

L293

#19 Teton St.
Newburyport, Mass.
Feb. 9, 1969.

Dear Bob: When I consider the recapitulation of my correspondence, over the years under the variegated conditions of jails, mental hospitals, & etc., it seems that I must have been afflicted with *cacothus scubendi*. (I remember the expression but the spelling is from memory).

I was not ever thus. For instance, when I was in the military service, I went for a period of two years without a single letter to my mother. She wrote the chaplain in the naval hospital where I was on duty in a surgical ward. He was a most tactful lout. He braced me in presence of forty patients. He turned to them & said: "What do you fellows think of a man who wouldn't even write to his own mother? ... I don't know what they thought, but they knew I was carrying their urinates, emptying their craps, rubbing their backs, & giving them enemas. (The records of the last few wars cause me to be proud that I was once a companion).

I ought have forgiven her for hoarding her solicitude for me until such a time when I might have become productive, but never, for shaming me in front of men, for a cause which I believed to be right. Could I have said: "Hell padre, that woman deserted me when I was two years old, & came