

AS MUCH FOR YOUR SAKE
a gay verbatim play

by Shane Bridger Lutz

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is devised from letters in *My Dear Boy: Gay Love Letters Through the Centuries*,
edited by Rictor Norton.

A total of 11 different individuals contributed to the framework of this play.

Beyond edits for clarity and formatting, the letters remain unchanged.

Below is a key to all of the figures whose letters are featured in *My Dear Boy*.

Scene I: Dawn

Letters from Colin Spencer, American writer, poet, and journalist, &

Letters from John Tusker, an Australian theatre director

RED reads Colin Spencer's letters & BLUE reads John Tusker letters

Scene II: Morning

Letters from Rupert Brooke, British poet.

YELLOW reads Brooke's letter

Scene III: Midday

Letters from Piotr Illyich Tchaikovsky, Russian composer of the Romantic period, &

Letters from Ralph Edward Hall, who served in the British Royal Air Force in WWII

RED reads Tchaikovsky's letters & BLUE reads Hall's letters

Scene IV: Afternoon

Letters from Herbert Copeland, American Biologist.

YELLOW reads Copeland's letters

Scene V: Dusk

Letters from Pier Paolo Pasolini, Italian film director, poet, writer, and intellectual, &

Letters from Joseph Randall Ackerley, British writer and editor.

BLUE reads Ackerley's letters & RED reads Pasolini's letters

Scene VI: Evening

Letter from Countee Cullen, American writer during the Harlem Renaissance.

YELLOW reads Cullen's letter

Scene VII: Midnight

Letters from Oscar Wilde, Irish poet and playwright, &

Letters from Stanley Haggart, founder of the Gay Liberation Movement

BLUE reads Wilde's letters & RED reads Haggart's letters

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While the play features a large quantity of letters from varied authors, they have been woven together to create a narrative featuring 3 distinct individuals.

Characters

RED

BLUE

YELLOW

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marks a shift in the narrative of the letters.

Sometimes this means the start of a new letter.

Sometimes this means a change has occurred.

Sometimes this means the writer can no longer write.

The play toys with the nebulous nature of how, where, and when we identify.
Therefore, no specifics have been given regarding time, place, or staging requirements.
All potentials are available.

Scene I: Dawn

RED My Dear John,
I suppose
it is difficult for you
as it is for me
to write this letter,
what to say and how much to say,
the adroit inference that is self-consciously planned.
It is all vastly complicated
and I can't pretend
to understand a quarter of it.

One has,
of course,
a few clues.

1

I miss you.
That is only natural, I suppose,
but worse,
I feel miserable without you and
regret the times I was
unkind
and
certain.

That again is only human.

2

I keep on seeing you everywhere
I go
in Brighton,
your head or hands or body
appear suddenly,
flash forward
and then I hear your voice.

I am full of ghosts.

And then there is

3

it is not enough to
remember,
but my mind insists
upon recreating moments

we should have
experienced
and wondering if life
is going to allow us
to.
Like midnight bathing . . .
I bathed
naked
in a warm and
darkened sea
in the early hours of
this morning
and
this afternoon
bathed in
the same sea,
naked again.
I am too dazed and quite unable
to make plans.
I hope we shall be able to see
each other
again soon.

//

BLUE My Dear Colin,
It seems very strange
to see your name beginning
this letter.
All last week
I took pleasure whenever there was
an immediate contact between us.
That meant
judging your mood of that moment
watching your first reaction
I take most delight
in the moment when an idea
bridges two people,
an electric moment
when a word, an idea,

without necessarily being deep,
joins one to another,
when the word doesn't have to be
formed and spoken,
then
it is even more exhilarating.
That happened
between us
many more times than
once
I think.
In comparison
a letter is a poor substitute.
What I thought might happen
is happening.
I already distrust and disbelieve all
that I felt we achieved
when we were together.
Why?
I'm not quite sure.
Perhaps
there wasn't a strong link forged?
Perhaps
it's an unconscious effort at
protection
in case you no longer believe
in it
Send me a sane letter.
Or even flippant.
Not earnest
like this one.

//

RED My Dear John,
What a strange and curious letter.
Why should you be afraid
of such a normal reaction
to last week?
We may well

go down
in a cataclysm of
thunder,
guts
and tears
and having nothing
at the end of it all
to remember.
I don't think life
bothers
or even worries
about what we secretly want.
It gives us
something quite different
from
what we asked for.
And then
of course
one can always play
that delightful game of
adaptability.
When one is about ninety,
bald, paunchy and addled
(and maybe wise)
one
can't cry
like the young
or long
like the frustrated
because one has "adapted" to
oneself.
And that
is probably a living death.
Which is all to say that
if you want something enough,
scream for it until
you get it,
don't,
don't be reasonable.

Love is rare enough
after all,
for one to tear one's own guts out in order
to get it.
And we all play that game
in some degree
or
other.
You know I
believe,
think,
feel, that something real
did happen last week.
I don't think I've doubted it
once.
But
I think it can die
through undernourishment
quickly.
So if you can,
and if you can bear to see me washing, ironing, packing,
why don't you
come down
next weekend?

//

BLUE Dear Colin,
. I was in a daze
all last week.
I couldn't get you from my mind,
I was more than
miserable.
And I felt frustrated,
that we were so
far apart
and that,
at that moment,
if we had been together
we could have been

very happy.
I found myself looking for you
in the streets,
in cafés,
at the theatre,
hoping by some
strange quirk of chance
you had been
able to come
up to town. . . .
Little love
I never doubted
what happened last week.
I simply couldn't stop wondering
if it had affected you
as it had
me.
I was afraid to say – I want to be with you
– see, here I'm shying,
because I really want to say,
I love you.
And that is true.
I want us to find time
to explore that
because we would be very happy
very often.
Last week,
for the first time for many months
I gained confidence in myself.
That was your work.
You did it in many ways.
Summer started last week.
I'm coming down at the weekend
if it's still all right.
I'll give you a hand
in packing and preparing.
Please,
though,
not too much of that.

Leave some time for
lying in the sun,
bathing
and being happy.

//

RED Dear John,
I swam and sunbathed all day,
naked by the pool.
There is a German affair here also.
A very pretty boy of 19,
Wolfgang,
and a possessive, rather jealous man
of about 30.
It's all very quiet and
tends to be boring,
for one can only
soak up the sun and read and write, etc.
But anyway
perhaps I shall enjoy the gay life
of Venice all the more.
Must say I'm rather longing
for a gay bar
and masses of pretty things
to stare at.
Oh, darling,
why are you such a long way away?
Last week
I wasn't sure of anything.
This week
I'm sure of too much.
But
I simply want to be with you.
I think I enjoyed those last two days
as I have never enjoyed anything
Before.
Write to me quickly for
I'm starved of hearing from you,
parched and desolate.

//

BLUE My Dear Colin,
Sweet,
I want us to be
so very happy.
And I want us to be resilient
to mistakes
and upsets
and difficulties.
We know each other as yet
under ideal conditions –
lots of free time, sun, money to spend.
I want so to strengthen
the bonds between us
so that they could take the strain when conditions
are far from perfect.
And I want to see that area of common ground
on which we meet
extend
and grow.
It would kill me to watch it
shrink away.
And I want to learn to accept you
as you are
without in any way
wanting to change you into
what I might want you to be.
For me that will be hard.
I love you sweetheart.
Darling.
Very much.
Come back very soon.
My love,
my thoughts
and even more.

//

RED My Darling,

I have never known this
ever
before –
I cannot think of anything else all day
and most of the night,
but you.
Do you believe me?
I wouldn't write it if
it wasn't true –
I'm sunk in a perpetual gloom
writing letters to you in my mind
longing for the sound of your voice
and the touch of your body.
I think
it is driving me
a little mad.
And when I say every minute,
I mean
literally
that.
I can't write a thing,
if I force myself
I feel I am breaking inside
– the only time I forget you is
sometimes at the theatre
or the cinema
but three-quarters of that time
is spent in things which jar you back
into my memory.
I need you,
need you
desperately.
I feel my heart is very slowly breaking
and with such pain.
John,
are you coming back here soon after Xmas?
I'm only a little nearer to getting a job,
but
I think I'm having an interview

at the BBC
tomorrow –
I only hope I land something
worthwhile.
And where are you going to spend Xmas?
I can't send you a present now,
it's too late.
I hope you'll be in Schwarz
but I don't know the address,
and I'm frightened this letter will take
a long time in the Xmas rush
and you won't get it for
some time –
I'm terrified too that
my going away has lost you for ever.
Please sweetheart,
I want very much to make you happy
and if you come back
I'll do everything I can for you
even to drowning all the sugar dads that ever was
in a large sack like a litter of kittens.
I'm abysmally unhappy
without you.
I'm quite sexless too,
I haven't come for a week
and I don't think I've had a hard on either.
My body belongs to you
and wants you
as much as I hope
your body needs mine.
One more thing:
if you find it and think it really impossible for you to leave Vienna
Then somehow we must think again
and I'll get out there.
I know,
I've just got to be with you.
I know it more every day.
I don't want us
to be destroyed.

Because of my fault
we have come perilously near it.
I love you with all my body,
with all my heart
and I think now it must be, with all my soul.

Colin

//

BLUE Colin

Colin
my dear dear Darling,
If I don't keep writing to you
I'll go round the bend.
Oh sweetheart,
I couldn't go to sleep at all
last night,
I lay there
thinking of you
and you married
and the end of everything we stood for
and I writhed and tossed in bed the whole night.
Somewhere about dawn
I must have finally gone to sleep
for an hour.
Sweetheart,
what what what
is happening to us?
Darling, time and time again you've written
that you wanted to come out here,
that this would be
a big adventure,
that the last anniversary would be
the last one apart
and then this letter,
this terrible one
that burns a hole in my pocket,
and that like
some crazy hypnotized thing
I must read and read again.

Darling, could you really love me
and still rush into
this?
You've been seeing Jill
how long now
again?
Is it so urgent that
you must marry immediately?
If only for me,
for the barest peace of mind I can have,
please delay it a little.
Please.
These roots you speak of,
that you need.
What are they essentially?
Security? Love? Understanding? Belonging?
These you had with me.
Surely you don't want to
settle down already,
a married man
with a house
and all the attendant pulls that castrate work?
You know that with me
you did your best work,
that it came to a kind of fruition
with me.
All that exciting vital life we'd planned –
Australia,
the islands,
the States,
Europe,
Italy.
Does that come to
nothing?
For us both
those few days in Italy
meant so much
because we were together.
We give things meaning.

Jill can too
I'm sure,
but can she give you that deep meaning
and coat everything done and seen and touched
with that glaze of fire
that we did?
You said that you didn't find
that bonfire
with her.
You said
we had lit one which shouldn't go out.
Darling,
don't let it go out.
We lit a fire which illumined everything
and,
oddly enough,
was a guiding light to others.
There is so much to be done and now
you are the only person I can do it with.
How can you be so cruel as to qualify us;
I am the only boy you have ever loved
so deeply.
Only boy!
But not counting girls?
Not counting Jill?
Darling,
that is an untruth.
A terrible
blatant
untruth.
Be honest.
What was is – yes is still –
vivid and savage between us,
joining us.
And darling,
it is not to be found again.
I have this nether region,
neither dark, nor light.
Living and half living

it certainly is.
Darling,
you can't suddenly not be in love with me.
Did you lie or
exaggerate in those loving letters that came
so recently?
Please darling,
come here to see me.
If only for two weeks.
I've already set things in motion
so that you can easily come for the shortest time.
Darling,
this you owe to me.
Please
have enough sensibility to wait and
to try to see me. . . .
Can you imagine how hurt I am now?
And have you no responsibility towards
me?
To me
who is as much a part of your body as your arms,
as much a part of your being as the air you breathe?
Darling,
do not let me go mad.

//

Scene II: Morning

YELLOW The autumn! We had hugged & kissed & strained, Denham and I, on and off for years – ever since that quiet evening I rubbed him, in the dark, speechlessly, in the smaller of the two small dorms. An abortive affair, as I told you. But in the summer holidays he had often taken me out to the hammock, after dinner, to lie entwined there. – He had vaguely hoped, I fancy. Denham was though, to my taste, attractive. So honestly and friendlily lascivious. Charm, not beauty, was his forte. He was not unlike Ka, in the allurements of vitality and of physical magic – oh, but Ka has beauty too. – He was lustful, immoral, affectionate, and delightful. As romance faded in me, I began, all unacknowledgedly, to cherish a hope – But I was never in the slightest degree in love with him. In the early autumn, then, I was glad to get him to come and stay with me, at the Orchard. I came back late that Saturday night. Nothing was formulated in my mind. I found him asleep in front of the fire, at 1:45. I took him up to his bed, – he was very like a child when he was sleepy – and lay down on it. We hugged, and my fingers wandered a little. His skin was always very smooth. I had, I remember, a vast erection. He dropped off to sleep in my arms. I stole away to my room: and lay in bed thinking – my head full of tiredness and my mouth of the taste of tea and whales, as usual. I decided, almost quite consciously, I would put the thing through the next night. You see, I didn't at all know how he would take it. But I wanted to have some fun, and, still more, to see what it was like, and to do away with the shame (as I thought it was) of being a virgin. At length, I thought, I shall know something of all that James and Harry Norton and Maynard Keynes and Lytton Strachey know and hold over me. Of course, I said nothing. Next evening, we talked long in front of the sitting room fire. My head was on his knees, after a bit. We discussed sodomy. He said he, finally, thought it was wrong . . . We got undressed there, as it was warm. Flesh is exciting, in firelight. You must remember that openly we were nothing to each other. Again we went up to his room. He got into bed. I sat on it and talked. Then I lay on it. Then we put the light out and talked in the dark. I complained of the cold. My brain was, I remember, almost all through, absolutely calm and indifferent, observing progress, and mapping out the next step. Of course, I planned the general scheme beforehand. I was still cold. He wasn't. "Of course not, you're in bed!" "Well then, you get right in, too." – I made him ask me – oh! without difficulty! I got right in. Our arms were round each other. "An adventure!" I kept thinking: and was horribly detached. We stirred and pressed. The tides seemed to wax. At the right moment I, as planned, said "come into my room, it's better there . . ." I suppose he knew what I meant. Anyhow he followed me. In the large bed it was cold; we clung together. Intentions became plain; but still nothing was said. I broke away a second, as the dance began, to slip my pyjamas. I had to make him take his off – do it for him. Then it was purely body to body – my first, you know! I was still a little frightened of his, at any sudden step,

bolting; and he, I suppose, was shy. We kissed very little, as far as I can remember, face to face. And I only rarely handled his penis. Mine he touched once with his fingers; and that made me shiver so much that I think he was frightened. But with alternate stirrings, and still pressures, we mounted. My right hand got hold of the left half of his bottom, clutched it, and pressed his body into me. The smell of the sweat began to be noticeable. At length we took to rolling to and fro over each other, in the excitement. At length the waves grew more terrific; my control of the situation was over; I treated him with the utmost violence, to which he more quietly, but incessantly, responded. Half under him and half over, I came off. I think he came off at the same time, but of that I have never been sure. A silent moment: and then he slipped away to his room, carrying his pyjamas. We wished each other "Good-night." It was between 4 and 5 in the morning. I lit a candle after he had gone. There was a dreadful mess on the bed. I wiped it clear as I could, and left the place exposed in the air, to dry. I sat on the lower part of the bed, a blanket round me, and stared at the wall, and thought. I thought of innumerable things, that this was all; that the boasted jump from virginity to Knowledge seemed a very tiny affair, after all; that I hoped Denham, for whom I felt great tenderness, was sleeping. My thoughts went backward and forward. I unexcitedly reviewed my whole life, and indeed the whole universe. I was tired, and rather pleased with myself, and a little bleak. About six it was grayly daylight; I blew the candle out and slept till 8. At 8 Denham had to bicycle in to breakfast with Mr Benians, his tutor, before catching his train. I bicycled with him, and turned off at the corner of – is it Grange Road?. We said scarcely anything to each other. I felt sad at the thought he was perhaps hurt and angry, and wouldn't ever want to see me again. – He did, of course, and was exactly as ever. Only we never referred to it. But that night I looked with some awe at the room – fifty yards away to the West from the bed I'm writing in, and I felt a curious private tie with Denham himself. So you'll understand it was – not with a shock, but with a sort of dreary wonder and dizzy discomfort – that I heard Mr Benians inform me, after we'd greeted, that Denham died at one o'clock on Wednesday morning, – just twenty-four hours ago now.

Scene III: Midday

BLUE My darling

RED My dear

BLUE I wish you

could have seen me off

but it was impossible to

I hope you got my telegram allright

RED If you do not want to write,

BLUE and the last letter

RED at least spit on a piece of paper,

put it in an envelope,

and send it to me.

You are not taking any notice of me at all.

BLUE We are passing a lot of islands

you and I done

in the crosswords

RED I am going to Moscow tonight

And from there straight to Petersburg

BLUE A lot of the lads are feeling sick

and I feel sorry

for them

RED I want to tell you about the excellent state of mind I'm in

so far as my works are concerned

BLUE On the night I sent the telegram

I was off the next morning,

and off like a shot

as they say

RED You know that I destroyed the symphony I composed and

partly orchestrated in the autumn.

And a good thing too!

There was nothing of interest in it - an empty play of sounds, without inspiration.

BLUE And I was thinking of you,

my dear

in your office

and at home

and all the rest

my darling.

RED Now, on my journey,

the idea of a new symphony came to me
This symphony is completely saturated with myself
and quite often during my journey I cried profusely

BLUE The wrist watch
has gone again my dear,
it just starts when it likes every hour

RED I have settled down to write the sketches
and the work is going so intensely,
so fast,
that the first movement was ready in less than four days,
and the others have taken shape in my head.

BLUE I dropped it

RED Half of the third movement is also done.
There will still be much that is new in the form of this work
and the finale is not to be a loud allegro,
but the slowest adagio.

BLUE I am just bedding down for the night my darling
and don't I just wish I was with you
I can see you lying there sweetheart

RED You cannot imagine my feelings of bliss
now that I am convinced that the time has not gone forever,
and that I can still work.

BLUE All the lads are guessing where we are going
I only know I am going away from the man I love

RED Of course, I may be wrong,

BLUE The one and only you

RED but I do not think so.

BLUE I know I will come back darling to you,
and it will only be a dream

//

RED These last days I have been considering
and reflecting
on matters of great importance

BLUE We had a raid the other night

RED I looked perfectly objectively through my new symphony
and was glad
that I had neither orchestrated it or launched it;

BLUE It was about an hour raid

and they did no damage
RED it makes a quite unfavorable impression
BLUE They put about twenty bombs on the turnips
RED What must I do?
BLUE in the field
at the back of the block
RED Forget about composing?
BLUE And the place seem to lift off the ground
RED Too difficult to say.
BLUE You don't know how much I miss you.
RED So here I am,
thinking,
and thinking
BLUE I kiss the photo every night
RED and thinking,
BLUE So you are in bed with me after all
RED and not knowing
what to decide.
BLUE I would rather have you with me
RED Whatever
BLUE I was up the blue
in the desert
for a week
RED These last three days were unhappy ones
BLUE It was hell
RED I am however, quite well,
and have at last decided to leave tomorrow.
BLUE Just sand
RED You wonder why I am writing about all this to you?
BLUE and more sand.
RED Just an irresistible longing to chat with you....
BLUE I cant think of a good thing to say about it all
RED The weather is quite warm.
BLUE so lets get home
RED I can picture you
BLUE Lets get back to the old days
my dear
RED sitting in your room,
BLUE Cairo is just a smell.

RED scented nearly to suffocation,
 working at your exercises.
 How I would love
 to be in that
 dear room!

BLUE as soon as this war is over

//

RED I am writing to you with a voluptuous pleasure

BLUE can you forgive me
 for forgetting your birthday

RED The thought
 that this paper
 is going to be in your hands
 fills me with joy and
 brings tears to my eyes.

BLUE But I tell you the truth
 I would have forgotten as

RED Is it not curious
 that I voluntarily inflict upon myself
 all these tortures?
 What the devil
 do I want it all for?

BLUE I have been troubled by this
 going overseas

RED Yesterday my tortures reached such a pitch that I lost
 both appetite and sleep

BLUE Darling

RED and this happens very rarely.

BLUE You dont know how I miss you darling.

RED (in my new symphony there is a place which I think expresses it very well)

BLUE I might as well tell you the truth,

RED I am suffering
 not only anguish and distress
 which cannot be expressed in words

BLUE I have been cryin over you
 and calling out for you

RED but also from
 a vague feeling of fear

and
BLUE The lads say
who is
RED the devil only knows what else.
BLUE And I say
what do you mean
RED The physical symptoms are
pains,
BLUE and they say I was calling out for you
RED aching
BLUE in my drunkenness
RED and weakness in the legs.
BLUE Darling
I am going to get drunk again tonight
RED So, definitely,
this is the last time
I am going through all this.
BLUE please forgive me
darling for what I have done and
forgot your birthday
RED From now on
I shall agree to go anywhere
BLUE darling
you know I love you
darling
RED only
for a very large sum
of money
BLUE My darling
ALWAYS DARLING
goodnight my love
and the one and only
and I will be with you
for ever and ever
you old Darling
RED and not for more than three days

//

BLUE Darling

RED My dear
Golubchik!

BLUE I would love to be in the garden today.

RED I have just received your letter, and was terribly pleased
to hear that you are in a happy state of mind.

BLUE It is just like English spring
and I know what it is like down your end,
the lads tell me all the news
when they come out.

RED Could it be that one of my letters to you
has been lost?

BLUE The garden should be looking nice when this reaches you
my Sweetheart.

RED I did not write very often
but I did write.

BLUE My work is just finished for today ‘
and it is 9 o’clock
the 20 march
and it is just started to rain
and it is very cold at night.

RED With all my soul
I long to join you,
and think about it all the time.
But what can I do?
There are more and more complications
and more work every day....

BLUE I wish I was coming on the boat to you
darling.

RED If only I could way to my secret desire,
I would leave everything and go home.

BLUE I hope you are in good health my darling
and all at home

RED So all I can say is that
it is impossible for me to leave
before I have finished
all my business in Moscow.

BLUE and I miss you so much

RED I embrace you to suffocation.

BLUE You old sweetheart of mine.

//

BLUE Darling

RED In my last letter

I complain that you don't want to know me,
and now
all links with your crowd
are completely broken...

BLUE I have not had a letter from you yet
and the lads that came out here with me
have had a lot.

RED What makes me sad
is that you take so little interest in me.
Could it be
that you are positively
a hard egotist?
However,
forgive me,
I won't pester you again.

BLUE I hope everything is alright at home.
Look after yourself darling
and try to do something for me,
you know what I mean
my darling.
Think of me.

RED The symphony which I was going to dedicate to you
(not so sure that I shall now)
is getting on.
I am very pleased with the music
but not entirely satisfied
with the instrumentation.

BLUE It is six days before Xmas

RED It does not come out
as I hoped it would.

Blue Just think of me in the desert
with the lads on guard.

RED It will be quite conventional
and no surprise
if this symphony is abused and unappreciated

- that has happened before.
But I definitely find it my very best,
and in particular
the most sincere of my compositions.
I love it as I have never loved
any of my musical children.

BLUE You are allways in my thoughts
and I know you will think better of me when
this war is over you

RED At the end of august
I shall have to go abroad for a week.
If I were sure that you would still be in

BLUE I am in the guardroom

RED Verbovka
in September

BLUE waiting to do my 4th guard

RED I would love
to come at the beginning of the month

BLUE I know you will miss me

RED But I know nothing about you.

BLUE You dont know how much I miss you.

RED I embrace you with all my love.

BLUE All my love
and a merry Xmas.
And a HAPPY NEW YEAR TO THEM ALL

//

RED As promised
I can report that I finished the sketches
for the ballet yesterday evening.
You remember how
I boasted that I had only about five days work left.
How wrong I was,
for I barely managed it in two weeks.
No! The old man is definitely deteriorating.
Not only is his hair thinning and as white as snow;
not only are his teeth falling out and refusing to chew;
not only is his sight deteriorating and his eyes getting tired;
not only are his legs beginning to drag -

but the only faculty he has is beginning to fade and disappear.....

I get very tired

If I read in the evenings

- it always results in a frightful headache.

But unless I read

I don't know how else

to kill time at night.

This

(I mean headaches as a result of reading),

is becoming a serious obstacle

to life in the country,

BLUE GREETINGS

MY DARLING

RED which made me decide

to look for a place to live

that was not in the suburbs

of Petersburg

but in the town itself.

BLUE ALL LETTERS ARE ARRIVING

AND WHAT LOVELY LETTERS

RED In general I think

it would be simpler to settle

in Petersburg for good.

BLUE ALL MY LOVE

RED I would love to know what you are doing.

BLUE AND BEST WISHES FOR XMAS DARLING

RED Write at least a few words.

//

BLUE With your letters dear

you are always speaking to me

RED Things have gone so far that

it is quite impossible to write letters.

BLUE and I read them

over and over again

my dear.

RED Not a free moment

and I scarcely manage

to write

my diary.

BLUE So you say you went

RED I made a trip to Niagara.

BLUE I can see you now
walking round

RED As soon as I returned
I had to visit one Mayer at his country house
and pay some visits
in the few free hours I had left.
Then
I was invited out to lunch.

BLUE I go back all over the days we had

RED Altogether,
I have been frightfully busy,
and I am completely numb
with exhaustion.
Tonight
I have to be at a big dinner,

BLUE at Richmond

RED and then leave at midnight for Baltimore;

BLUE and Esher

RED tomorrow a rehearsal and concert there,

BLUE and Drunken Bidford

RED the day after that Washington,

BLUE and Leamington

RED then Philadelphia,

BLUE along the river.

RED then two days here,
where all my time
is already booked,

BLUE Do you remember the old days
when we first started dating.

RED and at last,
on the morning the 21st,

BLUE I went back all over it again
last night.

RED I leave.

BLUE What a time we had
in them days

RED Oh God!
Will I ever
come to that happy
moment!!!

BLUE I hope this finds you in good health
my dear

RED But in spite of all
I feel that
I shall remember America
with love.

BLUE and
all the rest at home.

RED Everybody has been
wonderfully kind.

BLUE I get over to you
as soon as I can
my Darling .

RED Here are a few newspaper cuttings.

BLUE The lads say that
they think we are going out
soon,

RED I think that
you will all much prefer reading
my diary
Than getting only
short news
from my letters.

BLUE one just said that
and came in

RED I embrace you

BLUE I do miss you ever such a lot
my dear as you
know my dear

//

RED I am definitely coming to Kamenka

BLUE So you went to Leaemington

RED also

BLUE and I bet

it took you back some years
RED I have a great desire
to see you....
BLUE it did me
RED You are not at all
like an empty suitcase.
BLUE I have just come back
from the Blue,
RED There are plenty of things
in it
but they are still kept
in disorder and it will take time
to decide
and sort out
those that are important.
BLUE me and the driver went on
an important bit of work
and then
I went over to the mail centre
RED However,
stop worrying,
for it will all
sort itself out.
BLUE The letters you sent on
Oct 10 and 15
have arrived
RED Enjoy your youth
BLUE and I cried as I was reading them darling.
RED and learn to cherish time;
BLUE I love you darling
RED the longer I live
the more frightened I get
at the aimless dissipation
of this priceless element
of life.
BLUE and miss you so much
I am dry eyed.
RED This rather high-flown sentence
is nothing more than the advice to read

as much as possible.
BLUE Try and do something up your end
darling
RED You have an excellent gift
of assimilating what
you have read,
BLUE this place is
terrible.
RED I mean
you do not forget it
BLUE It is not safe to go out at night
at all.
RED but put it away
in a sort of
mental
store-room
BLUE Some of the lads that do,
RED until you need it.
BLUE do not come back
at all,
RED I do not possess
such a store-room.
BLUE thats what
it is like
RED To be honest -
BLUE You say what an experience all this is for me
darling and
RED no memory at all.
BLUE I hope I never have it again...
RED I embrace you
BLUE All my love darling

//

RED I feel an awful fool
BLUE I hope this finds you
in the best of health
and the garden looking
at its best.
RED Here I have another two weeks

without anything to help me kill time
BLUE I am coming home.
RED I thought this would be easier in Paris
than anywhere else but,
except for the first day,
I have been bored
BLUE I am at the camp waiting for the boat
and this is 20 September
RED Since yesterday
I do not know what to think up
to be free of the
worry and boredom
that come from idleness
BLUE I hope you received my telegram ok.
RED I often think of you
and see you in my dreams,
usually looking sad and depressed.
This has added a feeling
of compassion
to my love for you
and makes me love you even more.
Oh God! How I want to see you this very minute.
BLUE I think I will be seeing you
RED Write me a letter
and send it to this address .
BLUE about the end of october my darling
RED (14, Richenpanse)
BLUE but I cant say for sure.
RED It will still reach me
as I am staying here for nearly
two weeks.
BLUE I am so excited about it all
I cannot really believe it all....
Goodnight my sweetheart
look after yourself!
All my love to the one and only
you old darling mine
RED I embrace you with mad tenderness.

Scene IV: Afternoon

YELLOW What have we done? Again I'm wondering . . . if it is right to adopt those of another class than our own. Your experiments have not apparently been successful, and I'll never get over my former barber and his buying a Buddha and candlesticks and incense . . . he is a very apt disciple. In other words, he has, in the course of our very intimate relationship, become completely imbued with my taste in theater, opera, food, clothes, house furnishings, and all that. Now this is very flattering to me, and there's no harm in his acquiring good taste. But his wife will never sympathize with him in all this. . . I was desperately taken with him at first sight, and deliberately laid myself out to catch him (you know I've always wanted a disciple) before I knew he was married. . . . This was some months, and then it was too late. I tried to quit then – but – well, I just didn't, and our intimacy has steadily increased. And now, because I have got what I wanted, I am, as you see, "leaving 'em." . . . Why can't we find the right one in all ways? What'll I do? Nothing, I suppose . . . He really "has" me hard and I wish I might stay for a day or two. For I'd like you to know him — though I dare say he's not very interesting save to me. I'm afraid you won't like his looks . . . I'm afraid you will think he's commonplace looking. Maybe he is – only he has me!

Scene V: Dusk

RED You don't know what a comfort
and what sort of happiness
you gave me
with your letter.
I have been on the point
of answering
a thousand times
to the one in which you alerted me to your illness
and have never been capable of doing so,
not from cowardice
but from selfishness.
Perhaps I was happy,
who knows,
I don't remember.

BLUE I am flying out of Athens
tomorrow,

RED The first thing to say to you
is this:
I feel
as never before
my friendship
for you,
I very much desire
to see
you

BLUE returning to Marseille
and Provence,
thence home.

RED I have come
to the end of that period in life

BLUE Another letter before I go.

RED when one feels wise
for having overcome
crises

BLUE I've enjoyed myself
here,

RED or satisfied certain

terrible needs
of adolescence
BLUE though
in a baffled and frustrated
way:
RED and of first youth.
BLUE my true misfortune was that
you are not here. . . .
RED I feel like trying again
to give myself once more illusions
and desires;
I am definitely a little Villon
or a little Rimbaud.
In such a state of mind if I were to find a friend
I could even go to Guatemala
or to Paris.

//

BLUE Is it considered that
educated thought and scientific progress
are not yet sufficiently advanced to permit
ventilation of a subject
which,
although it may be freely and objectively discussed
in psychological,
anthropological,
biographical works,
etcetera,
seems still
to be regarded in contemporary life
as almost unmentionable anywhere
except in the News of the World?
I refer to
homosexuality.
RED For some years now
my homosexuality
has entered into my consciousness
and my habits
and is no longer Another

within me.
I had had to overcome scruples,
moments of irritation
and of honest...
but finally,
perhaps bloody and covered with scars,
I have managed to survive,
Try to understand me at once
and without too many reservations;
it is a cape I must round
without hope
of turning back.
Do you accept me?
Good.
I shall write to you at length
in a few days;
meanwhile
two words.
I have lost my teaching post because
of a scandal in Friuli
following a charge made against me
of the corruption of minors.
Fortunately we wrote to each other this autumn
so the business will cause you
less surprise.

BLUE During the course of the legal proceedings
against twenty men recently concluded at Abergavenny,
one youth of nineteen
committed suicide on the railway lines,
and two others attempted
unsuccessfully
to do away with themselves
by hanging
and poison,
to avoid the shame of
exposure.

RED The thing that cost me
the ruin of my career

BLUE The reports from which these facts are gathered

RED and this tremendous biographical
jolt
BLUE were published
on August 23rd
and November 8th
RED is not in itself very serious;
BLUE in the newspaper
RED it was all a put-up job
due to political reasons.
BLUE It would be interesting to know
whether public opinion today
regards such suffering as merited,
RED The Christian Democrats and the Fascists seized
the occasion to get rid of me and
did it with repugnant cynicism
and skill.
But I'll tell you about that another time.
Today is the last day of the year;
I have nothing before me,
I am unemployed - absolutely without any hope of work;
my father is in the physical
and moral condition you know of.
A suicidal atmosphere.
I am working furiously at a novel
on which I am building all my hopes,
including practical ones;
I know they are mad hopes
in a kind of way
they fill me.
Who knows now when we shall see each other
again
and I am very sorry because I still feel
that I am very fond of you.

//

BLUE I should now provide an elaborate description
of the set-up
of the Palladion Hotel,
which is, as perhaps you remember, on Venizelos,

down by Omonia.

RED I cannot yet manage to pass judgement
on myself
not even,
as would be easy,
to give a negative judgement,
but I think

BLUE I had just begun an affair
with a boy of 16,

RED it was inevitable.

BLUE there was a law against tampering with
the under-aged. Of this,
I had no inkling, and the news
unnerved me.

RED You ask me to speak to you truthfully
and with a sense of shame;
I shall do so,

BLUE The hotel
had regarded the boy,
when I had taken him in that day,
with what I thought too deep an interest;

RED Now since I have been
in Rome I just have to sit
at my typewriter for me to tremble
and not even know what to think;

BLUE nevertheless
I had got him to my room

RED the words seem to have lost
their meaning.

BLUE and we had both had an enjoyable time
for a couple of hours.
He was a street boy,
he did the picking-up,
one of a group of naughty boys who
operate round the Rex cinema in Venizelos

RED I can only tell you that
the ambiguous life -
as you rightly say -
which I led in Casarsa

I shall continue to lead in
Rome.

BLUE but he had a nice,
affectionate nature, was gay,
considerate,
active, not grasping and
exceedingly prettily made,
and,
by the sun,
coloured

RED And
if you think about
the etymology
of ambiguous

BLUE I meant to keep on with him
throughout my stay,
and had a date
with him for the next day

RED you will see
that someone who leads a double existence
can only be
ambiguous.

//

BLUE sometimes, too rarely, at the reception desk a girl or two functioned:
sometimes the manager and an older more authoritative sort of man
whom I took to be the proprietor
were added.
In fact,
usually there seemed far too many people about,
to welcome one and get one into the lift.
I must add that everyone was, and continued to be, extremely friendly to me
– most attentive –
and the "proprietor" kept saying that he hoped I found staying there "just like home"
– in spite of my rejoinder
(which I don't suppose he understood)
that it was from "home" that I was attempting to escape.
Anyway, I was unnerved;

RED I do not know what to understand by hypocrisy

but now I am in terror of it.

BLUE I did not keep my appointment
with the boy
the next day,
though he did,

RED Enough half-words -
the scandal has to be
faced.
I think in this connection that I want
to live in Rome precisely because
here I shall be
neither old
nor new.

BLUE I saw him
from across the road,
smartly dressed in a provocative way,
arsing about
with the other boys who
haunted the "Rex".

RED Here in Rome
I can find more easily than elsewhere
the way of living
ambiguously,
do you understand?

BLUE Sorry
though I was,
I decided to avoid him in the future.

RED And at the same time
the way of being
entirely sincere,

BLUE (I saw him some days later,
RED of not deceiving anyone
as I would end up doing in Milan:

BLUE very gay
RED perhaps I am telling
you this because I am
discouraged

BLUE and naughty)

RED and place you by

yourself
on the pedestal of
someone who is able
to understand and feel for me.

//

RED The sexual life of others has always
made me ashamed of mine:

BLUE Four days later,
as Henry Reed and I
were returning from lunch,
another boy
offered himself,

RED is the wrong all on my side?

BLUE also very pretty.

RED It seems impossible to me.

BLUE He too could speak no English,
but managed to convey
that he was a Turkish tourist from Ankara
– a story which I have subsequent reason to disbelieve.

RED Understand me,
what I have most at heart is
to be clear to myself and to others

BLUE He was a little older than boy No. 1,
either 17 or 18,
smartly dressed
in a cheap way.

RED - with a clarity that has
no half measures,
is ferocious.

BLUE Henry soon made himself
scarce,

RED It is the only way
to make me forgive
that terrifyingly honest
and good boy
which someone in me
continues to be...

BLUE I conveyed to the boy that

I lived in a hotel down the road,
he said he would like to go in with me,
and
in
we
went.

RED I intend to work and to love,
both desperately.

BLUE Everyone was in the foyer,
proprietor, manager, two female receptionists,
and two of the positively hideous pages
the hotel seemed to have thought it wiser to select.
Much polite fussification,
"how do you do?" to me,
lift pressed for me,

RED But then you will ask if
what has happened to me
- punishment,
as you rightly call it -
has been of no use to
me.

BLUE nervous conversation from me,
everyone most civil,
the manager himself rode us up to my floor,
more nervous conversation from me.

RED Yes,
it has been of use
but not to change me
and even less
to redeem me;

BLUE The boy and I
entered my room.

My dear,
we had not been there two minutes
before the phone rang.

RED but it was of use to me
to understand that I had touched bottom,

BLUE I picked it up – muffled, muddled voices, excited tones –
then it emerged that it was a call

for the boy in my room.

RED that the experience had been exhausted
and I could begin from the beginning
but without repeating the same mistakes;

BLUE Perplexedly, I handed the phone
to him.

RED I have liberated myself
from my iniquitous and
fossil perversion,
now I feel
lighter

BLUE More excited conversation –
of which I understood not a word,
but certainly heated,
the sort of "so what!" tone,

RED There are moments when life
is open like a fan,
you see everything in it,
and then it is fragile,
insecure
and too vast.

BLUE then
he put the receiver down, said
"The Police!"

//

RED In my statements
and in my confessions
try to catch a glimpse of this
totality.

BLUE Well,
there seem to me three possibilities only:
(the boy himself *must* have been innocent,
for he reaped nothing from it;

RED My future life will certainly not be that
of a university professor

BLUE 1
a jealous discarded friend of the boy's
had seen our pick-up and dished us,

RED by now
I bear the mark of Rimbaud,
or Campana
and also of Wilde,
whether I want it
or not,
whether others accept it
or not.

BLUE 2
the police had seen us,
and dished us,

RED It is something uncomfortable,
annoying and inadmissible,
but that is how it is;
and I, like you,
do not give in....

BLUE 3
the proprietor himself, pretending to be a policeman,
had dished us.

RED I have suffered what
can be suffered,

BLUE I think the first
rather fanciful
and reject it.
Which of the other two was right
I haven't a clue,
but it didn't matter,
they had the *same* effect –
I simply *couldn't* afterwards,
take *anyone* else into the hotel
at all.

RED I have never accepted my sin,
I have never come to terms with
my nature

BLUE Whoever was watching me,

RED and have not even become used to it.

BLUE I was a watched,

RED I was to be calm,

BLUE or at least noticed

RED balanaced

BLUE Man,

RED and natural;

BLUE either the proprietor had discreetly informed on me
(he was as nice as pie afterwards)

RED My homosexuality was something
additional,
was outside,
had nothing to do
with me.

BLUE that he wasn't going to have things like that
in his hotel,
or the police
had seen and phoned
(scouting round afterwards
I observed that the kiosk exactly opposite the entrance to the hotel
had a phone).

RED I always saw it alongside me
like an enemy,

BLUE So

RED I never felt it within
me.

BLUE although I have felt
as sexy as the devil
I have simply had to give everything up since:

RED Only I
this last year
let myself go
to some extent

BLUE I incline to adolescents,
as you know, and they
incline towards me.

RED The search
for an immediate pleasure,
a pleasure to die in,

BLUE But I don't think I would dare
to take even an adult in –
a sailor,
for example.

RED was the only escape.
BLUE So my life in Athens has been ruined.
RED I have been punished for it
without pity.
BLUE And how I have wished you were here!
RED But this too we shall talk about
or else I shall write to you about it more calmly,
now I have too many things to say to you;
//

BLUE Dearest
RED I shall add right away
in this connection
a detail:
BLUE perhaps next year,
or the next,
you and I could rent an apartment in Athens for the spring.
RED it was at Belluno
BLUE How delicious that would be.
RED when I was three and a half
BLUE I do think the Athenians
most attractive
RED (my brother was not yet born)
BLUE and wonderfully endowed.
RED that I felt
for the first time
that most sweet and violent attraction
which then remained
within me -
always the same,
blind
and sinister
like a fossil.
BLUE Last time I came
I was not in the humour,
not awake,
I am
wide awake
now.

RED It did not yet have a name
but was so strong and irresistible that
I had to invent one myself:
it was
“teta veleta”
and I write it for you
trembling,
so much does this terrible name
invented by a child of three
in love with a boy of thirteen
frighten me -

BLUE Anyway
too much time was spent among tattered English and American queens
and in those tiresome taverns which cater only for those who like he-men and Tarzans!

RED this name
which belongs to the fetish,

BLUE I don't think you ever took me to
a Secondary or
even Public School.

RED the primordial,
the disgusting
and
the affectionate....

BLUE My tastes,
I now realise,
lie in that direction.

//

RED I have taken a long time to reply to you
and am now doing so
because it would be shameful if I postponed it
again.

BLUE I am glad to go,
yet sorry.
I have missed a lot,
I know,
so much is going on.

RED But
I do not feel like talking

to you about my case,
I am
fed up with it,
overburdened.

BLUE Yet how hard it is
to get on
without a common language

RED Its importance is purely practical

BLUE Besides getting oneself into
trouble,

RED in that
I am left without
a job,

BLUE it would be terrible
to involve young boys in
one's follies

RED without hope of work,

BLUE – ready though they do seem to
be involved.

RED and with
my family in the condition
you know of

BLUE there is an animus against the whole thing.

RED Yes, the most serious problem is now that of
finding any kind of job,
even
as a worker.
As for the scandal,

BLUE I have no means of knowing,

RED I have digested it

BLUE and don't want to end up in
a Greek gaol

RED after all

BLUE But,

RED I had a right to this scandal,
didn't I?

BLUE I have a second string,
With details of which
I will not burden

an already over-long letter

RED In this world incredible things like this happen.

BLUE If he materialises,
my lonely week here
will be improved

RED Think
what a frightening mechanism can form
in the brain of an unfortunate like me:
sex-prison,
love -
having one's face spat at,
tenderness -

BLUE though not an intelligible word
shall we be able
to exchange.

RED the brand of infamy....
It is a figure which increases
in a geometric progression with each unit
you subtract from it;
only with death
will the zeros
turn up

BLUE you cannot write to me
here,
but you can write to me in Putney.
To come out in the autumn to you
will mean ordinary London suits I suppose.
Plus an overcoat.
Best love.

Scene VI: Evening

YELLOW My dear friend, I am feeling as miserable at this writing as I can imagine a person feeling. Let me explain – The Monday following our Saturday evening together I secured Carpenter's "Iolaüs" from the library. I read it through at one sitting, and steeped myself in its charming and comprehending atmosphere. It opened up for me Soul windows which had been closed; it threw a noble and evident light on what I had begun to believe, because of what the world believes, ignoble and unnatural. I loved myself in it, and thanked you a thousand times as as many delightful examples appeared, for recommending it to me. Tuesday young Loeb was to have come to see me. He did not come. I was keenly disappointed. He wrote no letter. Thursday morning I wrote to him, asking him to attend a concert with me to-morrow (Sunday) afternoon. It is now Saturday night and, although there has been time a-plenty, I have not heard from him. So what I had envisioned as a delightful and stimulating camaraderie is not to be. I believe the cause may be defined as parental, for I feel certain that the attraction was as keenly felt by Loeb as by me. I know you will understand how I feel. But I suppose some of us erotic lads, vide myself, were placed here just to eat our hearts out with longing for unattainable things, especially for that friendship beyond understanding. If you wish to write Ralph Loeb his address is 39–41 West 129 St. – But don't mention me! Speak for yourself. I have just written to Langston asking him to come here for that Poetry recital on March 21. I told him you would be here on that night (I am not sure of that, but I ask you to bend every effort to be here on that date. Your presence will be helpful; some will be there for curiosity, but I want someone there who is interested in me for my self's sake.) And besides, Langston might come. May I not hear from you before then? And in your own handwriting? P.S. – Sentiments expressed here would be misconstrued by others, so this letter, once read, is best destroyed. P.P.S. – Send your poem when you write.

Scene VII: Midnight

BLUE After long and fruitless waiting
I have determined to write to you myself,
as much for your sake as for mine,
as I would not like to think that
I had passed through two long years of imprisonment
without ever having received a single line from you,
or any news
or message even,
except such as gave me pain.
Our ill-fated and most lamentable friendship
has ended
in ruin and public infamy for me,
yet the memory of our ancient affection is often with me,
and the thought that loathing, bitterness and contempt should for ever take
that place in my heart once held by love
is very sad to me:

RED You know me well enough to know
that I will go to any lengths
if I feel I am right –
if I feel I have something to do.

BLUE but most of all
I blame myself
for the entire ethical degradation I allowed you to bring on me.
The basis of character is will-power,
and my will-power became absolutely subject to yours.
It sounds a grotesque thing to say,
but it is none the less true.
Those incessant scenes
that seemed to be almost physically necessary to you,
and in which your mind and body grew distorted and
you became a thing as terrible to look at as to listen to:
that dreadful mania you inherit from your father,
the mania for writing revolting and loathsome letters:
your entire lack of any control over your emotions
as displayed in your long resentful moods of sullen silence,
no less than in the sudden fits of almost epileptic rage
these,

I say,
were the origin and causes
of my fatal yielding to you in your daily increasing demands.
You wore one out.
It was the triumph of the smaller over the bigger nature.
It was the case of that tyranny
of the weak
over the strong
which somewhere in one of my plays I describe as being
"the only tyranny that lasts."

//

RED A few weeks ago
my latest effort was to marry Phyllis Ward.

BLUE And it was inevitable.
In every relation of life with others
one has to find some way of living.
In your case,
one had either to give up to you
or to give you up. There was no alternative.
Through deep
if misplaced
affection for you:
through great pity for your defects of temper and temperament:
through my own proverbial good-nature
and Celtic laziness:
through an artistic aversion to coarse scenes and
ugly words:
through that incapacity to bear resentment of any kind
which at that time characterised me:
through my dislike of seeing life made bitter and uncomely
by what to me,
with my eyes really fixed on other things,
seemed to be mere trifles
too petty for more than a moment's thought or interest –
through these reasons,
simple as they may sound,
I gave up to you always.
As a natural result,

your claims,
your efforts at domination,
your exactions grew more and more unreasonable.
Your meanest motive, your lowest appetite, your most common passion,
became to you laws by which
the lives of others
were to be guided always,
and to which,
if necessary,
they were to be without scruple
sacrificed.

RED Does that shock you to know this –
and that I am now crossing the Atlantic
with her
– married to her?

BLUE Knowing that by making a scene
you could always have your way,
it was but natural that you should proceed,
almost unconsciously I have no doubt,
to every excess of
vulgar violence.

RED My awakening
has been horrible
and the agony
had been almost more than I can bear.

BLUE At the end
you did not know to what goal you were hurrying,
or with what aim in view.
Having made your own of
my genius,
my will-power,
and my fortune,
you required,
in the blindness of an inexhaustible greed,
my entire existence.
You took it.
At the one supremely and tragically critical moment of all my life,
just before my lamentable step of
beginning my absurd action

RED To go back a bit,
I got your letter 2 days
before the ceremony.

BLUE I had made a gigantic psychological error.

RED Your letter has struck deep

BLUE I had always thought that
my giving up to you in small things
meant nothing:
that when a
great moment
arrived
I could reassert my will-power in its natural superiority
down into the very depths of me –
It was not so.
At the
great moment
my will-power completely failed me.
In life
there is really no small
or great thing.

RED has cut through all pretenses

BLUE All things are of equal value and of equal size
//

BLUE You send me a very nice poem,
of the undergraduate school of verse,
for my approval:
I reply by a letter of fantastic literary conceits,
I compare you to Hylas, or Hyacinth, Jonquil or Narcisse,
or someone whom the great god of Poetry favoured,
and honoured
with his love.
The letter is like a passage from one of Shakespeare's sonnets,
transposed to a minor key.
It can only be understood by those who have read
the Symposium of Plato,
or caught the spirit of a certain grave mood
made beautiful for us in Greek marbles.
It was,

let me say frankly,
the sort of letter I would,
in a happy if wilful moment,
have written to any graceful young man had sent me a poem
of his own making,
certain that he would have sufficient wit or culture
to interpret rightly its fantastic phrases.
Look at the history of that letter!
It passes from you into
the hands of a loathsome companion:
from him
to a gang of blackmailers:
copies of it are sent about London to my friends,
and to the manager of the theatre
where my work is being performed:
every construction but the right one is put
on it:

RED To think
it had to
take a marriage with
its wedding night experience
to show me where my
real affinity
lies.

BLUE Society is thrilled
with the absurd rumours that
I have had to pay a huge sum of money for having written
an infamous letter to you:

RED Every cell in me screamed
out in protest at my
desecration of my
body.

BLUE I produce the original letter myself in Court
to show what it really is:

RED At that time

BLUE it is denounced as a revolting and insidious attempt to corrupt Innocence: ‘

RED I knew that I belonged to you
and you to me. . . .

BLUE ultimately

it forms part of a criminal charge:
the Crown takes it up:
The Judge sums up on it with little learning
and much morality:
I go to prison for it at last.
That is the result of writing you
a charming letter.

//

RED Some of my thoughts today went into song –
and lifted an untrained voice
up to that level where one exists when inspired.
For I love you

. . .

I gasp with expectancy over
the thoughts of our being together
in a home – for ever.
That's what I want.
Every nook and cranny of the rooms
will be inspired.
The walls will
burst and surge
with the vibrations of
our merging.

//

BLUE There is,
I know,
one answer to all that I have said to you,
and that is that
you loved me:
that all through those years during which
the Fates were weaving
into one scarlet pattern
the threads of our divided lives
you really loved me.

RED I need your help in straightening this mess out.

BLUE Yes:

I know you did.

RED And it is a mess –
frightful.

BLUE No matter what your conduct to me was
I always felt that at heart
you really did love me.
Though I saw quite clearly that
my position in the world,
the interest my personality had always excited,
my money,
the luxury in which I lived,
the thousand and one things that went to make up a life so charmingly,
and so wonderfully improbable as mine was,
were,
each and all of them,
elements that fascinated you
and made you cling to me;
yet besides all this
there was something more,
some strange attraction for you:
you loved me far better
than you loved anybody else.

RED Phyllis loves me terribly and is such a
fine
girl.

BLUE But you,
like myself,
have had a terrible tragedy in
your life,

RED I told her yesterday of my feelings for you
And she realizes from my behavior that
a part of me which she had wanted for herself
belonged to you.

BLUE though one of an entirely opposite character
to mine.

RED Our marriage was
and is
a perfect set-up.
wrong in every way

BLUE Do you want to learn what it was?

RED The reason is that
I belong with you,
and you with me.

BLUE It was this.

RED Neither of us seems able to help it

BLUE In you
Hate was always stronger than Love.
Your hatred
of your father was of such stature that
it entirely outstripped, o'erthrew, and overshadowed your love of
me.
There was no struggle between them at all,
or but little;
of such dimensions was your Hatred
and of such monstrous growth.
You did not realise that there is no room
for both passions
in the same soul.

RED Goodness knows
I have done everything possible
to keep us apart.

BLUE They cannot live together
in that fair carven house.

RED Why?

BLUE Love is fed by the imagination,
by which we become wiser than we know,
better than we feel, nobler than we are: by which
we can see Life
as a whole:
by which,
and by which alone,
we can understand others in their real
as in their ideal
relations.

RED I don't know.

BLUE Only what is fine, and finely conceived,
can feed Love.
But anything
will feed Hate.

There was not a glass of champagne
you drank,
not a rich dish you ate of
in all those years,
that did not feed your Hate and make it fat.
So to gratify it,
you gambled with my life,
as you gambled with my money,
carelessly, recklessly, indifferent to
the consequence.
If you lost, the loss would not,
you fancied,
be yours.
If you won,
yours you knew would be the exultation,
and the advantages
of victory.

//

RED I left Lawrence yesterday and am halfway across Kansas
– on my way to you.

He wanted to know
whether I was homosexual through birth
or if it was acquired.
Phyllis made me decide
that I could be ‘normal’
and he urged our marriage.

BLUE You see that I have to write your life to you,
and you have to realise it.

RED I was forced to break
with my brother
and his wife
and the hurt of

BLUE We have known each
other now for years.
Half of the time

RED it sends me to you
with tears in my eyes.
I'm

BLUE we have been together:
the other half

RED crossing my bridges to you
my beloved
– and my eyes are steadily
on you –

BLUE I have had to spend
in prison

RED my heart is with
you.

BLUE as the result of our
friendship.

RED Just because of this
lack of truth,
this mess has come about.
Society
has already begun
to collect its price for
our love.

BLUE Where you will receive this letter,
if indeed it ever reaches you,
I don't know.
Rome,
Naples,
Paris,
Venice,
some beautiful city
on sea
or river,
I have no doubt, holds you.
You are surrounded, if not with all the useless luxury you had
with me,
at any rate with everything that is pleasurable
to eye, ear, and taste.
Life is quite lovely to you.
And yet,
if you are wise,
and wish to find Life much lovelier still and
in a different manner

you will let the reading of this terrible letter
– for such I know it is –
prove to you
as important a crisis and turning-point of your life
as the writing of it is
to me.

RED I know the difficulties in our way
if we go onwards together.
I will have none of my present life to back me up –
all will desert
me.

BLUE Your pale face used to flush easily with wine
or pleasure.
If,
as you read what is here written,
it from time to time becomes scorched,
as though by a furnace-blast,
with shame,
it will be all the better for
you.

RED My life with you would
have to be enough so that I
would not care –

BLUE The supreme vice

RED would
willingly abandon everything

BLUE is shallowness.

RED for you.

BLUE You came to me
to learn
the Pleasure of Life
and
the Pleasure of Art.
Perhaps I am chosen to teach you something
much more wonderful,

RED But my darling
I have that sweet certainty that if
we were close enough together
nothing else would count.

BLUE the meaning of
Sorrow,
and
its beauty.

end of play