

Westville

~~Salem~~ Jail and House of Correction

~~Box 647~~

L-247

~~Salem, Massachusetts~~

1-4-65

~~Stone 73~~

Dear Bob:

Received your letter today, concerning your latest manuscript, & reading of applications for research grant awards. Most of my reactions of later years, have what might be termed, a literary reference. For instance when I hear of your scientific investigations, I recall the plaints of the greatest of bards in my favorite sonnets, wherein are mentioned those lines: "Wishing me like to him, more rich in hope; Featured like him, like him with friends possessed; Desiring this man's art & that man's scope..." With special attention to the last line.

What started out many years ago, scribbling a bit of verse as a means of practicing shorthand has lead to the memorizing & retention of a great bit of the world's best poetry, orations & prose excerpts. Neither my own wild folly, drunkenness & cynicism can take these things from me. It is a magic which clothes even prison walls with tapestry & fills the narrowest cell with music; & a sleepless asthmatic night conversing with the best minds of the ages. Schizophrenia, escapism, compensation, sublimation??

Referring to a previous letter, what gives with the membership to forty-one committees?? What about that coronary thrombosis of a few years ago? Shall I refer to the peasants who rebuild on the slopes of Vesuvius<sup>s</sup>, unmindful of what has happened before? Not at all. Truly this is a marvelous creature who winters at the Poles, studies the equator, & seeks reputation "even at the cannon's mouth." I forgot who said it, but live is to lived, & not ho<sup>rd</sup>ed. It is worthwhile risking your neck as long as the goal is worthwhile - Albeit I repress a demoniac chuckle every time I hear of some penurious old bastard who drops dead while shoveling snow, rather than pay a kid twenty-five cents. Along less heroic lines - last summer while I was down by ~~the~~ the wharf, guzzling wine, & the wit was sparkling, (so it seemed to us) I was struck with the macabre thought that I would rather drop dead amid such surroundings