

Dear Rob —

Saturday, January 8

You are spoiling me with your electric typewriter. Thursday I retyped 8 solid pages of study guides in what seemed like no time. However, I also had ~~two~~ quizzes to type and, since Mama was asleep and the typewriter is in your room, I typed them on mine. Result — one was usable, but the other — on an older (i. e. a couple of months) cheap school ditto — was illegible. It's a good thing I won't be typing dittos much longer.

I haven't been writing because I've had such a thoroughly rotten cold that I haven't had anything to write about — but I'm out of it except for a drippy nose now. It has a nasty ending — but Dr. Dickey prescribed lovely little pink (Pepto-Bismal color) pills — and I would say that's all gone since for lunch today I ate all but one pie in a whole can of ravioli by myself!

I really blew my top in World Lit yesterday and shocked them and myself by telling them they are "too damn lazy" — sometimes shock has good results, however — we'll see what happens Monday. I had really knocked myself out to make up and type for them a step-by-step guide of good questions on the Pardoner and his tale (from the Canterbury Tales) (they read it over vacation) to be answered in writing when I was absent so it wouldn't be a wasted day — I had told them to have it in class Friday (I was there Thursday but needed the period then to introduce Dante for their first assignment). I did — with brief notes on the ditto itself. Some said they had left to home — others said

they had just talked in class, not worked - others couldn't even remember what they had done. I told them we would not discuss it until they all came prepared - but that they would of course be held responsible for it on the upcoming test. What an old crank that Michel Legoulat is!

I'm listening to Don Giovanni on WQXR now - There is a 4 hour program on Saturday nights with a pleasantly chatty host and good music. New York City Opera may do Don Giovanni next year or soon after (they haven't done it before) - doubtless with Norman Craig as the Don. He's really great - an actor as well as a singer - and properly saturnine-looking for the part.

Writing "saturnine" reminded me of telling the kids about the old ideas about humours and physiognomy (i.e. gap teeth mean you'll travel, etc.) - and I realize remembering how the kids read each year to Chaucer, Dante, and Shakespeare and the attendant background materials that if you were to teach a course in pre-20th century literature limiting it to only a couple of periods, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance would, oddly enough, appeal to the kids more than, for example, the 18th and 19th centuries. I think there is an odd combination of appeals there - both certain similarities in views and more noticeably, odd facts, ideas, beliefs, etc. of the type that intrigue the adolescent mind. Of course it helps that those I just happen to be among the greatest of all the world's writers - and I never cease to be amazed at how much Dante - who,

despite his universal qualities, is still very much a man of his time writing in a form totally foreign to these kids - appeals to them.

Would you come in to my class as a guest lecturer when you are home? How about telling them background for Proiere - dressed in costume for the time?



I think I'll go down and make myself a pot of real tea with leaves floating around in it. I haven't done any schoolwork yet (it's a bit after 10:00) and I feel only mildly wicked. I'll be very sorry about 10:00 tomorrow night, but I have had a pleasant weekend so far. (and I'm writing a very ~~not~~ nothingish letter - maybe I'll be inquired later.)

On the jacket for a Sergette Skyeer mystery (her mysteries are 20th c. - I haven't read any yet, but Thom has) there is a very appreciative comment on her characters and dialogue by Dorothy Sayers!

Monday night
As I told you on the phone, blowing my stack was at least briefly effective.

Mamma decided to postpone the S-F book since she has 28 days on it (but found the book intriguing) and started Joe Oldenbourg's new book, Years of the Kingdom (about the Iron classes in the Middle Ages) since that is due in 2 weeks. I've been bringing her books while she is sick - and she is really going through them.

I'm so groggy I was falling asleep over the quiz I had writing, so I'll end this ~~now~~ illegible as it is.
Be good.

Love,
Luis