Bob and myself went round to the river on Saturday afternoon. The trees are still bare; the Cherwell emerging strongly under Magdalen Bridge, birds among the undergrowth & reeking English air. Max Perkins was out with the Jesus men on the Isis, their core hunting instructions: the swans supremely indifferent against the bank. The lads with megaphones; boats will soon be drawn up. The men pulling manfully in their sweatsuits down Christchurch Meadow—spring is (about to be) here.

My hands frozen, I buy 10th with a Bramley cooking apples in the covered market; wash them down with coffee, a detestable souvenir; before (8L) Sommers found a delightful juveniles volume on Auster with Love & Friendship (letters), the enchanting History of Eng. Kings from Henry IV to Charles II, in which she uncharacteristically declares her hatred of the scheming Elizabeth, but one suspects partly with her tongue in her cheek, as she always does. Early, but already the delicate precision is evident to read her: I confess is an agreeable, sensible experience.

Sorrel 18 is the one Ruth Henry (then Roussan) read onto tape in the small middle room of 5 Rust St, Easter 1967, & I still own it. I can hear her enthusiastic voice at a moment of seriousness: Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?

Monday 14th February

Morning jogs at 7.40, breakfast at 8.20, newspapers (Morning Guardian Times) & Shakespeare with Robert Herrick’s Testament of Cresseyl, a following to Chaucer. Tute with Jack Burrow at 12. Mag. from WUS.

Advice given as ideal relationship arrangement: never complain, never explain. It had worked.

At the O.U.D.S. Playhouse in Beaumont St, bearded Richard Burton in the final dress rehearsal. You sensed he was holding back till the eloquent magnificence of that resonant Welsh voice, but good. At the end the lads & birds refused to let him go; & he came forward to tell a joke about a drunk friend. Taylor had a walk-on part as Helen of Troy. Tonight’s opening will see the fire.

Playhouse is smallest, cozy with heaters behind the slots of wood
paneling—a theatre for intimacy rather than grandeur.

One likes Buton—his sincerity, the humility in his gestures.

15/2

Sergei Eisenstein's double. Battleship Potemkin is a silent, full of rough power, maggots crawling over carcasses of sheep in a ship's hold, the unshaved surgeon saying 'Phew! They're only dead maggots!' Revolution.

The full-scale Alexander Nevsky, set in 13th-century Russia caught bet. Mongol & Teuton, is superb for its time, without Marxist bias—the fervour is all renewing Russian folk. An undergrad. in front of me was annoyingly smirking, a kid who was doing it be.

he was unsure how to react to a film of this type; up in the Welsh fastnesses his stocky Calvinist mother must have told him all's bad that's Red.

Note the natural treatment of love as a social phenomenon which works most interestingly on a personal level: it came out feel... as folk art, as spontaneous.

17/2

Letters from Joan (J.M.C.!) & C.M.R.—Ambrose refused permission to go to U.C.T. bec. facilities exist at U.C.W.C. He sent clips about brain drain, mainly to Canada (Port, Mtn. — or exit!)

She says Happy Valentine's Day! Thanks for the card.

Going skiing with her friend. Swims, plays tennis — these boys grow stronger.

I've got her out of my head! (for time being?) but what about crazy! e — "even shaved... atz" — Bye for now. I've given enough, not to overload but damnit I'm gonna ask some questions about their getting thick. It's what Leivel would admire, the intrigue.

Love wants to tour at the end of '67—the world. And it's all quiet about that new date: thighs unwet, skeleton unsexed.

Garbo again, given the turgid romantic setting, the Parisian extravagance of Camille (galloping consumption, tuber directrix) — so
excellent an actress I am not likely to see again in my lifetime. Robert Taylor, charming & debonair as the poor boy will love but no money, & a finely acidulous Barrymore as the rich flummoxed Baron—who loses out?—no, Cukor lets out of Dumas' novel, Greta die, & even death comes greatly to her. Allowing for the romance aura, she is extraordinarily skilful at occupying the mind, and a really delightful deep-toned voice, shining through the soul when at poignant moments, she plays it intense. In the Z films so far, I detect STYLE, which at once stylises & identifies her & unfortunately makes her rather more predictable. So that one concludes logically: if in Marie Walewska (coming) & the other film her low-key, small-voiced, lost-tone pathos & the raised profile oddity of manner persists into cliché, then the element of surprise will of course be gone. Even then, her virtuosity would still leave her queen of the moving image, a very beautiful woman of remarkable finesse.

**Doctor's Dilemma**—I did it with Dennis in that 1960 X session, which proved historic, just before he was kicked out. Shaw (why have I never regarded him seriously?) now seems to be richer than I have ever thought, & one resolution is to go back to him in a cross-holiday session, Pygmalion & DD having been all (no Ibsen, either, so when am I going to get through the Henry IV's & histories & Sh's earliest as I have decided before teaching anything else?). Shaw says through Sir Laddie Cullen (Felix Aylmer?—superbly father-figured, philosophically) that one can be 2 things wrong with a lad: a cheque, a woman.

Bogarde, as Dubedat, has both wrong—he is a poor unscrupulous artist, & an immoral one (organist?—unclear at this distance). So he cannot get a blank cheque to continue in this way, as it were. Again, the expected winner loses the girl, in this case Leslie Caron, not one of my pet actresses. How does a poor struggling artist support such a gorgeous wife? Sample question, but mainly it is Shaw's retained dialogue (as quadr sensibly directed) that crackles delightfully—"My plans for the season are simple—I am going to die," or Dubedat holding the immigrant
Physicians of London at bay will revolutionary morality. Here Robert Morley as Bloomfield Bonington (Goodbye, Goodbye, Goodbye!) was great as the imperceptible stimulator of the phagocytes. Minor portrayals which have become a pleasant feature of British filmmaking.

After twelve—left Joe Libani, the Maltese, in the G.C.R.—will check in the morning whether he left the coffee till undisturbed. This is a matter of honour to me, after all it was I who concealed that silver bolt under a mound of copper in the corner of the black box—intrigue, you discerning! Nevertheless, at 11.35 I changed a 6d into a 2/- piece + three coppers (one of which was a threepenny bit—Joe was reading a paperback on Ethics), had myself a cuppa, mixing milk crystals with cold water. Jean Genet, behold my disciple.

Also, have I not hidden that pint Guinness (dark stout!) in a corner, to be garnered when term’s at an end? Already 3 pints of milk & cantone are stacked in the wall cupboard—so do not curdle for my morose pitiating escapades. Observe, Womer, Padley & Godfrey India invited me Along to the Turf, but no penchant yet. Boy, wait until the drought breaks...! The white cupboard.

Sunday 20th February


Faustus (discussing Burton’s tenacious talent which despite years of Hollywood won’t die) is a massive hoax, an arabesque portal & rusty machinery abandoned by the crew & old orange peel. Title: “Hollowed Tryst”. Kit, she says, was tossing a huge joke at God—Pope boudoir.

So everybody came at kind for Dick.

Afternoon walk to further parts of town & Red bull with gild horns on blue waves. Oxford’s coat of arms. You stand in the town hall steps & look at the Carfax. St Aldate’s is full of Sunday tourists. I was going over fifty bridge into Abingdon, then saw a naughty
your (sassy know!) toss somebody's rickety old bike into the Iris, flowing strongly past by. Grey water, reflecting sky, but the sun burst through in a sharp moment: one's eyes are almost used to the intimate greyness. Reminded of C.T. at Easter, rainshun, sunray, but no, nothing can ever equal that at Wynberg or Lansdowne, looking into the light. Swans here black-webbing the stream.

At the Moulin Rouge (ctd) — Maria Walenovka. Was I not in the mood, is it that Garbo seemed to wear off, but during the opening scenes her brilliance had become a customary efficiency, even lacking lustre. Still, the story picked up interest, with Boyer in one of those deserted huge 19th palace rooms explaining will weary wisdom how he had missed it somehow: military victory but spirit's defeat — not being able to get close enough to the warmth.

Gaps in the story made it sag, the subject spanning so many years. Still, I held her great.

Rutherford as Miss Marple by Christie: tricky, nice touches of Brit. old lady (headline-conscious): good jobs of pique & lip-pursing. Those senna tablets I had taken forced me back to Jesus early. Now off to Silken Skin & Passenger, to report later.

For Jack Burton, oral aspects of Beowulf, after 700 lines translated last frid-sat, a fine finishing spirit.

Monday 21st.

Scala — Truffaut's Munk's last.

Francois Truffaut's Silken Skin is clear, clean-cut, intelligent in its crime passionel class: at the end Francesc Doleac (beautiful!) with her unfaithful husband—very sensitive portrayal of an intellectual who happens to be also a man — in a cafe, with shotgun. The airline hostess (Doleac? — more likely) she was good; the title seems to come from a great moment when he removes her nylon stocking from the suspender (pre-coitionally) finally tells him the affair won't work, she'll iritate him too, it would drag on painfully as will his wife, whom he takes with quiet-burning passion even as she is proceeding with living,
& after the pleasurable flash the relationship is the same: crumbling.
Jean-Louis Richaud collaborated with Truffaut: he does seem to be one of
the finer talents in French films. You got those clear, sharp black &
white shots: it started off at an interestingly brisk pace & you felt
it was at least going to be good.

Understatement can be just as boring, said Tyman once, yes: but
io Beowulf e.g. It is one of the strengths of the epic, esp. where humour
of self-hate against monsters is concerned, the hero's wryness & modesty.
Well, I haven't seen Belmondo, but Mastroianni is coming in 8½,
& early next week, there's Ray's Chiramati, hailed as a masterpiece,
so next week is going to be marvellous, I can see that.

Passenger has been delayed. The manager was out front to ex-
plain, but recompense was perhaps unexpectedly good: Eisenstein's last
work, fragmentary. A documentary (people are the heroes!) on the
Mexican revolution in 1910, but it cut out at the uprising after some
splendid work giving insights into the lives of the Mayas & A
Aztecs before Cortés & after, the main scene being of wedding
arrangements on the festival of Corpus Christi. Early on, rough, the
most creative shots in the love-scene of an Indian girl with
river scenery, mangrove roots, a fibre hammock above the water, &
as the youth converges like every other girl she half shields her eyes
with her forearm, half smiling at the edge of her mouth. Then the
Camera moved on, Eisenstein's masterly editing or luck? I think it
the former.

Mankiewicz's unfinished film was about a Pole-Jew relationship in
one of the better concentration camps. State-subsidised - in parts one
got it was too consciously arty, & in any case do you find people
who in subjection behave like this? I walked out into a very
unEnglish hailstorm, sitting here now with steam rising from the
black pants I've worn for about eight weeks now - not Ed
worry. Wrote the Smiths about April 1-14 holiday, & Bern.
Working strongly, through 2 nights now—essay work. This after I broke the drought for Dave Bartlett's 21st. When I got up there after Bed on Tuesday evening the joint was jumpin' with all the Jesus luminaries & Turl & Wheathead extras & champagne with sugar cubes to kick it was buzzin' all over, about 20 bottles or so.

Everybody got pissed as a rat & the next thing there was singing. I knocked all a ¼ scotch, some brandy, missed ball. Bradley junior dean was down in the bar to calm the boys down, tankards of beer spilling all over, glasses breakin' after a stormy quad march to the rousing time of we won't be buggered about.

Back to Maanjlie with revenge! Ian Mac just put David Morris to bed & then the 2 cars were off to Whytewam's, where Len told me they went the next day to apologise. I remember drinking heavily & talking Mac Perkins intellectually, coming home with Greg. Jephcott after some more brandy at Terry Davies—who gave me a Dylan to read written by his father: what a time! Next day, no dice, no get up, a helluva hangover so I think well fuck it. I'm going down to the Turf; 3 pints of bitter, a half, & we swing like a bastard again; bed me down once more. That bird is the Bird—been making eyes at everybody, why should I think at me specifically. Nightshift, but it went O.K. — Colin satisfied. I've got this thing for Jack done too, an reading (or about to) Henry 8, to write on Wyett & early Fuder. If to finish with a bang, not a whimper. This, needless to say, is Saturday. Monday is the 28th of February, it ain't no leap year. Should write D, but somehow not. Glad not Smiths heard from Jimmy, but he seems to have renounced me. And I have debunked myself—what is there to believe in. Grenville wrote about his career tribulations, a rather funny letter: he deserves to give himself better—got talent, yes.

Sunday 27th Feb. 1966

I have perhaps put unfair pressure on you, desiring you to be explicit. Much taken up with matter of time, energy (totality, finality).
A passenger is a person in transit, passing through — about whom it is prudent to ask too many questions. A wanderer, traveller, as in a sense out of time & place.

Chrysalis: the golden (Chryso) resting stage, was jotted down when I thought I couldn’t presume to write any more, a kind of Elysium for Milton effort: the revival is a retouching of it, giving Draft 4, to all intents and purposes the final one, giving it to the Journal — but called simply POEM

Memory merchant, I hog my emotions of being alone which will never end and as jussounds brush the steady fire: metal fire: the snug burr vibrates in mental centres.

Not only at dusk or dim moments, but beyond swift seconds I have no vivid wisher which thrust through the muck of time and absolute philosophies to triumph wholly.

Shields of bone, the moist glands, membranes, bulbs of flesh and hair roots breed again, propagate themselves, protect, renew: I am the fragrant air in the golden cocoon that is vacant.

K.A. N
27/2/66

Wormcast

Over grass and among the still brown crosses & seed cocoons roll with the wind to be humus now that the moth has emerged.
There are fewer & fewer butterflies
as we bear a greater assault on the eyes.

Tongue in its warm lap lies so tight
it cannot speak with sweet breath late (at night).

You grow bit by bit, & by a piecemeal process learn to cope with
your anxiety, neurosis, restless impatiences & loneliness. As Gide says
reportedly in "Silken Stein" (the film), each of us needs one other person
to believe in. I cherish this ideal in you, but also remembering
through the brown ales that man is an aspect of developing matter,
& he has now reached the crucial stage of being his own problem:
how to cope with what he has arrested. Responsibilities.

Saw Wince, was surprised that he, so nonchalant mostly (except
on his leftist politics), should want to get married to an Indian girl
from East London whom he has known for some years. The relationship
has always been somewhat uncertain & inconclusive, until she recently
wrote ("out of the blue") from Durban where she is studying; except
that she spells apology with 2-pps, the letter's style is remarkably
like Joans: non-committal, factual but unconsciously trifling, tacit
(e.g. "be good" instead of the explicit keep away from other girls & if
you can't play safe). "This will probably surprise you, coming from me.
By the looks of it she wants him to want her, & he does. Wants
to get to U.S. after Bracenoise, get married ("I've had a good
innings"). — Sorry about casualties like Meader Oster & Alan Murray: but

Here he walked in, it's going to be very factual. Had an emotional
problem. Naturally I showed him the note in the making, then we discussed
Keralo-Indian society in p.e. deeply. Jesus bar, telling Boston District 6 anecdotes
then swung into the Bracenoise pub-barren for Brown ale (red-brown, sweeted)
& he was in Guinness. We spoke long & happily — in the end he was
worried about the fact that I thought I was pulling the wool over
his eyes on Sundays: didn't want me to feel that way. Very drunk, he told
of unhappy family background, ostracism from community on both sides, life in no-man's-land. Likes me so helluva lot — true. Consequence: soberly I bring him into 111 for steering up, he promptly throws jewelry onto the green pile carpet — I manage to keep his hair out of the japi accumulation in the sink (lunch: spaghetti bolonaise, supper: BNC peanuts + potato soup).

As I clean the carpet, he struggles out of his jacket & lunch forward. As Frenchie says — never pick a drunk man from the ground if he's safe. Cover him with blankets. Half through the night I'm forced to shit in the sink & stir the solids down the drain with my index finger. In the morning he's awake. Back at lunch after my tute & we go down to the Union to get last week's Channel, a good issue for J. & C.M.R. Then I take him in to see the great Scala double: African Queen & Charulata.

Bogie was marvellous as the white trader in Africa, set up very funny against the spiritual side of things with Robert Morley as a great missionary. There's this frantic scramble for a cigar butt that Bogie absent-mindedly (suggestion of imbecility by director Huston) tosses away: Katharine Hepburn in bush boots pumping away at the clumsey Ad organ: it breaks up in chaos with Mr B looking unkempt, very dirty, & flatulently funny at high ten. Morley dies rather beautifully & now Bogie swills gin, the 2 discover each other — refreshingly, only a suggestion of sex here, not the crawling lust again! — there's the tremendous scene where afterwards at breakfast, the princess broken with the tissue one believes the inexperienced Katharine says "What's your name — dear?" to a man who up to now had been nothing but Mr Allnut, with a zig a missionary zeal, crosses shad run into the river hungry. Unbelievably, Bogie gins through his stubble above the dirty round his faintly gangly neck & says: "Charlie." She's Rosie — there were hosts of laughter. All ended happily, but by then even the hungry was before — you know us bit could not get in the way of what had
been heartily entertained.

Like *Woman Of The Dune*, Satyajit Ray's masterpiece—no
hates to apply language to this brilliant work of art which is so
closely about life, it had something in me seared & broken for some
time afterwards, an awe of the spirit — must rank as the best film
I am likely to see for a long long time. As with the best things, the
actors are probably unknown outside India. Certainly not Raj Kapoor
Indian pops. The subcontinent has one hold on my mind. It is a
profoundly stirring film riddled with unexpected & unassuming irony.
Where even Bergman's genius fails to conceal the trundles of art,
Ray works with unbelievable subtlety. You are not dragged in to
witness anything, neither are you asked to understand. I found my
self riveted visually & mentally to the screen, grinding my eyes a
swift glance at the clock... starters beauty... but why attempt
the idealization of words to make it better or worse. Reconciliation in
the 3 suits of the end the hands of husband & wife reaching out,
linking, yet paralyzed by a new knowledge which has
to be assimilated. It is not so simple to start something new. There
is always the black residue, the waste that remains & kills, even the
abortive unfulfillment has an aftermath.

In the Prince Of Wales they sell cheaply (1/1) an exquisite
(2) bitter with a mildness running through the liquid & a soft
texure on the tongue. I must have some more of it when O.K., but
not this afternoon — I'll

March 3rd 2:9 after a night-essay on Sir Tho. Wynttt I'm to see
C.W. at 11 instead of 10. Why despair yesterday? Afterwards like
now it seems so fine. Then "8½" (Scal) later report.

But two pints of milky bitter meant the night in limbo. I had
wanted to work. There was Mac in the Col. Pub. & he said o.k.
Anne the Scots chick is waiting: for 50 in the Roebuck paid 6/6
for a meal an hour after Hall's one + a meat roll afterwards.
Wonder why you diet?

Then adjourned to the Turf, invited them up to 12 for a prelim novel reading. While they sat & made love in my corner chair
I dug out poems & read early extracts from 4A Southfield Road.
They forgot episode raised shorties, needless to say.

Next day it was up at midday: lush life.

Election: March 31.
Beatles at Shea Stadium, but I could get to work immediately afterwards. On TV they don't come across well, what with 60,000 teenagers shouting their lungs hoarse. They still appeal, there is no doubt about that & always seem to have accepted the end of the day to arrive. Marriage, the one way out, easing off. Falk wants to weep-weep, dad Ringo! That part of it is tied up tantalizing with Crawford & Rust Street.

MARCH THE THIRD

8½ FELLINI: about Mastrianni making a film, or wanting to, while at the same time there's wife trouble. Cardinale co-acted, but here was a.

series of faces & fantasies of childhood. I said to Jerry Davies don't

in the bar this experimental stuff couldn't get me the way La

Dolce Vita did, though the film, like a self-parody, says so itself. You

want to kick another cripple into the world, just a mutation on

the public, the place is already riddled with casualties & discards & rejects. Why add to the muddle? Well, begging the question isn't it?

We must create, must be prepared to fail, it seems, just like we must

risk love & be ready for frustration.

The Turf, I pissed again like a rat after the knockdown sherry up in

Obenz's room. I had spoken a load to crap to D.B. & Bobo

Smith down there, had tried to soothe a kaleid David Roberts,

poor Weetman, mixed Afro-Americans with Peter Lamming from Mautel,

laughed with Chris Pown & Dave Hughes, finally fell into bed round

12, thoroughly sooked & not having slept for about 36 hours.
Lunch with Nagan & a Stellenbosch researcher, at B.N.C., a beer & a walk
to Uniparks with Gary, the Californian. He played Tchaikovsky in the music
room, getting artistically emotional, blowing his lid, like. Nice licks, we're to
take tea with the Beer: some guy I hear, 2 Winne has set me up as
a sort of automaton about to walk a Jesus first. Harold Wilson's League
of Arabi must be quaking in their boots: they were here & with 10 hours
day did it — I'm all for a 3rd or so, man, & thanks.

Tidied up some writing, & tonight I've no doubt it's the Tull,
what will Phil Garner & his 49 Daimler around.

— Pissed, but not as a rat. This place Dave B. knew down Biminy
lane a few miles out of Oxford, a country pub like Dudley's but cozier,
with 2 brown boxers & a black cat. Low-ceilinged, those black gleaming
old rafters: the white plaster, you crouch going out through back
to the modern, tiled gents. Discussing the Ghana coup, army or Nkrumah?
Dave said he's a cynic, but I pointed out how all positions on
bound after a time to be harden-eyed poses man has been going for so long.

After I sat to ham & egg sandwich salad at the Eastgate, one of
the posher places down the High. Ian had Anne along, she said how my
eyes light up when I make a point, & Pete brought Dave along. Mac
was sitting deep in comfort fagom-like behind the wheel on the way back after we kicked the idea of a London club at 1.30
on Sunday a.m. — The next logical thing was for Barrett to steal
into the G.C.R. & rifle the cupboard of port, rather than the T.C.R.'s
Sunday night keg of brew for the meeting. That smooth roomy Daimler
was purring for the getaway outside college but it was thumbs
down till Pete Jones rang up the night porter at the Mitre: we
sat down here to a quick scotch & ginger ale. Easy: I thought I'd
come home broke, but I didn't.

7/3 — So yesterday up at about 12 I was in with Phil, back from
Birmingham & Bristol. 2 pints, lunch at Winges, Lionel Optie & Elena
(St Hilias, attempt Ph.D. in Zambian Politics, & a good bet also
Scots but with Russian admixture) got us away for tea. Steve Kano
had gone out after relaying about Jill & her Tony dad, a clash
been threatening with Ogy the upstairs Nigerian—W. said it
had been a good idea, how many bobs in the gas stove. There-
fore glad not to be in digs.

You had those fossilized M.A. types with a Dean Bradley Jr.
outlook, settin' tight, saying little, often looking blankly through specks of
their fossil birds in sweaters. And a pregnant wife visting med
better. A look at a 122 store church, I climbed up into the
pulpit. The types left, Winnie got a little tipsy on Lionel's shangers
started a fiery attack on Portuguese colonial policy directed at a
remote newcomer come to find out whether one of the brothers
was at the cottage. The five of us had this chicken which
had been soaked overnight in white wine, & Nokes went to town
on Lionel's Luxembourg cigars. Like Leitch he is in his express-
this interested me. Medic, doing research, a Harvard chair in the
cottage next to the clarion, plenty of traditional charm, dark &
entwined. Forty Driver had left with this deep.

(sinister type) who was saying nothing, Christ, where does Driver
connect these tatty kids...

Should I have performed Buck College high jumps? Afraid not,
Lionel, old man, afraid not. Instead I volunteered to help dry the
dishes, answering questions with great perspicacity (Leitch, you'll
be proud of me yet!)

discretion. So next time I'm not invited
along, I can see that already.

After getting up via Tolkien, I had issues with Obens, and
Jack Burrow was very interested in the case for BW's Christianity,
though of course Dick must sense by now how I want to

Jack fair argument to shreds, non-practising as I've been here. (Dennis
Whiteley the chaplain walks past me in grave unconcern, white robe.)

The Bod, then, some good news: Elizabethan sonnets for Thursday
& I realise I haven't written to D.A.B. for weeks. No news from Canada
either, but I've said to Williamson how love is the supreme oxygen.
81r I last week of term & each time I see successful people, feel the urge to be, too. Cracking day today, & probably the same till that essay for Thursday's over with. The Prince's collection, but was having none from Tutors: apparently Dick & I inspire confidence. In all likelihood, then, a rumble after Thursday. Then work: maybe Leitelt in London over Easter. Haven't heard from him. But guys like Tim Lewis of Univ Challenge can get a bit silly when tight. In the Tins tonight after Bed. I found myself at odds, in addition this Newcastle man from B.N.C. was informing me that the better I was drinking is normally called cat piss up north, so he was on the verge of getting me a beautiful Newcastle Brown. Some time.

16/3 — After Thursday's last tute, a reading list as long as my arm, the critics on Shakespeare. Titus Andronicus, King John, 3 Henry 6s, Henry 8, but after a fine collection, s none coming up except the BW essay which I'll come back to. Abolice Trinity Term opens.

The Elizabethan Society had cancelled their meet, on Thursday night tight with Waverley & Barker-Jones in the Tins, I was chatting up a bespectacled bank clerk called Janet, the boys applauding. And so after Christie & the Senior Tutor, the rumble in Steve Simpson's with a keg of lizzie beer: rauccous until Dean Bradley entered pompously, looking through that Squint. Leitelt should hear this, an imitation would be mimitable from him, pursed lips & all. The boys flattened the fat bastard at once, Chris Pout & Gerry Davies gathering around concernedly. Collectivewise, late were getting progressively pissed: in Andy James! I fell asleep after Monk & Miles, beer negotiations breaking down, Mac being busy preparing for finals. The Tins again after Winse came down into the Jesus bar with this unforgettable pronounced thing so we swung through more boozes, deep talk through Tins noise as only it can get in a Friday night full of scabrous Welshmen. I implored further bits of "novel" (this!) on Winse & Mac who came into the Tins looking like MAC People in a check Brown suit: we ate (again for me) at The
Chinese place next to Long Johns, where on Sat. afternoon, after 2 or 3 absorbing hours in the Tudor, again, Wince sipping Mackeson; I on bitter as usual, we were eating chips, baked beans & sausages among the narrow tables.

There was the party at Vincent's upstairs on Sat. night, & it turned out to be quite a thing. I had emptied ½ gal. pupilon on my ace practically the afternoon, & lay under the rugs until people started floating in & I edged in near to the cider. Met here a Welsh Londoneer, name of Diana Glyn-Fowes, Ph. D. now in anthropology, whose sceptical coolness, first regarding Gary Fuller (B.N.C.) attracted. Noeks is an inimical melting intellectual mood. Approach of opposition: later, she was refusing dances & saying that's beautiful to a line of my poetry. She writes too, but from what I could gather, hoary stuff. I told her so, & made a calculated exit after the booze had run out, on the well-known R Capie principle that booze takes priority over women. Said I might run into her at the Union sometime—when I join. Perhaps even to be invited up to an Iffley Rd flat? Her idea is the fact that I had monopolised her time the whole evening, mixed, with the fact that lack of booze had me in a frustratingly suspended state, kept me awake for half the night, so that I feared delusions & hallucinations as Nezian lay snoring on the floor where he sleeps from time to time to keep his back muscles in trim.

Already, after she told me of her anthropological eff researches, a poem with a title was in search, of matter, & today it finally worked itself out: Strange Affections, with the ending needing polish. On Sunday, when Wince had to prepare curry for Opie (he said, reluctantly I feel, bring Noeks along if you like,) said never was there a greater transformation, this after I had had shorn off by a queer-looking
Opie went to get guests at the station. First we sat out the last half hour at the country pub, Wince relating to Samoo the old pressing emotional problem, 5, in turn saying with distaste how as the brew was weak piss: everybody laughed. Opie returned with three S.A. Republic chicks; the Canadian one who turned attention on Samoo gave him the impression she was falling for him. We moved with the delicious smells of chicken curry with herbs & condiments (Wince had found a Chinese thing with tang) rising from the kitchenette. Elena had been ditched, or at least for the time being was absent, for our part the grog shops were shut. Dead Oxford on a Sunday afternoon. At Crawford's we had to return at 3.45 p.m. While the staff sat chatting upstairs. Eventually Pat found the bile-yellow & excruciatingly soft beef curry not up to par; Samoo & Wince were discussing trade unions & socialism, the new realists. Nortje sat in the corner busy with some solid steak & kidney pie. On the way back to digs Wince thought of London.

Grub at Cooposammy's after the panel van had started leaking petrol & someone leaving out the window at an Islington traffic light. Said - think you'll find you have a gas leak, mate. A bit of pushing afterwards we took trains. Wince & I finally pitched up at Bern's Chelsea flat at about 11.25, just in time to find Mike Rassenger doing the finishing touches with dabs of white paint. They need an extension from the landlady just back from Kenya. Fano must have pissed her off, I dare say. But the phone rang the next morning to indicate an alternative: she'd write, said Bern, let me know.

The A.N.C. people were kicked out along with a number of
fringe political groups after Nkrumah fell—apparently he had bought the building to them. Well, the Redeemer fell, like many others in Africa of late: uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. Not only for his philosophy, but also for his poetic wisdom do we like him.

We hitched back on Monday after weak beer at Victoria & a chapati will lamb curry at India House, where I am told the L.S.E. people eat. First a swearing truck-driver, then on the A40 with a retiring RAF pilot on his last mission to Aden. Outside the Lamb & Arms at 4:00 p.m. on a chilly March afternoon, we were joined by a Welsh policeman on furlough & got into town on the Barton East bus. For Wince, with Law Finals looming, back to libraries. For Nokke, a reassuring connection with Mr. O’Connor, Trust manager, who used to tell me of the atrocities in Ireland. Bastards all over, I say. Ciao, meaning hello & goodbye—it is the same.

Can’t get back to Henry VI at all. Without rest & root, it seems, so what’s to do but spend money, get soused, grow fat & ungrainly again, destroy what has been built, & then painfully re-enact. Letters yesterday to Dennis, Carrie who feels guilt about an agonising abortion, & Lena Koch whose address W.P.N. gave me on Sunday as a possible Swedish contact for the intended summer trip. C.Williamson informs me I could get a college allowance for that. And a thought to J.M. Cornelius after the photo of her outside 917 in the snow, thick woolly, with piled hair & dark specs, that sadly smiling oxymoron of a mouth, sweet though in sadness, some cards.

She writes to me with increasing warmth, & this is any indication of how things are going. I’d say they are going well at the moment. What happened in the afternoon is that I went to see a beautiful & poignant film called Shakespeare Wallah. About a group of itinerant actors in post-raj India, i.e. the appendent wallah, or foreigner without roots. Directed by James Ivory, beautiful raga & other music by Ray. Punch from Ceylon,
(Wakanyeka) confessed next door in the Prince-of-Wales Arms that the film had moved him very much. We picked cocktail onions & olives, smoked Players as he told me of the Sinhalese kings & their elephant drives, or the local Oxford Old Boys club in Colombo. We drank the best bitter one can find in Oxford, an Ind Coope brew with a milky cloudiness in the honey liquid, polished off some pints & came into the G.C.R., where Godfrey Rajasoria was back from London. A sherry, & we ate, the 3 of us, in the Rockbuck, where Nokes was spending like a bastard in the mood again. Punch looked visibly moved by the experience of Sh. Wallah, but then, even though in her facial features some of her features the girl was almost J, he must be much closer to something like this. Told of a past made in Ceylon with a girl, for the sake of the return, be good. Yet here I see him sometimes escorting not a bad-looking kid around Oxford: never trust a man. But what of the other side of the coin: the bloke in Malaysia who descends upon a bird in Wince's block with a deluge of letters, a daily barrage, a boy, the things she does to him! But be, then, it's really a grand life if you can put up with living like a cynical dog.

Again a film which like Chamulata lives in its images. What one may perhaps speak about is the poetically justice of the inconclusive end of the affair—the Anglo-Indian goes sadly home to England, but the whimper of lost love is a nostalgic memory rather than a chilling testament of passion: it is what gets me often, so why is in love? full of the touches that endeared me to Chamulata, the lovely wife, but without the deeper ironies that run through Ray's masterpiece. Still, memorable, so memorable perhaps as to be disturbing.

18/3—Last night's TV: Frost, satirist, on travel, that people come back & must have snapshots to prove it, evidence of brave suffering in the rain at camp, of catastrophes, the unusual moments. Never mention joy as simply as that.

Times Literary Supplement's review of C.S. Lewis in retrospect, the turning from atheism in boyhood to adult Christianity. The search seems more & more to me to resemble a reassembling of fragments,
The scattered pieces of the picture puzzle, knowing how it's to end, but having nobody to show you the ways. The means are there all the time, & the search ends apparently where we return to where we start from, I know the place for the first time. Eliot & wistfulness—I can see now how it came about in 4 Quatrains. Sh. in Tempest, too, in a way, but quite another matter: one must bow out asking pardon for the audience's indulgence, it was an act of grace, whether we say this is irony or not, to brook one. They must set one free, & paradoxically so since the poet is above other men, as Wordsworth says, a man speaking to men, endowed with "more enthusiasm and tenderness," with a more comprehensive soul.

183. The bitter twist is my true enthusiasm
when silences linger
Silence is long & tenderness lingers
minutes never know my longing
and I do not expect the clock to stop.

Cameras can catch a likeness
of you trailing fingers in the snow
but the edges of your smile make
mouth, etc. Snow, grow
a Mona Lisa wistfulness.

I want evidence and you wear
dark glasses against the glare.
to shield

Letter to D, asking for comments on my tormented struggles with
Spring Picture of Exile. A hurried letter with insight at the end, overflow
of what could not be good verse?

Afterthought on Fellini's 8½: if we lack the courage to write & fail, then
people may call us cowards; because we have the gift, they have every
right. The courage, also, to face (as said in the Spectator, at times
to outface) reality. Joyce—must take Finnegans Wake to London—
Beckett for instance: the huge human warmth & a quiet thread
shining through their work like a phosphorescent thread. Somehow
I must try not to look away; liberation lies in enduring the pain
& easing it every so often with dashes of salty humour.

Surprise if the day, McDonald turning quietly to me on a sunlit
bench with Dave B. in the inner quad before lunch & adding
blandly that he had become engaged to Anne. Jeke?—am to
see them after last hall in the Turf tonight.

Note: waited all night after an English flash game in G.C.R. for ½ an
hour with Peter Silverman, Vince Ellis. But saw Chris Pont & the Manitzburges,
Peter Lapping. Later Geoffrey Rajuenaia bought me a phony in College,
after he left I was drunk & had merely 2 more + a port without pay.
Bubbles on Sat. morning, but Vince & I were in the Turf when Ian, Anne,
Floe Barratt & Maggie Lenox came along.

Jesus College, Oxf. 21/3

Maggie,

Hi. Thought I’d better get these to you before you lose enthu-
siasm—taking you up on Saturday. (Not to speak of Sunday: you’d have
realised that I didn’t want to leave, & maybe I was brusque. Disturb
your soul, you, but if I get immersed in work again suppose I’ll go away)

[Some brief histories of 3 poems to be typed]

Was going to ask you to do only the two (to see how you
shape: ain’t I being just choosy!) but I thought 2 Women would
amuse you. If it doesn’t, kick me to hell with knee-length black boots,
or smother me in a mustard tweed jacket.

Finally: Ian said you got to the station in time. Hope you
made it to town, didn’t feel too sleepy today.
I'll be up until the end of March, then descend on London for 2 weeks. I'm not sure yet whether to stay with friends in Chelsea or in Croydon. So there's no hurry.

Ciao/Arthur.

Chilling streams of watchful mortals.

Timidities, reticences, refusals to speak out, what Den. said in his letter as I got back through wintry spring.


Dear Maggie:

Thanks for note, a surprise.

Got back o.k., by coach — my head's in the right place after the initial kick of the country. I mean, no more taxis, just facts.

I wrote more in London than I do here, rather unexpectedly. But am working on the new things as I can, which means hastily. Should be back on BW (sorry, let just say Old English is getting done with it) but I did 8 hrs today so after supper came back & looked at some early views of England again; these may have to be final drafts, since if one keeps on going back the chopping & changing never stops.

Saw Ian & Anne last night, but briefly.

You people sound busy; still, you seem to be a glutton for work. In that sense, hope you get something out of these two. Remember you in my royalties.

Again, single spacing & light paper, if you can.

Luv, A.

It was Oxford Walk & Foreign Body.

April 18th, back to the academic mill. London & Leitch were very welcome news. But I may need the weekend, & the BW translation waits in ye olde black satchel. So more later, including the Turf Tavern bits leading up to an almost crazed escape early to the swingingest city of the Western world, as Time Magazine has it, bought at Victoria on my snowy Thursday back, & all in spring...
April 19th, or...
Will it be adventure, discovery, or study.

May the Third: a letter.

Dear Maggie,

On a gloomy morning, yours was a sharp and lively surprise. Thanks for the poems. Did you get the "Dr. Walk" affords?

Some magnificent weather here for days, almost unbearably good. And today turned out to be very fine as well, despite the early winds.

Right now, thinking of something to say that can be as pleasant as yours was — but the difficulty of communication; Beckett "burden of living"?

I've been idling away the time with the group in College; it's been good in some ways & detrimental (e.g., weed) in others. We play cricket together, go out for meals in delightful country pubs afterwards, get smashed occasionally, gamble at cards in somebody's room, see the flics in somebody's car — it must begin to look like a picture of deeper dissolution. Somehow I manage to get over the essay crises & other academic & social commitments.

This term & the coming summer are going to be mine. After that comes the Exam. Schools in May of '67. Period. And then a huge question mark.

I have been elected to the Elizabethan Society, which is a time-honoured drinking club — Jesus was endowed by Piggy I in 1571, as you probably know. According to the card I have here, membership will raise me above "ye commune vurlets of ye colledge." Ha-ha.

On the day that you are made a member, you have to recite a self-composed funny poem about your first sex experience. But from what I'm told by the time this ceremony is performed the boys are so pissed off that anything is bound to be funny. So I hope that the number back home who did it to me doesn't mind me using the material.
Bernstein's a good bloke, certainly. But that's about all I know. Sorry to be a musical barbarian, but maybe I've not tried hard enough to be serious about Ravel et al.

The last theatre session for me was Burton's final dress rehearsal at the Oxford Playhouse. He's a fiercely tender actor, the students wouldn't let him go, that afternoon. Otherwise (and maybe you could credit me with individualism here, rather than sheer perversity) I usually fail to go to theatre because of a feeling that the audience is going to be a bunch of black-tied, sweet-smelling hoity-toitys.

Good luck with Gazzo. And happy swimming. We had some raucous May-day punting scenes on the river. Magdalen Bridge on Sunday morning was jam-packed.

No, you shan't be a teenager any more. Sorry about that. As you say, a compromise is best. Your attitudes are refreshingly adult, as far as I'm concerned.

Shall see Anne over the weekend. They are home birds now. Actually, thought I'd repay you when you came up here. Sorry to have embarrassed you into asking. Included, find.....

Just stop me when you find you can't take any more Norrlic poetry. Ciao, i write: it's good to hear from you. Yrs. A.

Jesus, Oxford.

23/5.

Dear Magi,

It was back to work for me too on Sunday morning, or so I intended. The temptation to return to the flat when I rose at noon was after painful self-debate defeated by the presence there of HIM: I couldn't bear being in the same room with the man after what you told me about his stranglehold on you. Acting seems to me the most primitive most basic kind of art, to witness a great performance is to be aware of a moment of warmth, sparkles & deep generosity (the gift of the artist "that is death to hide") existing in no other area of human activity. People who stifle expression are downright to me. But then,
again, there are several imponderables. In vino veritas: how much truth could I attach to your statements about feeling embattled at present? Certainly, as the evening went on, Scotch started blurring my personal reserve. I was telling you more and more emphatically about a change in you. A terrible gap all of a sudden. I had wanted to stay clear of you because of the existing situation. But it's the weakness in people that I've had a weakness for; not the mushy feminine romantic "weakness" I mean the psychic frailty which one detects and wants to defend against the callous judgments and attacks of other people, the "other people whom Sanke called 'hell'.

The tenderness I harboured was for those rare child-like facets of your personality. Saying that I'd never do anything you didn't want me to do, because you don't really have the strength to resist, should I or someone like me be persistent and brutal. I stayed away, hoping you wouldn't think that I was treating you in cavalier fashion. As the scene in the flat comes back to me now, I feel butterflies in the stomach. Is it all rather strange. If you wish to, shall we call it an accident of time and place???

I found that the Ister, a college glee-cricket side, was having a match at this village called Notche. I should have been working for this morning's tutorial, but how could I... So went along with the boys: the afternoon turned out to be pleasantly easy. We met the Notcians in the pub after the match, over beer, and played a set of Aunt Sally, a naive country game, tossing sticks at a doll. We had let the gents beat us, a tradition — more beer is a huge tea if they're scoring well — at cricket, but surprised them by just winning at Aunt Sally — "Arthur calling Russell [opponent] for one light ale" and "Garner calling Campbell, jr..."

Eventually things were going so well that I got back and just flopped into bed. Found a note to the effect that the Facani speaker for today couldn't turn up, so asking me ("Yours desperately, Mike Shepherd") to come and read some poetry at Brasenose College. Had to turn this down rather hurriedly; not quite in the mood for poetry discussions right now. Surprisingly, the tutorial came off beautifully — I had put in a few hours before breakfast.
I intended getting this away before lunch, but went down into the college cellar & found the cricketers there. We had a net at the ground after lunch, & I've been standing in the shower thinking that I'd better tear this letter up & write about the weather or something. But perhaps it must stand as it is: a moment when I tried to communicate with someone.

We came to London on Wednesday to play Univ. of L., but I may have to 'very sorry' the notice because of a paper on King Lear for Thursday. An interesting topic she gave me (I mean my tutor at Lady Margaret Hall) - the concept of justice in Lear:

The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel,
Poor fool & knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee. (III.2)

I've not been doing justice to Shakespeare this term, but I hope to turn in some fine work here.

Tristram Shandy's being done as experimental theatre at the Playhouse this week. Sadly, I missed the OUDS production of Winter's Tale. Could you imagine yourself as Perdita? The individual colleges are tackling various plays ambitiously, but though I do not go to the theatre regularly, I prefer professionals when I do.

Wish I could listen to some good jazz again: The sessions back "home" are what I most often miss. I expect that Coltrane or Parker or Leadbelly would hardly be up your alley, though. Anyway, there's always a first time.

What's on over Whitsum weekend? At the moment it seems as if it's North Wales for me. My pal's dad is a hot shot in the Edin. Dept., & I might as well get acquainted with the influential people: it sometimes pays.

Write & tell me how you're getting on. And don't make yourself sad & wretched, kid, whatever you do. Ciao. Love, Arthur.
Self-poem: I feel
dawn beyond words & find
my eyes search symmetries,
explore the correspondence of her gaze

gazelle at traffic lights, & yesterday
a swan drifted
upstream picking morsels from the water
a peacock shrilled the summer’s strange
melancholy of leisure
that brilliant bird, its plumage
trailing in the grass

If you were fat as a chub I should tickle
your belly till skies are spinning,
[a plain Jane would laugh herself]
 tame will weakness, sharing my season.

But love is too complex, you
were once beautiful when I wanted to say it.

K.A.N  May - 66

unclear nuclear
lonely at third man

And Odysseus Wept

Pink night-dresses in pink, night, boutique windows
And every sweet elegant dream such things give rise to—
Why should I hate them, I’ve not been deprived of them?

Soft murmurs of terraces, lime trees & lapping of water;
Slim-ankled Imo, her eyes in the lamp-light like water—
Why did they look at me, who had never dared pray for them?

The pride of attractiveness burns inside their faces,
Those who wear like togas— Their successes,
Why should I envy them, who have also won them?
Apartments where all is clarity—bathrooms smell
Of powdered skin: sponges, s Chanel—
Why should I scoff, I who have thanked God for them?
The truth of love, perfection, visions, dreams,
A face in the morning, joy falling like coins—
Why should I bawl at these, I who have counted them?

I, with the heart of a lover, heart of a hater,
Who have taken nothing easy since the day I was born,
Why should I hate the thing I have taken, who have paid for them?

The girl in the bar who asks for a table for one,
A little crazy perhaps, but lovely, her hair hanging down,
Bypasses me & sits (I'm exact) with a cross-eyed Italian.
Three seconds later they give soup & a hot conversation.
I don't even mind she misses out me, perhaps I prefer to watch her?

I have lived in the waves of the sea, borne up, tossed down.
Why should I weep at the waves, that have saved me & wrecked me so often?
Piazza di Spagna

P. J. Kavanagh
N/5—15 April 1966.
Jesus, Oxon.
8/6.

Dear Miss,
In your silence I had nightmares about what I'd said,
but it's ok now you've written to level things out. Very sorry about your
"bitter perplexity"—what can we say but 'cheer up'. I'm in that kind of
wipe-your-hand-across-your-face mood right now.

Because of the strength-sapping summer I've not composed
poetry. Ephemeral happiness, joy falling like coins. Blue tits are scuffling
in the leaves, the purple flowers fade in heaps on the edges of the
empty quad, I've got an essay on Sir's problem play (Tr. All's W., Measure). Casualty from Olori's end-of-term champagne session: just been called in & cautioned by the Junior Dean for drinking in New Street. I sat there patiently listening, wordless. Your letter's an antidote!

Broke out in an angry heat rash after a day in the field at Cambridge. What a go: the team split into 2 groups—we were rousing up the town in various states of disorganization & missed the coach back. Someone suggested a taxi, but half the money had become extremely unimportant to the four of us.

Tablets from the doctor & I've developed a smoker's cough. Bad luck, there's another batch of grads coming off today; one refuses to heed the danger signs. And tonight the Elizabethan Society harmony...

Had news from Coventry, an invite to spend the vacation down here. We're leaving on a cricket tour next Sunday (1974)—Dorset. Then I'll be back for a week, hoping to get some essential work off the chest—that's all of July. And maybe Green will Ian in August, or Sweater with Winter. What are you planning? May call you when within earshot. Have not heard from Mike & Bern but that's nothing unusual. It seems that one's best friends are those who appreciate in person performances. I'll find them; they'll say well A/M we knew you'd know we're still in the same place. No trouble!

What you could do at an odd moment is to ring FIA woman 5050 & drop regards to them.

Forget the icepaper effort, probably they don't sell it here. I've not found any in Oxford. Incidentally, am finding people who want to publish the kind of verse I've written, mostly no-pay. But it's still very exciting to find an outlet. It makes you feel that the world is a wedding.

Have you seen the short film on the legendary Allen Ginsberg poetry reading? They had Mitchell, Porter, Allen Ginsberg...
(HOWL!) - your idol - Feinghletti. Very good. Came in on the tail-end of a Tuesday night "jazz" session at the Clarendon, down here. Nothing but glorified pops, someone shouting into a mike & deafening guitars so that through the electrified din you couldn't even hear the alto sax getting in his licks. Masses of blond bitches & ecstatic bobs, though I was far too sober to stand more than 5 mins. of this curious blank-faced atmosphere.

Don't fear Christmass. Think I'm a punk: you know I'm not. But now & again one likes a little simple honesty, a little true laughter to light up the ennui.

Whitmore - finally we went not to Bungy but to Bolton where a memorable weekend was topped with a magnificent little tea at a roadside bungalow after the golden & bewildering ales of an afternoon swathed in crystal fire of sunshine... Goodbye to the north: do nothing till you hear from me in London. I love that solid city & its silken birds.

You sound pleased about rose bunches of hair. I'd really like to see that.

I missed Anne's birthday. Ian seems to be hard at work. The poem is very beautiful. So take rose bunches down! (see my mark) - I hope it gives you joy. May the waves wreck and rescue you too.

Write me sometime.

Yrs ever,
Arthur.

Jesus, Oxford: 19/6.

Dear Mags:

I feel completely bushed. On Thursday evening we had the cricket dinner in the pavilion, & I was drinking brandy like a king. Then with a huge head & a drumming belly there came the end-of-term collection, a ceremony where you enter a room with assorted dignitaries round a table to hear your Tutors telling your fortune to the prince, a thin, shy character insults you dauntily. Well, Pete was writing his last paper in the afternoon, so Ian & myself got
hold of some champagne & after we walked into Anne on her way from work we drank some more champagne, only to discover at the Anatomy place that Ian (hold your breath) had actually passed... The scene went completely emotional, Mac breaking down, Pete stammering. The news over the phone to Wimbledon, Anne weeping, Kian jumping for joy & offering plonk to anybody in sight — it was really good value. And if Pete gets through, boy, are we ever gonna rumble!!!

I got smashed out of my tiny, of course, as did everybody except Pete, whose been in this morning. Apparently he crashed the kebab ball, wandered into a room which he thought was a toilet & promptly walked off with a case full of booze that was lying around. I'm sipping gin & water, trying to recover for cricket against the dums this afternoon. We leave for Dorset in the morning, then I shall have to be back to utter slavery — my Tutors have really over-loaded the reading lists this time. So weep for me a little.

Your letter was very funny, Bec. I was checking my pigeon-hole in the lodge when, result of the night before, there was a sudden need to rush to the boy (they call it The Palace in college) & I was sitting there miserably when I came across the "load of pretentious balls" bit — hehe. Incidentally, a woman I met vaguely sometime at home writes me a serious comic letter that really had me rocking with laughter, a thick mixture of peasant religion, love & romantic goons. She says things like — "Oh Arthur, every night I pray for you in what you are craving (i.e. stirring) for..."

About Kian, glad you like it. Actually I've always signed my work like that: it was suggested to me by a high school teacher to whom I owe such a helluva lot — he is now under house arrest in P.E. & is contemplating exit permits for the family & moving to Eng. We've been trying for years to make him pull up the roots, but he was much more involved in the movement than most of us. From various sources I learn that things are worsening with my earth mother. May God bless the child.

Yes, of course you can have all the originals: you deserve them. I shall get the others to you when I've hunted them down among the myriads of papers in desks & drawers. I was mildly surprised to see you typed self-poem. It was something I'd abandoned, a "nonsequence " (as I think I explained) for private perusal. Thanks
all the same.

I haven't been treating my Muse with the greatest of decrees this summer, but then poetry comes by such fits & starts. Some time ago I jotted down the second stanza of Affinity, but let it go at that. Then, looking at it again this morning while searching for the originals, I dropped everything & found that it came out like this, it's for you—I hope you like it. The fact that one's written a poem once more leaves a pleasant tingling in the nerves: I think I shall walk down to the Turf & drink a scotch by way of celebration. About the punctuation, there's only one comma. It just happened as I wrote.

Hope Reading weather as good as you wished for. It's raining here, the type of day I adore. It reminds me of Capetown's one brilliant Easter.

Apart from collections, no exams for me. My finals come up next year (June '67). Officially, I am now what they call a Schools Man, that is a man who needs to work 3 terms flat if he has hopes of a reasonable degree. And boy, that piece of paper can make it or break it for a man. To me it matters less since I have a degree already, but if you'd seen Mac last night you'd know what I mean.

Well, enjoy yourself & write me sometime, kid. For now, it's ciao.

Luv, Arthur.

Footnote to "Kan"
The Eng. equivalent is the affirmative "Can", like in "Can do".

Jesus, Oxford.
3/7 - 11:45 PM.

Hey Mags!

Out of term college gates shut at the ridiculous hour of 10:30. I was out in the Turf for a pint or 2 with a lad called Thorac Turville-Petrie (the famous intellectual family, if you don't mind) —he's awaiting his Finals results & has a job lined up in Sweden, €200 paid a month. I ran into him after getting back from up North this morning with the firm purpose of not touching "the
most fantastic things in the world" (booze & cigsies — birds apparently uncatered for in this idiom) even before I got your letter — and thanks anyway for the timely warning. The thing you learn very quickly at Oxford is that you have to force the diplomatic drink upon yourself at times — meaning that I intend to end up either in Canada or Sweden eventually, as I said T-P is someone to cultivate as a contact. Besides, he’s a good lad, & that, as we say back home, is something.

Sorry about the long introd. I was trying to say is that at this unearthly hour the guy below me, whom I believe to be a Prof. Dobson, is busily typing some thesis or other. As I was attempting to fall asleep (as I should after 4½ hrs on the Pines Express from Manchester, after missing breakfast in a desperate chase to the Bolton station & a taxi across town) I thought of Affinity’s concluding lines, ending with the word reticences. I thought I was writing in the dark, at the time, & maybe I tried to cover the doubt up by sporting generalizations (your statement about what my poems say & what the poet himself says is very interesting). I say thinking how it all started to fall into place — I mean the sheer intuition of “timidities” & “reticences”, because you said in your letter: “Thanks for the poem, I can say no more.” It’s a sudden moment when I felt strangely that I’d been right in writing what I did, & of course it makes the poem so much more valuable as a personal record of a particular moment that mattered to me:

Love at the Lips was touch
as sweet as I could bear...[and once, etc.]

The cricket tour needs a verbatim retelling, so I shall hold it over. I’m much more excited by the thing I wrote in Lams, which I’d like you to type — it made my week, up in Bolton, it really did. I shall be working in Oxford (mentally) until the end of the month & then I want to see some more of London. If you are around & also, if Peter McPherson or whatever his name is, is not demanding


all your attention, I shall be glad to occupy some of your spare moments — pardon the conceit, of course — let's have a meal somewhere; a chat, o.k.?

I suppose I have to say this to get it off my chest (been fretting about it ever since I got in this afternoon, though); lad, at the same time as your letter from Canada, the kid whom I respected (is the term now out-dated??) I loved very very much for a long time, I swear your Absence is Repentance is many other things were written. I made the mistake of reading your next first, so that when I got to Joan's aerogramme it was depressing — I was thinking how in hell did you ever get involved in THAT effort, boy... Still isn't it a bit unfair: S.A. women hardly have a chance to be intelligent. It reinforces trenchantly your point about growing beyond the grasp of people you are familiar with. But how can you make them see the present incompatibility? Except by being plain bitchy, it's not in my nature to be... Period.

Chelsea Visit: we rest assured it wasn't you or anybody you know. My first trip to London turned out to be rather a surprise, again needing in-person explanation. Don't know why I gossip so much with you — it's as if one's found a way to speak all of a sudden, my mind whirls with things to tell you. It doesn't sound as if you're consciously trying to be "literary" or "intelligent-womanish" either, which is what so many people I'm in touch with try to do, so usually the ones in my academic circle. If there's something I'm glad about, it's that you did not end up at Oxford. Yuttatata!!!

Shall write you a more graceful (Oxfordian) letter when the mood strikes. Your was full of glancing liveliness. Ciao (everybody up north calls me "luv" — so it's in order). And luv.

A.

Agenda: there's been a mix-up with the allocation of rooms for people who come to Oxford conferences. The scout who cleans my room [Rose Tompkins] blew in here as I was struggling into my gear, so I told her to piss off & ask the Prince about the arrangements. There's a bloody huge list up in the lodge saying clearly who's in his room & who is not. A bit of a mess-up, but there's cricket on telly at 11, & it looks like another day of sweet relaxation.

What I hate now is the routine chore of bundling up the laundry. I've never got beyond washing some socks in the sink & hanging them up in front of the winter heater, though. There's a Hotpoint down in the palace in college & an ironing board, or the local launderettes. I just don't have the enthusiasm to stand around reading novels while the machine is whirling away full of powders & things.

Millions of letters to write, too, so apart from that I feel like getting some poetry out again. Was planning a short novel for this vac. — but where's the time? I keep on coming across things I want to read. "In the middle of the road of his life / I found myself in a dark wood": Dante's famous opening lines to the Divine Comedy. The sentiment is returnable — look after yourself, also, as you said.

Ever: A.

Oxford: 21/7

Maggie sweats,

...Despite the thunderings of damnation, there does seem to be hope in the air: the afternoon papers claim victory for sterling, the great invincible F, tottering on the brink of a catastrophic fall, rids the storm out once more. What a bloody miracle, or is it merely that the gnomes of Zurich are highly pleased with our (I must at this stage include myself, since I dig Brit. better, use petrol & the telephone) long-sufferance? Nevertheless, whether it’s by design or by accident that London can keep on swinging, thanks for the cheque from Nu
Nat. Provincial — it was saucy of you, I'd forgotten about it.
Money is a casualty of the summer. I've been working a
stitch & there's an inverse proportion somewhere, mooching around with
Thorlac [Turville-Petre] at the group, or what's left of it. Overspending. I've
been raving through the lettuce, like, after I got back from down-
there-on-a-visit. O tempora! O mores (Cicero), I know not what o dark
dark dark... Been getting sleep at all strange hours, searching as it
were for a continual change — so allow me a pause to suck a
Rennies, my pets are grumbling.

College is swarming with Americans. They have a conference (the
Eng-speaking Union) which ends on Sunday. The lads find it great sport
to take these rather naive women into the pubs, chat them up in
a super-duper way. Most of them are grads. of places in Texas & Calif.
one has never heard of before, so one doesn't really have to pit one's
wits in conversation, but it does sharpen the woozy mind to bring
them down a rung or three. Some of them are good lookers: Fuler
said was moving around with one of the most beautiful women I've
ever seen in my whole life, she showed a lively brain on the
occasions that I spoke with her. It turned out to be a fatal fascination
— she's gone to Stratford & the poor guy wants to propose, having
told his girlfriend to pee off. As for myself, I just keep on re-
membering that it's here today & gone tomorrow, like in the world
of pop, happy valentine & bye bye blackbird: so take it easy, dad, cool.

Oxford itself is full of tourists peering into ancient chapels
or examining the honey-coloured sandstone architecture specially
scrubbed down for them. Here & there you find genuine human
beings: I went to a church across from the Bodleian with
a drama student (Guildhall?) who wanted to do some brass
rubbings. She had some interesting points of view — for a rare after
noon we were talking about something other than Vietnam or S.A.

Among several surprises awaiting me was the A-Welsh Review with my poem (On The Train, circa '66) in it, but they messed
it up in such a vital spot that it's hardly worth letting you have
it. "Saint" for "same" — what stupendous irony: I don't quite
intend a closer acquaintance with them, Pearly Gates yet, &
besides I've not started me hair lessons, so how can they canonize me so?? Still, I'm in very good company you should see the poem Verlaine Aid Rimbaud, it's the most brilliant piece of writing on the celebrated homosexual theme that I've come across.

And a rap over the knuckles for my dear typist (viz. "things" for "things" in Seeadays) - the malaise catches, no? Or perhaps I did err in the script you had, but I'm almost certain the error is a Digby Wills one. Anyway, I can edit it by pencil before sending it to Black Orphans Nigeria or somewhere. The others are perfect, the super type again making me feel that the poem is somehow more deep & meaningful than it is.

Happy holiday. Anne (had lunch with them on Sunday) asked me about a tent you people needed for continental camping. Made enquiries with likely people, without luck. I shan't be going Greek this summer; instead, I think it necessary to cool my heels in Croydon, with the occasional weekend at B & M's, who have moved by now to Highbury. You can ring them at MOUNTview 9855. Anne was in fits about your swooning, which K.A.N italy embellished with surrealistic detail. And I am given to understand that penicillin apparently has no effect on the consumption of & reasonable quantities of alcohol, so maybe he pratis be searching links up with a Freudian syndrome: you wanna watch it now!

Lemons - of course I should like to see you again, too, as you know it. But baby, everytime it happens (like your voice over the phone that night) it makes me go Tender & I have treasonable thoughts. I'm fighting bec. it won't do to create fresh difficulties; you are committed & I am vulnerable. There are, however, areas in which we will probably continue to converse fruitfully, so I was teasing you a little about the realistic side. Bern, who overheard, afterwards gently chided me for, as she said with her neat smile, "mental cruelty." In the senitonic business of living it seems difficult at times to separate the two elements.

Feel free to discuss lit. & crit. Whenever you wish to. I'm no prudit, & new views are always welcome. One prefers, like Beckett, an
eloquent foot to a wordless genius. Your little essay on Wittgenstein was illuminating: I had glanced at the N.F. article briefly in the hurry to get onto the August Encounter. Take it on holiday, there's something by Mayne which entertained me this morning, as a result of the article on translating poetry, I am rushing out to get a copy of Ezra Pound, whose translation of Guido Cavalcanti is famous (should all my poetic mercy fall away...). P. was one of the excitement of my intellectual life. He is eminently worth a re-read.

I have been cleaning out my desk, trying to rescue some incunabula from oblivion—the poems are S.A. in setting, starting with *Burning of Letters*. The usual process, but don't strain during your last week.

Generally, things are as they say, going for me now, that's just fine. There'll be no time to reply, perhaps, but send me a card or so wherever you are, I do enjoy yourself. Ciao.

Yrs, Arthur.

*Culture Note.*

Inadmissible Evidence—Osborne at the Playhouse. Mastroianni superb in *Divorce—Italian Style*: Saco.

Sweets:

Patterns reveal themselves in a manner that fascinates me. Here I'm sitting at 8:10 waiting for the breakfast places to start opening, and the wisecracks amount to a week's extended adolescence in the big city. What I'm wondering afterwards always is how I could beef myself up with all those goofsballs, meters of potage, pots of messages, etc. Tch! Tch! If I hadn't told you ½ the story when I called yesterday, perhaps my prose would be more palatable. Anyway, even if I distort the detail a bit, you can admire the poetic rhythms I manage to exploit in what follows.

Travelling without luggage, so to speak, one needs fewer reservations: it was a blessing in a sense that you couldn't make the Tally Ho tavern the week before. Thereby hangs several tales. The main result was that I ended up at a bigoted semi-national S.A. party and suffered such an acute depression at finding myself
encouraged by parvenus, popists (kick the pope! for all I care about it), scrofulous bastards, pseudo-intellectuals, dimwits, hysterical women—it was phantasmagoric. So this past weekend, aching bitterly for excitement, I decided to case a few Highgate joints. For one thing, nearer home beats means one can drink more freely, giving that demon full rein. For another, Karl Marx lies buried somewhere near, doesn’t he?

Anyway—proceed to pub no. 1. Most neat in Casuals, feeling spry & arch, meets this painter. Conversation, guarded at first, in the best C.P. manner, finally warms into mutual understanding of sorts. Eventually I get myself “invited round,” as they say. So we sit about various roses, sauternes, burgundies, s o for the s a time—oh what a lovely time, ducky! Don’t say so!

Back again. Mrs Bird’s sausages are nice & salty, succulent so you can feel you’ve had breakfast. My hand feels considerably steadier. The whole system is beginning to appear, once more raiding the superbly ridiculous letters column of Time Mag., “ane, eat, s ept.” Do you know that French saying, the more they change the more they remain the same? Plus ça change...(plea sah zhong—yes, that’s it)

Your critical appreciation of my work, while not entirely valid (I’ve got a suspicion about being superficially defensive here), I find valuable. It is possible of course, it’s sometimes desirable, to trim one’s sales according to the taste of one’s audience, though I’ve not been worried overmuch because I’m not publishing. You’re dead right when you say that one should push oneself in this direction. It’s better to become ambitious once one’s got beyond the flash-in-the-pan phase, it seems to me that artistically now I’m solid & strong enough to pursue my own policies, as it were. In any case, if overnight fame were to arrive suddenly, I’d probably be more surprised than anyone else—I’ve always worked best from an outsider’s position: to become closely rich & celebrated would ruin me as a poet. I’d have to drag out a miserable existence as a Bushman-Bourgeois, enough to turn Ithaka z my Jewish uncle in his graves.

You forgot to send me “Period,” but your remark in parenthesis “sick” is wonderfully apt. Hi, beautiful, what’s you don’t smile?... Yes, what you describe as “splashin’ around” is in fact what I call giving the poem its head, letting it propel me under its own impetus. It’s but the vague idea that I go back to the desk with. Lately it becomes a bit of a ritual, debating with myself whether what I want to say at
given moment is worth saying. If the emotional impulse is strong enough, it usually forces itself through the crust of learning, experience, sensibility, & what have you, the way a baby pushes itself out into the weary, stale, flat & unprofitable (as thee to a nunney!) world. Period!

Glad you like philosophy. I'm running out of titles for poems, so you can expect some weird things coming up. And No Blues is a new beginning for me. Could I imagine something like "the women of my age" before London in particular & England in general? No, but I've been doing my homework & learning facts. I've started picking out the important details. What remains to be learnt is how to make snap decisions.

1. A bun is a bun is a bun. Right.
2. Do pass the poems around to that bird — don't be stingy, my darling. Furthermore —
3. Introduce me with due deference, appropriately, & not mincing your words. Extol my romantic soul, my raffish, good looks.

And so forth.

But for Pete's sake keep that philosophy don at bay! (The pun is unintentional.) You must have been embattled with the 2 of them giving their proverbial guns, as we Afghans of my pedigree say.

I expect to be seeing Ian, Pete Jones, sometime. Meanwhile, I'm bethinking off to the library to see about some books I need. Later during the week I hope to get some poetry to you. But you've been perverse & censorious about Period, my little one. Bill Newcomb, the artist bloke I met, got pissed as a newt, stood in the centre of the room with his belly out and materials all dangling down, declaiming from the original draft in a stentorian voice. Then his wife up at me with my bottle & coat in a corner, hugely amused, throwing out the words with a fine gusto of disgust — "a poet as randy as a rattlesnake." Whereupon she cuts herself a generous slice of turkey. Still, plus ça change. (Plea sak what?)

There are no more sacred cows; the thought gives one what the French call a Flisson, a pleasurable tingle laced with irony.

Once more Hen to the breach. Again, the pun is not intended. I mean work, that elusive document which will tell the big shameful lie. K.A.N merely "passed through" these venerable doors; it was too hard to take the rough edges off. Plus ça change, plus c'est
la même chose. But – poco a poco...

Take care of yourself, too. You’re a great kid.

Yrs truly,

Arthur

P.S.

Where we start differing is the fact that you “like animals around.” I don’t, but that’s another story. This should’ve gone yesterday. Little facts keep on impinging. Ciao. A.


12/10 – M. darling,

Terribly rushed: essays, letters of application, other kinds of academic shuffling. My tutor obliged me with a B minus on Friday’s collection, not bad going considering it was my last formal Oxford exam. Next time you write, remind me to discuss a film called The Knack, which I saw tonight with Irina la Dorze (no, I mean the double itself).

But before I go for the week’s 2nd tutorial, the dudler of the 3 now things to get off my chest – sorry to burden YOU! It’s Casualty! Something else. Thing that’s happening is typical, I guess: meaningful noises are being made in my direction: I don’t want to hide some of my meaner stuff. Just close your eyes tight while you’re typing.

Casualty is an attempt at cool disgust when I strolled around in a half-wit-it-all mood. Fading light should soften any “sick” impact. Tryin’ an odd pair, anyway. Almost a travesty that they are about the same woman. Plus ça change, see... Ciao, X’s over – Arthur.

P.S. keep original if you wish, though I can’t see you diggin’ my inver... [Dear Joan Cornelius]

Hi! Well, you people do seem to be enjoying yourselves immensely from the looks of it. I know that kinda wild feelin’ when things are happenin’ all over the place, so much so you eventually get to do your letters in instalments, touch up here & there, read in snatches & operate piecemeal. Life becomes bitty, man. Or as the Italian expression (poco a poco). Cool.

And tell Judy, Dianne (?) & those other kids their greetings from merrie England. Period, with XX kisses.

Me, I’m just back from London where I wore or less lay low for a coupla weeks, wrote an essay, threw in the odd bacchanalia, Saturnalia
if it's in weekend terms, like). Everyone was busy working so it pre a bit dull at times, but after I shifted scene from T.H. (10 miles south of the City) to the northern side of town (20 min by tube from Traf.Sq.), but by now probably I've got you confused, they did improve noticeably. I left T.H. because of a one-sided quandary. Mr Smith was doing all the talking, I was assuming him with nods + signs of assent that he needed bother to serve notice as I hadn't been a paying customer anyway. (His wife was away on a holiday visit to S.A. — this seems to explain the brusque grumpiness which so surprised me. It was more than half funny.)

Moral of the story: persistent experience teaches me that when I am on my best behaviour in a new environment I am likely to get kicked out or hurt in some other way. Resolution: never try to be at your best, anywhere. Does this kind of logic make sense? It shouldn't, but there you are.

Oxford is the same as ever it was, prim yet gainful, prissy yet becoming alive. I'm joining that famous institution, the Oxford Union, tomorrow. You can pay something like £30 to become a life member. I don't want to be that vain, however; besides I probably can't afford it. It's worthwhile to be with the impecunious, though, for a term or two.

Just had my collection result back this morning. Got a B minus, not bad considering this was my 1st formal exam at Oxford. I'd dropped off the night before under a load of ales topped off with a triple scotch & soda. But I should stop rattling — most probably a B minus is the rest of it don't mean a thing. You seem to be much more excited about some of your new ideas & ventures & so am I, in as far as I am capable of judging from across the Atlantic. What pulled me up sharp was the entry, "conversational French" — what!!! Still, maybe the girls got confidence beyond my actual knowledge, isn't it? Wanna watch it with the rum & coke then, ducky, if you're going through all them golden-haired things.

I'm remaining on the Facasi (Joint Action Committee Against Racial Intolerance) issue, probably very inactively. Trouble is I'm strictly not (e you're so bustling with clichés these days that why should I apologise for mine!!!) strictly not what they call an organization man.
I've got this batch of Jacari membership forms on the table. 2/- each. In the end I'll simply toss them out the window & pay the £2 or so out of pocket. Not surprisingly, the other side of the coin is more promising. You are obviously moving as the A.S.U. sec is the W.U.S. rep. (I just receive their voluminous mail & dump it somewhere till I can hazard a swift look), so this is pleasing. Or perhaps that's just an impression I get.

About badminton: I wanted to play soccer, but my finals are comin' up — no good to sport around too much. Playing as such wouldn't be bad in terms of time consumption, but the lads usually sit tight in the pavilion or come back to college afterwards & head for the bar. For the moment, I'm on fruit juice & of cigs, watch me this weekend. Cool.

I'm in college again, same room. Hunting for digs, second only to suffering a waiting period at Oxford. Railways is the booniest trip in the book. I was fortunate in being able to stay. Jesus is right bang in the middle of town, back of Marks & Spencers, front of Barclays. Next tutorial tomorrow, but what's it be "today" since I see its 3.30 am by the underwater service clock I brought back from London? (tell you how a lad bet me a pint & brown ale I wouldn't throw me watch in the river Thames at Isis?)

No, haven't read Shute at all. Saw On the Beach once in a fire-bitten bioscope back of a factory in old pov' Elizabeth. Some hours ago saw thing called the Knack (is who las' it), with Irma la Douce. Fine double. Enjoy your homemakin', & give a thought if you can.


Maggie baby,

Got your letter - very perceptive — & the poems, which in retrospect don't look as brilliant as I thought they were. Maybe it was my mood: poetry, even one's own poetry, is, like booze, bad on an empty stomach.

Things are what they always are during term — but Nat's begging the question. Tell you all about it when I get to London over the weekend. Out of the blue the painter bloke I met, Bill
Newcombe, sent me an invite to an exhibition of paintings (Bill & 5 other colleagues - Kinetic? Op? Pop? Mobile Art? Don't know!!!) on Mon. 31st, & tells me I can have the spare room if I wish. Most probably I'll be with Mike & Bern overnight, though: being with Bill after the private showing is sure to be suicidal in terms of liquid consumption & abstrusely, peculiar discussion.

I'm thinking in terms of getting enough work done for next week's tutes so that I can leave here on Sat. & return Tues.

Sorry about the seeming breakdown in communication.

Bloody embattled, as always, grimly clinging to shreds of self-respect. So far, miraculously, I've managed to keep off the grass, as it were. Yrs - Arthur.

P.s. If at all interested I could in a matter on Sunday, can drop Mike a message? Say where & when to meet you, & we should be able to fit in the long-promised stint at Kentish Town's Tally Ho.

Mags baby -
Rushed, but hope delay hasn't wrecked your budget. Thanks all the same.

Finally decided to WORK now. Tons of letters to answer.

No verse - yet.

The show was a rave. Bill Wyman of the Rolling Stones turned up, quietly, in an executive grey suit. And beautiful girls were serving champers, if you'll pardon me calling that lovely bubbly-bubbly liquid "champers."

Guy Fawkes night, let in college bar & later in Trafalgar Tavern - a gas for Jesus. Outa mah tiny winy. I mean, hell, old girl!!

But mere later, when time. Ciao - Arthur.

Footnote:
Ray bearer £1.00, or the equivalent in gold bullion, etcetera et cetera.

Rosemary Spira: Americans In Town, Assessment, Separation, Chelsea.
Dennis 11/66 - Cosmos, Affinity, Grim Place.
Zeke: 11/71 - Americans, Grim Place, Strange Affections.
Hi Octopussy!

Thanks, belatedly, for yours—all I can say at this late stage is I enjoyed the eloquently spun narrative about Kate's flat, the London soirees you attend, those wild shenanigans in Greek cafés. By the sound of it your powers of persuasion are undiminished & your way of making the scene unimpeachable. Period.

I come again across your idea of an animal's essential being. No, I never tried to pin the essence on paper—I take it you mean 'dog' or 'dog', not as man's faithful friend—unless one can include under this the female of homo sapiens, in which case I admit to having reflected on a particular intensity of sexual experience, thus:-(ACT).

One can never match in words the complex of physically crucial sensations, emotional tautness & the one rare moment in waking life when the mind is in total eclipse. I am attached to this little vignette mainly because it expresses the resolution of a tender loneliness which I've not since equalled (my verse has improved in other directions, yes). And though the experience was unique, of an unrepeatable time & place I mean, it was the 1st time I had insight into a physical relationship—that in the nature of things the woman's love earth mother I but the natural instrument: the bird's eloquence is hidden, gliding above the grace-note of the water.

It was good to see the Rilke again, though this kind of writing is untranslatable. Remarkable for its time, as you say, & yet not so remarkable that it's always been an undercurrent of rebelliousness somewhere. The other thing is that Eng. is probably the poorest language in true rhymes, & the translator of version you sent me was probably at pains to impose some sort of form on the original. I'd love to reply will one of G.M. Terrible Sonnets, in which the economy of expression is astonishing without being eccentric, but that'll have to wait, because

I had a letter from Gerald Moore, who is editing an anthology of Afr. Poets for Penguins. He's taken 2 of the Absa prize-winners (Black Orpheus 1962). Now he wants some more contemporary stuff & I've sent off some scripts to him, thanks to you mainly. Don't go yelling your head off, though—these often have a habit of mysteriously dying out. I'm waiting on more news. Incidentally, sweets, my London contact (Dennis Brutus) finds he likes Affinity For Maggie very much.
He goes on about 'wonderful freedom of structure', etc. If they take this thing, I hope you don't mind me keeping the title the way it is. The pun on 'for' in the bracket was unintentional — usually poems are addressed 'to' people who for one reason or another one has thought about much.

New Contact, an Oxford mag, printed one of my things last week. It was a lost weekend anyway. Reason — one of the lads had come upon some hashish (little powdery golden nuggets in a crumpled envelope, very expensive, very sinister). Gareth Baxter-Jones asked me that since my room would be least conspicuous, to roll a 'joy blast' for an hour or so. Well, I wasn't too sure about this arrangement, but for a lark I sat in with them. Hash, like S.A. 'daggie', is non-habit-forming. Well, it was good shit, that lot — after about 10 mins, I was floating 8 miles up, with thoughts too luminous to recall. The quiet sensation was of course followed by the usual depression, like in alcohol, only the tongue tastes bitter & there's a harsh dryness against the palate. Material for a future story: Noijsie the Jesus Shit Smokers. At this juncture Maggie, aghast, swallows 2 purplehearts.

I'll have to borrow your copy of Heresy when I come back to London. Something I've evidently missed is Bellow. So I don't know how true your indictment of 'Establishment figure' is, until I've read some. Been grappling madly with Pope, Dryden & other unsavoury gentlemen of belles-lettres. Autumn ended this weekend (2 horrible little blue stockings from Somerville came to drag me out to tea with them — the N. Contact editors — yech!!) I started polishing some notebook poems. They all have a period flavour — my Capetown college days when I was brash, naive, salacious, & cynical as the young John Donne (no comparison!) who could swear that nowhere lived a woman both true & fair. Brief notes, for your eyes only:

Ship of a Girl was all that remained of a disastrously futile attempt to write a longer poem about the failure of love in the face of fresh developments. A nearly more than word-play. Which is not true of Soliloquy-revolution propaganda if I hadn't struck upon the idea of a sky colloquial manner married to a mock complaint to the fad also of mistresses of romantic verse. It ends in argument rather than in decision or resolution of the problem — at the end it still seems me speaking all the time.

I am surprised & delighted to find how fresh some of my ideas have remained. In other places I've tried to remove some obvious discrepancies or archaisms, but it's best not to have tampered too much. Replace one wrong word for a weak 1 & the flavour of the poem vanishes.

Synopsis is just that. With Exception I've spoilt a somewhat superb
opening by having to find a last line. But the best effort of that period was undoubtedly Search. I've been much obsessed with this idea; this is its earliest airing. All my guts, gore, frayed nerves, muddled dignity, desire & dumb numbed anguish of humanity went into it. What I had to leave out is perhaps even more NB than what remained e.g.,

What troubles the flesh leaves the bone

sorry. Is it heart's desire, or what? It is

loneliness, believe me, despite the attachment

of muscles, clinging to tautened sinews...

Well, I must stop rambling. My birthday on 16th Dec. a Friday, but we intend to carry it into Sat. as well. I'll be moving into the flat with Phil Garney, whose buddies (Davey & Steve) have gone home for Xmas turkey & Yorkshire pudding with their respective mummies. Someone has given us the

recipe for chilli con carne, & we intend cooking this up in a huge pot. The drinks (Sorry for polite terms!) are on me it is generally agreed. If your attentions are not required in London, why not come along. Anne in any case will still be around at Ian's flat.

We won a thrilling match at Twickers on Tuesday, didn't we? Yes. If South African beat our boys; at other times we would have diplomatically avoided each other, but in rugby we are united. Viva la Oxford! 3 cheese chops

and cioc. Sincerely, Arthur.

Postscript: the inevitable happened after a beer & chicken lunch in the local - Phil suggested a scope. We saw a 'horror' (very mild) 60 thing called See You In Hell Darling [my 1st Regal show] with this Whitman bleke lumbering about like a grizzly gorilla. Janet Leigh always looks desirable, though. Dialogue was the standard New Wave Americanese e.g. Get the hell off my back for leave me alone, the fires are out & the war is over.

Top Of The Pops on College telly & The Girl From Uncle, with the regulation 2 pints to round off the day. It's 10.30 p.m. - got to get some kit & books packed.

This should've been off, but since I started writing to you I no longer do journal entries on significant episodes; usually you hear all about them. So all I have to do now is copy the letter out. A recent-happening summary. News. Yrs - A.
Dear Arthur,

You probably don’t remember little Susan, but I think of you oft
I hope you found the books I left for you—but, then, maybe the porter is
interested in lit. crit.!

Hope you are well & still studying furiously. You must be nearly
finished with your studies. Still going to Canada? Do drop me a note
if you have a spare minute or two.

Susan (Bet) Eustace

Xmas/New Year 1966.

Cosmo, for the Heinemann’s deal: 3/1/67

London Impressions, Period, Transition, Assessment, Casualty, Strange Affections,
Fading Light, Midnight, Ciao, Song For A Passport Continuation.

Jesus, Oxon: 3/1/67.

My Lady:

I found your card amusing almost to distraction. I’m
laughing not so much at the American extravagance &
sense of occasion as at the knowledge that the writer
must have been exceedingly sloshed, hammered, plastered, pissed as a coot &
silly as a dodo to write an inscription like that. Fabulous message! The
thing is on the mantelpiece in the process of becoming a Maggie Lena
classic, & everytime I turn that way there’s another quiet chuckle coming
up. When do you have your birthday? I feel this lovable absurdity just
begs a reply in similar vein.

By now you must have recovered from the more traum-
atic experiences of the weekend. I hope your visitors were genial people
but then you hardly need coaxing to make other people feel at home. I
should tell you how I enjoyed Friday evening. It was simple, clean (?) unhur-
rried, somehow contriving to be both light & serious. But any study in
depth is bound to spoil the effect we came away with. ‘Super’ or ‘great’
would be facile generalizations: it was all over good simply & warmly, I think.

... I said to the Ceiling.

Oxford as I say & correspondents upon getting back
is the same as ever: crowded, busy, self-sufficient. I’ve taken $ 100 out of the
bank, I have one left. There are eating problems. My first impulse is to
dash into the Roebuck at 7 & order plaaee chips & wedge—not to be
bothered. Usually, however, I meet someone in the lodge or round the corner
who’s been to the Roebuck last night & wants to vary it a bit. I say well
look I reckon I wanna go eat in the Roebuck anyway seeing as how I
dig plain Eng. cooking & you get plenty on your plate & you needn't tip the
waitress & they're all nice friendly & Randy old maids & the barman & the
chief between them obviously ... If it's a bloke who goes to chapel before Sunday
breakfast, by this time we'd have parted silent company. More usually it's one
of the lads; I'm dragged off to some joint like Crawfords - mass-produced,
conveyor-belt grub with po-faced women in blue overalls dishing up out of steel
bins & a grim witch waiting at the cash register: 4/10 plus a penny for
S.E.T., & off to squeeze in at one of their ridiculously small tables I am
finding David Morris & Mike Harris hunched over shepherd's pie & baked beans.
Places like Crawfords - huge room full of grubby tables, crumbs & an air of
muffling poverty - give me the creeps.

Waiting for news from Cosmo. He's doing the selection for that Hex
eman's deal. Haven't heard from Penguins yet; presumably they're also recupera-
ting after the Yule celebrations. Keep you informed, though. - A great deal of
the credit should go to 'my typist', if these things become real, which at pre-
sent they threaten to do. I doubt whether I could've got those scripts prepared
(by myself) with which Cosmo is feeding magazines in a publicity bid. Probably
I'd never have bothered anyway. I'm harking through the pile in the drawer, & it
occurs to me that I'm going to have difficulty trying to patch together some
of the old ones, unless you've kept the originals of poems as different as
At Rest From The Grim Place (is that in fact the title?) & Philosophy...[etc]

And that exists in this mutilated version: So can you get it? copies...

The worrisome thought is that if you move house or get married blissfully you
may be saddled with a fair-sized cardboard box labelled something like 'Novy: INCUNABULA'.

The cleaning-up operation begins slowly. I have the wastepaper
basket next to the table in the centre of the room: both bars of the fire
are an murky orange. - The window panes are misted over with cold January
dew. Work requires effort, as will gather. I'm being ruthless with the Xmas
cards & birthday wishes; somehow I find it the greatest satiety to harbour
them for more than a few jolly days of euphoria & turkey leftovers. Long
before the holly wilts over pub lamps & the come down to gather dust
in the attic (even my pose is suffering a post-alcoholic lack of originality, so
acute that I can't help in this section but throw in the towel of apology)
long before that I'm tempted to give seasonal sentimentality the boot. But
every time I dip into a desk or shelf up comes a load of cigarette coupons
Saved against a rainy day (how on earth am I gonna make $6000 or