

Robert Lowell

(1917-1977)

T. S. Eliot (1969)

Caught between two streams of traffic, in the gloom
of Memorial Hall and Harvard's war dead.... And he:
"Don't you loathe to be compared with your relatives?
I do. I've just found two of mine reviewed by Poe.
He wiped the floor with them...and I was *delighted*."
Then on with warden's pace across the Yard,
talking of Pound, "It's balls to say he isn't
the way he is.... He's better though. This year,
he no longer wants to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem.
Yes, he's better. 'You speak,' he said, when he's talked two hours.
By then I had absolutely nothing to *say*."
Ah Tom, one muse, one music, had one the luck—
lost in the dark night of the brilliant talkers,
humor and boredom from the everlasting dross!

FOOTNOTES

"This poem ["T. S. Eliot"] and the two following, from Lowell's volume, *Notebooks*, seem intentionally casual in organization. ["Memorial Hall"] A Harvard building memorializing the University's Civil War dead. ["warden's pace"] Eliot was an air raid warden during the Second World War. The Yard is the campus at the center of Harvard University. Lowell visited Pound when the latter was in St. Elizabeth's Hospital for the criminally insane, in Washington. ["Social Credit"] A dubious economic program which Pound fanatically supported. Eliot, who originally denounced Milton, as Pound did, and then later recanted. Released from the hospital, Pound went back to Rapallo, Italy, to live. Pound talked several times on the Italian radio during the Second World War. 'She' is Olga Rudge, Pound's companion [mistress]. Frost's son committed suicide. ["Merrill Moore"] A poet and psychoanalyst. ["Possum" was Pound's nickname for Eliot.]

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