that it should be right again in a year. I am sorry you never let me know ere now, that you would prefer a birthday card to a cable; for, as I said in the cable, your letter did not arrive in time to fulfil yourwishes. I find it hard to believe that "Separate Tables" clever as it is, could be a great success in the U.S.A. - one ought to know that kind of ENGLish seaside board-

ing house.

I forgot that I was going to write this as an ordinary letter at 1/3d. in order to include a F & F house chit about Dudley Fitts Lysistrata. I'll send it by surface mail - it might please him to see it.

With much love

Tom

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BY AIR MAIL

PAR AVION

AIR LETTER

AEROGRAMME

Cecil. Nov 12

CHELSEA 5 15PM 28 OCT 1956 S.W.3.

Miss Emily Hale,

35 A School Street,

ANDOVER,

Massachusetts,

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Second fold here

Sender's name and address: T.S.S. Eliot,

19, Carlyle Mansions

Cheyne Walk

London S.W.3.

AN AIR LETTER SHOULD NOT CONTAIN ANY ENCLOSURE; IF IT DOES IT WILL BE SURCHARGE OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL.

To open cut here

FABER AND FABER LIMITED
PUBLISHERS
24 Russell Square London W.C.1.
Fabbaf Westcent London Museum 9543

11 December 1956.

My dear Emily,

Thank you for your letter of December 3d. I am of course relieved to learn that my letters to you are not being read by the Librarian at Princeton.

I am however distinctly puzzled. I returned t o you the letter addressed to you by the Librarian; but I kept a copy of my letter to you of November 27th (this is the first time I have ever made a copy of a letter to you) and I can quote the exact phrase he used. He wrote: "as I gain a progressively clearer idea of its bulk and richness I grow more and more happy at the prospect of having it in our possession".

Please consider his words in a calmer and cooler mood than that in which you wrote to me. What does "progressively" imply? That he has opened the parcel and is sorting out the letters. The notion of "bulk" he could gain merely from inspection of the size of the parcel, It may have been larger than he expected. I fail to see, however, how he could get a "progressively clearer idea" of thebulk: I should have thought that the bulk would be obvious at the first glance. But what does "richness" mean? Such a term can only apply to the contents of the letters.

Furthermore, you yourself spoke of going to Princeton after the letters have been "catalogued". If it were merely a question of "cataloguing" a parcel, that could hardly be a matter of more than a few minutes.

I should like to know how the Librarian's words could be interpreted otherwise than I interpreted them, except by admitting that the Librarian's English was very slipshod, and that when you said "cataloguing" you meant something different from what the word implies to me.

It is true that when you first wrote and proposed your design of presenting the letters now to Princeton (in its elf a somewhat unusual thing to do, but I raised no objection, as you seemed so well pleased to do so) you stated that the letters would not be read. ~~But~~ In your following letter you agreed to a compromise (for that was what it was in effect) with my desire that the letters should be kept unopened until fifty years after my death (at which moment they fall out of copyright) by saying that you

would give instructions that they should not be opened until fifty years after 1956 - a trifling difference which I was prepared to overlook. But ~~And~~ as you were so readily persuaded to accept the view of the authorities at Princeton, and as the wording of the Librarian's letter seemed so clear, it was natural to suppose that they had persuaded you in that respect also.

As for the suggestion that my letters from 1949 should be made immediately available, I say emphatically NO. These letters are the least interesting and least valuable; and I do not see what right the "many now living who are fine students of my poetry" have to learn my privately expressed remarks from day to day. They have as good a right to ask for copies of every personal letter that I write.

I must also confirm what I said in my letter of the 27th November as follows: "It also seems to me an impertinence for the gentlemen in question to "express disapproval" of my stipulation that the letters should not be accessible to readers until 50 years after my death". In fact, what you said was: "Now, Tom, both men most strongly express disapproval of the very long term of years we placed on the letters".

I do not propose to dispose of your letters to me until my death.

I feel finally that it is for you, not for me, to communicate with Princeton. If they want to write to me they can.

I am particularly sorry, my dear, that such a storm should have arisen at Christmastide. What I should like would be an explanation of what the Librarian meant his words to mean, while I insist that the interpretation I placed upon them was reasonable and natural. I am also puzzled by your phrase which you put in inverted commas "I am very very sorry for you". I can understand your being annoyed with me for crossing your wishes, not why you should be, in such a situation, "sorry" for me. It sounds perhaps more superior and condescending than you realise! But alas, the whole problem is perhaps simply one of a difference between us as to what is Good Taste. That is the way it looks to me.

With much affection

Tom

Christmas Eve: 1956
ans Jan 13 '57

My dear Emily

I hope you got my Christmas card before you left Andover. But that I thought I might have heard from you meanwhile, in reply to my letter of the 19th. I gather from the tone of your last letter that you were hurt, & I am afraid that I had been scandalised! But I merely think that you were misled by the importunity of over-zealous library-historians, & I should not like to think that there should be any grievance between us at this time of the year above all others. Let us think of other things.

I have been at home with a cold for the last four days, & with fog & cold weather, my doctor won't let me out till after Christmas. And what with the depression, anxiety & humiliation of public events, this will be a sad Christmas, for the affairs of this world, for all of us. May you have a restful happy visit to friends after your Christmas obligation is fulfilled.

I shall be writing soon, about other matters; but I hope you read this letter first.

With constant affection Tom.

BY AIR MAIL

PAR AVION

AIR LETTER

AEROGRAMME

Miss Emily Hale
35 A School Street
Andover
Massachusetts
U.S.A.

AB Vol
Acad

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Sender's name and address: T. S. Eliot
19, Carlyle Mansions
Cheyne Walk
London S.W.3

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To open cut here

Ans
Jan 14

Dearest Emily

29 December 1956.

Thank you very much for your letter of the 23d, received yesterday. It makes me wonder, first of all, whether I thanked you for the delectable cheese which arrived safely in good time for Christmas. If not, please forgive me: there have been so many other things on my mind. I do thank you for it, and for the trouble involved in ordering it. I have been pretty remiss about Christmas gifts: I am ashamed to say that I owe Meg a present for last Christmas as well as this.

And I am delighted to know that your nativity play went off so well. You have certainly had a brilliant success with your plays, and I hope that Mrs. Crane is more duly appreciative than Miss Hersey was.

I also was pleased with your Christmas card and verses.

Thank you very much for the way in which you allude to the gift of letters to Princeton. I am sorry to have misunderstood Mr. Dix's statement, though I still cannot see how I could have interpreted his letter otherwise. However, I trust that all is now well; I have no doubt that Mr. Dix's statement will be satisfactory, and there should, as you say, be no need to refer to the matter again.

It is curious that there should have been a rumour that I should have flown from Geneva to Paris this summer. What happened was that I was suffering from an abscess on my hip while I was in Geneva (I thought I had mentioned this) and then got a slight attack of tachycardia. I flew back to London as usual (it was my doctor, who had been in Geneva to see another patient, who saw me off and then flew to Paris himself) and my doctor arranged that I should be taken off in a wheel chair at London airport and sent in an ambulance to the clinic, from which I was discharged in a week. No one was told about the tachycardia, and the newspapers never got wind of the matter at all. After my experience on landing from the Queen Mary I am always very anxious to avoid the attentions of the press and its photographers.

The photograph in "Time", and any information, was left over from the "cover number" they did of me in 1948.

It distresses me to think of your having to move away from that lovely little home in Andover. I hope, in your retirement, you will have sufficient means to live comfortably, at least? I am worried about this.

Yes. I have never been so alarmed, distressed, depressed about world affairs, and the future of Britain, as I am now. I have a low opinion of both the British and the American governments.

I shall be writing again, before very long.

Write much love.
Tom

Miss Emily Hale,
35 A School Street,
ANDOVER,
Massachusetts,
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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19, Carlyle Mansions
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To open cut here

1956?

Saturday.

5650 DORCHESTER AVENUE
TEL. MIDWAY 1882

Dear Emily

I was glad to get your letter, in Minneapolis, though your news was unhappy. With these difficulties so early in the spring, I am afraid you will be very tired indeed before the end of term. I shall see you soon - I go tomorrow to New York, & on Tuesday to Washington. & Cambridge the following Monday. Minneapolis went off well, I think, in spite of the absurdly large audience. Chicago was fatiguing - I had to give a reading at the Cathedral, for my old friend Canon Bell - one can't refuse a blind man. Washington should be more restful in some ways, - if it is warmer there! Will spring ever come? I look forward to telephoning week after next, & coming out on the first opportunity. With much love Bom

My dear Emily.

10 February 1957.

Our existence is unsettled and in a sense nomadic at the present, as we are staying at an hotel in Kensington; and as Valerie is having to continue to work at Russell Square for me until the secretary engaged to replace her arrives and has had a little training. In this sort of life less can be accomplished in a day, than when one has one's own home and a settled routine; so the first personal letter I have written was to Marian, finished five minutes ago, and this is the second. There are, of course, any number of letters from relatives and friends to be acknowledged as soon as possible. It is true that I still have my possessions - except what I can get into a hotel bedroom, and this typewriter which I keep at Valerie's old lodgings not far from our hotel - at Carlyle Mansions, but I only go there to fetch or return necessary articles.

Anyway, as this is my second letter, it means that I wanted to thank you before anyone else, for the very fine letter you wrote me, and which I found at Carlyle Mansions on my first call there; also, Valerie was very much pleased by your writing to her, and will write to thank you - I have explained above why she can hardly cope with correspondence yet, her time being divided between secretarial work and house-agents. I do hope that you will be able to come to England and meet her: I should like to bring her over to America on a visit, but I dont see how that can be managed until I can get some lecture engagement lucrative enough - such as the Norton lectureship is.

I have since had your second letter, about Aunt Edith (quite rightly addressed to 24 Russell Square and marked "personal" - that will be my address until we are settled in a flat, no more letters should go to Carlyle Mansions. I am very glad that Aunt E. is finally and with so little difficulty settled in a home. (The address, have I got it right? Van der Klisch Home, 929 Beacon Street, Newton Centre, Mass.) I'll write to her there as soon as I can. But on the other hand I read between the lines that this means further outgoings and that as a consequence you cannot afford to retire yet. Is that the reason? I am terribly sorry about this: I hate to think of your having to find a new post and together with it a new residence. I do pray that you may find a well paid post near enough for you not to have to move - though that seems too much to hope for.

With much love

Tom

Miss Emily Hale,
35 A School Street,
ANDOVER,
Massachusetts
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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