

DOCUMENTS

“So often I look up at you and tell you things, and you listen!”: The Correspondence of Louise Morey Bowman and Amy Lowell

Edited and with an Introduction by Laura Cameron

Introduction

In February 1923, the early Canadian modernist poet Louise Morey Bowman (1882-1944) received a small international accolade: her poem “Oranges” was awarded an honourable mention in the inaugural Blindman Prize competition by its sole judge, the renowned American poet and editor Amy Lowell (1874-1925). Of over four hundred submissions to the contest, Bowman’s entry was one of just eleven finalists—listed among a select group that also included Wallace Stevens’s “From the Journal of Crispin.”¹ Lowell later voiced her special appreciation of Bowman’s poetic sensibility on the dust jacket of the latter’s second volume, *Dream Tapestries*, which was published by Macmillan Canada in the fall of 1924: “‘Oranges’ ... made a great impression on me,” Lowell wrote; “Mrs. Bowman’s work has the authentic touch of poetry, the projection of a personality that feels poetry keenly ... [It] is individual, rich with colour, and full of feeling. Anyone interested in poetry should keep on the look-out for her productions.” Such an endorsement was obviously a great boon to Bowman and to her publisher. “When the High Priestess speaks in this fashion it means a good deal,” wrote Hugh Eayrs, the president of Macmillan, to Bowman on 18 January 1924; “I am glad for your sake, and incidentally ours.”² Lowell’s statement, along with an endorsement from Harriet Monroe, the editor of *Poetry* magazine, was displayed prominently on the front of Bowman’s volume.³ But Lowell and Bowman’s relationship by this time

was far deeper than simply promoter and product, judge and competitor, “High Priestess” and apprentice poet. It was more, even, than merely a relationship of influence, though echoes of Lowell resound vividly throughout Bowman’s *oeuvre*.⁴ In fact, the two women were correspondents, engaged in a vibrant and friendly dialogue that would flourish throughout the assembly and publication of *Dream Tapestries* and extend over two years until Lowell’s untimely death in 1925.

Between March 1923 and the spring of 1925 Louise Morey Bowman and Amy Lowell exchanged at least twenty letters—thirteen from Bowman, six from Lowell, and one from Lowell’s secretary on her behalf—which are held now in the Lowell Collection at Harvard’s Houghton Library and a major selection of which are published here for the first time. Their discussions cover a wide range of literary and personal topics: their current projects—Bowman’s sophomore volume and Lowell’s biographical study of Keats (Houghton Mifflin, 1925); contemporary literature—“What did you think of the Waste Land?” Bowman inquired on 3 February 1924; Canadian literary culture—which, in Bowman’s estimation, was “just beginning to stir as far as modern Poetry [was] concerned” (December 1923); and their daily lives—Bowman’s move to Montreal, her father’s failing health, Christmas holidays in Quebec City, Lowell’s exhaustion under the proliferating demands of her work, her deteriorating eyesight. Although the exchange is somewhat lopsided and reveals more about Bowman than about Lowell—Bowman’s letters are longer and more personal—their relationship adds an important cross-border dimension to Lowell’s already well-known role as a literary mentor. Her influence on Bowman was not only indirect, gleaned through the younger poet’s devoted reading of her published poetry and critical work, but direct, in her commentary on the twenty-three poem drafts that Bowman sent her in several batches throughout 1923. At the same time, the correspondence provides substantial insight into Bowman’s career and *oeuvre* and delineates a new path of modernism’s influx into Canada.

Perhaps most valuable of all, Bowman’s letters present the candid first-hand reflections of a representative “transitional” poet of the 1920s. Several recent critics, including Anne Cimon, Aislinn Hunter, and especially Wanda Campbell, have recognized Bowman’s importance as “one of the initiators of the modernist movement in Canada” (Campbell, “Moonlight” 82). Along with Arthur Stringer, Frank Oliver Call, and E.J. Pratt, Bowman was one of the early Canadians to experiment with free verse and imagism. She published her work in magazines including *The*

Canadian Forum, the *Dalhousie Review*, *Poetry* (Chicago), and *The Bookman* (New York), and she assembled three full collections, *Moonlight and Common Day* (1922), *Dream Tapestries* (1924), and *Characters in Cadence* (1938). Her work has lately been anthologized not only in Campbell's *Hidden Rooms: Early Canadian Women Poets* (2000) but also in Brian Trehearne's *Canadian Poetry 1920 to 1960* (2010), for which, as he explains in his Afterword, a key principle of inclusion was the poets' "will-to-modernize" (435).

Whatever her "will," however, Bowman's poetic achievement is undeniably inconsistent. In the most measured account to date of Bowman's engagement with modernist techniques, Campbell comments on the poet's "formal innovation that draws upon such diverse international sources as imagism, haiku, slang, and the rhythms of jazz" as well as her attraction to "modern themes," but she also characterizes some of Bowman's efforts as "sincere but awkward" ("Moonlight" 96). Bowman has attracted similarly divided reactions throughout her critical history: if on the one hand Cimon emphasizes her "innovative artistry" and "contemporary style" (44), on the other James Doyle judges her work only "mildly experimental" and Don Precosky concludes that her "struggle to break free of [nineteenth-century] techniques ... proved ultimately futile" ("Louise" 108). Another way of putting this is that Bowman participated in an early stage of that struggle as it was taken up by a wider community of Canadian poets; her poetic *oeuvre* offers, as Avrum Malus, Diane Allard, and Maria van Sundert put it, "a foreshadowing of Modernism in Canadian verse" (67). Bowman's correspondence is an illuminating counterpart to her creative work because, despite the awkwardness and unevenness that so many critics have identified in her poetry, the letters make her ambitions—her "will-to-modernize"—quite plain.

The exchange between Bowman and Lowell describes the advent of Canadian modernism not only from the perspective of an early insider but from that of a woman—a point of view still underrepresented in critical histories that stress the roles of Pratt, A.J.M. Smith, and F.R. Scott, among others, in revolutionizing Canadian poetry. Elizabeth Popham has recently edited excellent collections of the correspondence of Pratt (2017) and A.M. Klein (2011), but the letters of Canadian women writers of this era remain largely unseen. Bowman was also a decade or two older than the young men of the McGill Group who were, by the mid-1920s, energetically embracing modernist practices just down the hill from her Westmount home in Montreal. As Precosky writes, "[t]hose who

supported modernism” and “found the Canadian tradition wanting” were “usually young poets who also wrote criticism” (“Back” 40). Bowman’s letters to Lowell make her support of modernism eminently clear and she clearly found the Canadian tradition wanting, but she was not a young poet—she was forty in 1922 when her first book was published—and she did not write criticism. She was not a professor like Pratt or Call, the poets with whom she has most frequently been associated; she did not deliver lectures or write essays; and she did not even theorize her poetics in prefaces or introductions to her books, as did so many of her contemporaries, including Call in *Acanthus and Wild Grape* (1920) and Stringer in *Open Water* (1914). She did sit on the executive boards of the Canadian Authors Association, the Canadian Women’s Press Club, and the Montreal Women’s Art Society; she served as president of the Montreal Branch of the CAA in 1936-7, and with the Art Society she convened numerous talks and programs on contemporary literature and often gave readings of her own work.⁵ But Bowman’s critical views on modernity, art, and the “new poetry” have not thus far been represented in print.

Her letters to Lowell disclose her often harsh assessment of Canadian writing and her sense of her own place in the country’s developing literary tradition. She was pleased to find the Canadian reviews of *Moonlight and Common Day* “amazingly sympathetic with my efforts towards freedom” (10 March 1923), but she observed that “Canada as a whole wants her poetry in the traditional manner” (December 1923). She was particularly troubled by what she saw as the “tyranny” of Canadian writers and critics—their tendency to group poets into restrictive categories and judge their work accordingly. “They make it a tyranny somehow in Canada,” she explained to Lowell; “one must do this... one mustn’t do that. One must be bound or free... if you write ‘free verse’ what business have you to employ rhyme and metre... etc. etc.” (December 1923; ellipses in original). Canadians were striving, with a certain amount of anxious prescriptivism, to define the voice of their young movement, and Bowman found this cultural milieu polarized and claustrophobic. Her poetry exploits the aesthetic possibilities of both “bound” and “free” verse, and the collisions and continuities of “old” and “new” were, for her, fertile thematic ground. In *Characters in Cadence* in particular she self-consciously alternates poems in rhyme and metre with free verse and imagist experiments, purposely juxtaposing Romantic nature imagery with abstract meditations on time and modernity. Call’s “conventional” (“Acanthus”) and “free” (“Wild Grape”) sections of

Acanthus and Wild Grape exemplify the same kind of contrast, but his volume has proven more influential, in part because his now well-known preface explicitly establishes his objectives.⁶ Like Call's preface, then, Bowman's letters provide a contextual frame for her creative work; and as private correspondence has done for so many generations of women writers, they offer a record of her spirited views on a wide range of literary-critical and cultural matters.

The exchange published here covers a period of significant upheaval in Bowman's personal life, and her reflections on this time not only highlight her sense of alienation in the literary environment of 1920s Montreal but shed new light on the rhythms of her creative career. In the summer of 1923, Bowman and her husband moved from their "beloved Toronto home" on Walmer Road in Forest Hill to a "little old mongrel of a house" on Lansdowne Avenue in Westmount, Montreal (26 September 1923). Archibald Abercromby Bowman, an engineer, had been transferred to a new post with the Montreal branch of the Canadian Ingersoll-Rand Company.⁷ But his wife struggled at first to find her footing in their new city. "[T]his move of ours down here to Montreal has knocked me up badly as far as my own little sphere of influence is concerned," she wrote to Lowell on 3 February 1924; "In Toronto I suppose I really was doing something ... [and] was on the point of doing more—but here I can only write—and talk and read here and there—bide my time."

She had enjoyed not only "influence" in Toronto's artistic community but close friendship with other women writers, especially Katherine Hale, in whom she found a kindred poetic spirit. After reading Hale's *Morning in the West* in October 1923, Bowman wrote a rave review to "Katherine, darling," noting that the latter's new work was "admirably suited to a modern child who craves old and new ... Oh and how well—how clearly—I see what *you are doing*," she asserted; "God grant others in Canada will see also."⁸ Bowman believed that she, Hale, and Lowell were all able to balance "old and new," and to her, this set them apart from "others in Canada" who seemed to demand the choice of a side. In her new city, she found herself among "largely a certain 'old Montreal'" crowd, "steeped in tradition and conservative Victorian ideals" (3 February 1924). Her sense of displacement at this time hints at some fundamental contrasts between the literary cultures of Toronto and Montreal in the 1920s: whatever was happening at McGill, Toronto seemed a more nurturing environment for a poet of Bowman's age, class, and gender. Indeed, the "horrid up-rooting from [her] Toronto home"

probably underlies, at least in part, the fourteen-year book publication hiatus (between 1924 and 1938) that separates Bowman's second and third collections.⁹

The dialogue between Bowman and Lowell offers meaningful evidence of the ways in which modernist writers formed alternative artistic communities based not necessarily on geography but on shared artistic sensibilities. In Lowell, Bowman connected with a true contemporary such as she struggled to find in her own city. She disparaged "the English and Canadian poets mooning over sky larks and robins" (6 October 1924) and repeatedly expressed her desire to see Lowell's influence more widespread in Canada: "Oh if I could only *deluge* Canada with you!" she wrote, with characteristic exuberance, in December 1923 (emphasis in original). Little magazines that reached subscribers across North America and Europe similarly facilitated the transmission of ideas beyond national borders. Indeed, it was in the American publications to which she subscribed—including *Poetry*, *The Dial*, and *The North American Review*—that Bowman found inspiration and guidance. Lowell was a link to that world, and an intellectual companion with whom she could satiate her thirst for literary discussion: "Some day I'm going to make a list of things for you to mark with an X or a zero because I shall burst if I don't know!" she wrote on 3 February 1924; "Things like the Forsyte saga and Five tales and The Midget and the Return and D.H. Lawrence..."¹⁰ Her letters are also replete with allusions to Lowell's own work. The American writer's *oeuvre*, Bowman insisted, meant "a very great deal to us who are trying to make dry bones live!" (December 1923).¹¹ The titles that come up repeatedly in the correspondence—particular favourites such as "Lilacs," "La Ronde du Diable," and "View of Teignmouth in Devonshire," for example, or Lowell's critical study *Six French Poets* (1915)—intimate the style that Bowman sought to achieve herself, the standard she sought to emulate, and comparative readings promise to inspire fresh interpretations of both poets' work.

Bowman also longed to establish a readership for her own poetry outside Canada and Lowell was, to her, a valuable professional contact. Her work appeared in *Poetry* magazine on five occasions (in 1919, 1924, 1927, 1932, and 1941), and in other international newspapers and magazines such as *The Bookman* and *The Independent* (New York), but she deplored the limitations of her Canadian book publisher: "I seem to be tied up with 'Macmillans In Canada,'" she explained on 23 September 1923; "They did well for me here, but almost nothing in either England or

the States.” In the same letter, her second to Lowell, she haltingly outlined a dream: “to have my second book of verse published with a foreword by Amy Lowell! ... It couldn’t be—could it?” she asked; “*That preface?* Forgive my temerity!” (emphasis in original). Bowman had read Bryher’s 1920 novel *Development*, published by Macmillan with a preface by Lowell, and she hoped to have something similar for *Dream Tapestries*. Unfortunately Lowell replied that, although she was “flattered at [Bowman’s] suggestion,” she was too busy with her work on the Keats biography to take on anything else at that time (6 November 1923). Her endorsement on the dust jacket, however, along with Harriet Monroe’s, provided *Dream Tapestries* with just the kind of cosmopolitan patronage that Bowman had hoped for. Macmillan chose to print full paragraphs from both women right on the front of the jacket, entirely filling the space with words of praise—a design, Bowman recognized, that would be “unique in Canadian Poetry jackets.”¹² Lowell’s and Monroe’s declarations of support, not only privately articulated in the letters but so visibly displayed on the cover of the book, were important to Bowman because they publicly aligned her with the community of international modernist writers of which she wanted to be a part—and, as this correspondence reveals, of which she *was* a part.

Bowman and Lowell’s exchange additionally illustrates the older poet’s active role in shaping *Dream Tapestries*. Bowman sent Lowell at least twenty-three poem drafts in typescript, six of which remain unpublished; fourteen of these drafts can be found in the Lowell Collection (including three unpublished poems), and the other nine, probably sent in a later batch after Bowman had moved to Montreal, appear no longer to be extant. Lowell commented on each of the poems and made recommendations about what to include in the volume. For example, Bowman sent Lowell a long dramatic poem called “Pauline,” but when Lowell told her that the “attitude” in the poem was “a little sentimental” and the poet’s eye “somewhat too romantic” (28 March 1923), she forwarded two potential replacements, “The Mountain that Watched” and “The Toy Shop” (December 1923). Here Lowell’s views once again proved decisive: she judged “The Mountain” to be “simply superb” and “extraordinarily vivid and clear,” whereas she found “The Toy Shop” to have “a monotonous and dim quality which leaves it on a lower plane than the others” (14 January 1924). By contrast, Frank Oliver Call had apparently told Hugh Eayrs that “The Toy Shop” was “the best thing [Bowman] ha[d] done, better even than ‘The Mountain that Watched’ since more original.”¹³ Bowman trusted Lowell’s judgment

more than Call's or Eayrs's, however, and she selected "The Mountain that Watched" for *Dream Tapestries*—an important addition which, though late, would become a centrepiece of the volume and one of Bowman's best-known poems.

The exchange published below began after Bowman's husband attended a talk by Lowell in St. Catharines, Ontario, in early March 1923—the only such visit to Canada that Lowell ever made, as she notes in her letter of 6 November 1923. Having just encountered "Oranges" in the Blindman competition the previous month, Lowell paid special tribute to Bowman in her lecture—"much more emphasis was given in the lecture than was reported in the Press," Bowman boasted proudly to William Arthur Deacon¹⁴—and Bowman wrote to Lowell on 10 March 1923 to express her gratitude. By the end of their correspondence, *Dream Tapestries* had been published, and in the final letter printed here, Lowell records her generous approval of the volume. For two years, their epistolary friendship was manna to the younger poet, and Bowman often conveyed an acute sense of relief at having found a sympathetic contemporary who shared her literary sensibilities. On 5 December 1924, for instance, she revealed that she kept a photo of Lowell, cut out of Marguerite Wilkinson's book on contemporary poetry, *New Voices* (1919), hanging above her desk—as a kind of guardian angel or inspiring muse.¹⁵ "So often I look up at you and tell you things," she wrote, "and you listen!" She kept Lowell's first letter to her, meanwhile, "in an old red lacquer box on my desk" so that she could "open [it] again and again" like a "magic casement." Her imagery, though ironically Romantic (her allusion is to Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"), suggests just how important it was for this early Canadian modernist to feel that she had a "casement" opening out from the suffocating "tyranny" (December 1923) of her own cultural environment (as she perceived it) onto the more vibrant and diverse Anglo-American literary world.

In a different sense, Bowman's correspondence itself opens a window onto her *oeuvre*, as well as the early years of the modernist movement in Canada. Her dialogue with Lowell highlights the major significance of transnational exchange in the development of this movement, especially for a woman of Bowman's age and aesthetic preferences. Here was a writer who rose to the presidency of the Montreal Branch of the Canada Authors Association and yet who implored her publisher "not just [to] let [her] live and die in Canada surrounded by the A.C.B. [Association of Canadian Bookmen] and the C.A.A."¹⁶ In Canada, the CAA was the community that welcomed her; but she found more compatible

intellectual companionship in Lowell and more stimulating literary models in the American literary magazines whose pages she devoured with such studious interest. Alas, this border-straddling position, as well as her divided allegiance to both “old” and “new” in her poetry, was almost certainly among the factors that permitted Bowman’s legacy to fade almost entirely after her death in 1944. Rosemary Sullivan remarked this disappearance when she asked, in 1989, “Where, for instance, is the name of Louise Morey Bowman in the history of Canadian Modernism?” (xi). In 1924, however, Amy Lowell posed a different question entirely. “[W]as I not in the vanguard to say,” she exclaimed fondly in her letter of 12 December, “‘Here’s someone, good people, worthy all attention’”?

Editorial principles

The letters below are replicated exactly, including idiosyncratic spellings and capitalizations, as well as small errors. On two occasions, in Bowman’s letters of December 1923 and 6 October 1924, square brackets enclose words that are illegible in Bowman’s handwriting, and on one occasion, in Lowell’s letter of 14 January 1924, an abbreviated name is completed in square brackets. Obvious corrections made by hand in Bowman’s letters are adopted silently. Bowman’s letters are original autograph manuscripts and typescripts; Lowell’s are typescript copies. Some letters are dated conjecturally in pencil, presumably by Lowell’s secretary or by her partner, Ada Russell, after the poet’s death; where I have corrected or adjusted these dates, the rationale for the change is given in the notes. For reasons of length, six full letters have been left out of the selection published here, and several passages have been omitted from letters by both poets; these passages are marked by ellipses in square brackets, on their own line if full paragraphs have been omitted and, on two occasions, within individual paragraphs where just a few sentences have been cut. Where omitted content has a bearing on a published selection of the correspondence, it is summarized in a note. Bowman herself was a liberal employer of ellipses; ellipses without square brackets are hers. Bowman also frequently alludes to Lowell’s poems or calls them by shorthand titles. In these cases, and where she does the same with works by other artists, full titles and publication details are provided in the notes.

Notes to the Introduction

- 1 Grace Hazard Conkling won the prize in 1922 for her long poem, *Variations on a Theme*. The Blindman Prize, offered through the Poetry Society of South Carolina and named in commemoration of the Charleston poet Hervey Allen's war poem, "The Blindman," was worth \$250 (see the announcement of the prize in *The Year Book of the Poetry Society of South Carolina for 1921*, October 1921, p. 12). The competition ran until 1926.
- 2 Macmillan Company of Canada *fonds*, Box 11, folder 13. Hereafter abbreviated as "MF," followed by the box and folder number.
- 3 Monroe had favourably reviewed Bowman's first book, *Moonlight and Common Day* (1922), and she and Bowman also corresponded periodically between 1919 and at least 1934. Bowman's side of that exchange is housed now at the University of Chicago Library in the *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* Records. References to this collection will be abbreviated in the notes as "Poetry Records" followed by the box and folder number.
- 4 A.J.M. Smith was the first to remark on this relationship of influence explicitly in his introduction to Bowman's work in *The Book of Canadian Poetry* (1943; she was dropped from later editions). He wrote, not altogether kindly, that Bowman was "the best representative in Canadian letters of the school of feminine imagists which flourished in the twenties under the aegis of Amy Lowell" (261).
- 5 See the Women's Art Society of Montreal *fonds* (P125) at the McCord Museum in Montreal, especially the programmes and meeting minutes, for further details about Bowman's role in the group and the lectures that she organized.
- 6 In 1967 Louis Dudek and Michael Gnarowski reprinted both Call's and Stringer's prefaces in *The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada*. Tellingly, they noted that *Open Water* "must be seen as a turning point in Canadian writing if only for the importance of the ideas advanced by Stringer in his preface" (3). Call's preface was of similar importance.
- 7 For more on Archibald Bowman, see his death notice in *The Engineering Journal*, vol. 17, no. 1, January 1934, p. 374.
- 8 Queen's University Archives, Lorne and Edith Pierce Collection, Hale-Garvin *sous-fonds*, Locator 2001.1, Box 32, file 8, letter from Bowman to Hale, 23 October [1923], emphasis in original. Bowman does not provide a year in the date on her letter, but she is clearly referring to *Morning in the West*, which was published by Ryerson in 1923. Wanda Campbell insightfully compares these two poets in "Moonlight and Morning: Women's Early Contribution to Canadian Modernism."
- 9 The quotation in this sentence is from Bowman's letter to Lowell of April or May 1925, which is not printed here (it is a long, somewhat rambling letter in which Bowman sends her best wishes for Lowell's recovery from the illness that would ultimately end her life). There are, of course, many other reasons for this hiatus, including the hardships of the Great Depression and the deaths, just eight years apart, of Bowman's father in 1926 and her husband in 1934. Notably, most of the poems in *Dream Tapestries* had been written before the Bowmans' relocation.
- 10 John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* (1906-21) and *Five Tales* (1919), Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget* (1922) and *The Return* (1910). See note 44 to the letters, below.
- 11 "Dry bones" is an allusion to Ezekiel 37:1-14; see note 22 to the letters, below.
- 12 MF, B11F13, letter from Bowman to Eayrs, 13 September 1924. The length of the endorsements is particularly noteworthy; Bowman insisted that she did "so want every word in those two little paragraphs." The correspondence does not reveal who decided to print the endorsements on the front of the jacket rather than the back or an inside flap; although the design was probably not quite "unique," it was certainly unconventional.

Note that Lowell's endorsement is taken almost wholly from her first letter to Bowman, of 28 March 1923.

- 13 MF, B11F13, letter from Eays to Bowman, 8 January 1924.
- 14 University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Library, W.A. Deacon Collection, Ms Coll. 160, Box 3, folder 13, letter from Bowman to Deacon, 21 March 1923 (the date is added to the typed letter in pencil). Bowman enclosed a clipping from the St. Catharines paper with her letter; it is not in the Deacon Collection, as Deacon returned it with his reply of 22 March.
- 15 This page from *New Voices* actually features images, side by side, of both Lowell and Harriet Monroe; Bowman kept the full page with both pictures above her desk, as she told Monroe on 24 May 1924 and again in September–October 1925 (*Poetry Records*, B2F35).
- 16 MF, B11F13, letter from Bowman to Eays, August 1937.

The Correspondence

1. Bowman to Lowell 10 March 1923

March 10th/23

Dear Miss Lowell,

The tangle of circumstances, that kept me from hearing your lecture in St. Catharines the other night, unravelled sufficiently to let "my Scotchman"¹ through to you:—for which we are both devoutly thankful. Did he tell you how keenly he liked "In A Time of Dearth," when it first appeared—in "Century" wasn't it? Anyhow we read it one summer, in a magazine, on the Maine Coast, and he has so often used "Sand" since, as ammunition and defence! No, he probably did *not* tell you, being Scotch.²

After my "Oranges" and their inspiring fate, I longed to write you—as indeed I have felt equally eager to do after "Legends," "Pictures Of The Floating World," "Men Women and Ghosts," "Six French Poets," and "Fir Flower Tablets," for instance! Do you mind lists of things? No? Then may I add, with special emphasis, "*Lilac*" and "La Ronde Du Diable?"

"But an aching meat,
That's poetry."³

Let us be Scotch, and also New Englandy, by all means and just say, very quietly “I like them *beyond words*.”

For it is quite impossible to tell Amy Lowell what she has been, and is, to “Mrs Bowman of Toronto, Canada.”

I am sending to you, in a few days’ time, copies of my one (first) book and some of my newest stuff! It is obvious that my publisher insisted on some of my earliest poems being included in the book. From the Canadian and English view-points he was wise: though some of my Canadian reviews were amazingly sympathetic with my efforts towards freedom, and new rhythms and colours, “and curve and pause of a Cadence.”⁴

Forgive this too-long letter. You must get so much too much of this kind of thing! But—I never did it before anyhow.

With deep regard,
Louise Morey Bowman

* * *

2. Lowell to Bowman 28 March 1923

Mrs. Archibald Abercromby Bowman
377 Walmer Road Hill
Toronto Canada
(Louise Morey Bowman)

28 March 23.

My dear Mrs. Bowman:

I have seldom had a greater pleasure than your letter gave me. Mr. Bowman will have doubtless told you that I mentioned your name in my lecture before I knew he was in the audience. Your poem “Oranges” made a great impression on me. I got your book as soon as it came out, but I am

more than glad to have it from you with this beautiful inscription. I was very much disappointed when I first read the volume to find that "Oranges" was not in it. I hope that you are going to have a new volume soon with your new poems in it.

Your metrical experiments are very interesting, I think. I like your work so much. It has the authentic touch of poetry, the projection of a personality that feels poetry naturally. Evidently you are extremely fond of music, judging from the references to it in your poetry. I like very much your two Debussy preludes in your book. The orchestration in your symphony, "The Enchanted Wood," written on the back, is very interesting, and that poem itself is beautiful and thoroughly original. This whole series of "Green Tapestries" is very striking.⁵

I think perhaps I like the "Portrait" least. "Blue Moon" is delightful. I confess I am not in love with "Pauline."⁶ It seems to me that your attitude toward the lady is a little sentimental. The idea of cremating her is excellent, but I think she is gazed at with somewhat too romantic an eye. It would be an amusing study to try and discover which of the poems in your book are old and which are new. I think I could find out without much difficulty.

By the way, how fond you are of apples and apple orchards! Of all these poems I believe I like "Green Apples" best. It is so imaginative and full of colour, but still perhaps "Oranges" keeps its place for me as the chief and most enchanting of the poems. It is not so mystic as some of the others, but it is a beautiful picture.⁷ On the whole, I will not give the palm to any one, I find so many delightful ones, each in its own way. I have seldom enjoyed reading any new poetry so much as I have yours, and I thank you very much for sending it to me. I shall keep it and read it often with great pleasure.

You must be sure to let me know if you and Mr. Bowman are ever in Boston. I begged him to do so that night at St. Catherines, and he assured me that you came quite frequently, and that you would certainly look me up. We should have such a nice talk; I shall look forward to it.

I see a lot of people writing poetry who are not, I think, poets. Do you know what I mean? Ezra Pound used to say that he could find plenty of good poems, but few good poets, which may sound paradoxical, but which really is not. Many tyros can hit off a good poem now and then. A poet is a person who carries poetry forever with him, of whose being it is a part. I think you are just that, so that when I say “Good luck to you,” it is not a mere, idle expression, but a statement of my firm belief that you will continue and prosper.

Again, with many thanks for the kind things you say about my work, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,
[Amy Lowell]

P.S. I have not mentioned the picture. It was a very good idea to put it in. It is a pleasure to know that I shall recognize you when we meet, and I shall regard the picture as a pledge that we shall certainly meet before long.

* * *

3. Bowman to Lowell
26 September 1923

495 Lansdowne Ave—Montreal
September 26th. 1923

Dear Miss Lowell,

I have just re-read the Keats March 1818 in the N.A. Review.⁸ I have been wondering if Mr Keats would not walk amidst us soon now! Oh my word but I'm keen about this thing! “An aching meat”⁹ that satisfies me to the marrow of my bones. I read it first this afternoon, crushed up in the tram, with an enormous Franciscan friar, in his great brown cape and habit and dirty white rope girdle sitting beside me, and a vivid demi-mondaine on the other side; and two little nervous nuns, with faces like neat sheets of blank white note-paper, opposite. I couldn't wait to get home to read it

and I devoured it with such greedy delight that I suppose I must have been smiling—because as I looked up from the last word I was conscious of hastily-averted eyes on all sides, and I almost thought I saw pale question marks written on the sheets of white note-paper! It was a queer thrilly moment, such as Mr Keats—and you—and humble me sitting at the feet of you both—can share! Think of that!

And so here I am head-long again into a letter to you. Your letter to me last Spring was—well—untellable it was—is! A “magic casement” it is, which I keep in an old red lacquer box on my desk and open again and again.¹⁰ No need though. I have the letter by heart. I generally answer letters—but this one I couldn’t without seeming fulsome and mawkish—and so—I’ve waited. But today—the bonnet shop girls—especially perhaps the little One who saw the sun on the muslin blue-bells—they have loosed my pen.¹¹

You haven’t forgotten your letter have you? So marvellously kind, so—no, it’s no use—just “thank you” and let it go at that.

I have not been in Massachusetts at all this summer. Our sojourn in Maine¹² came very hurriedly in June and early July, as my Scotchman has been transferred to a new appointment in Montreal. We have sold our beloved Toronto home, with its deep wooded ravine and own little wild-wood and sunken garden; its oak-tree balcony; and its great windows where, from bed or desk, I saw a great vista of open sky and windy wings and tree-tops. After a short fierce battle to find *any* kind of a house to rent here, we saw this friendly, little, old mongrel of a house; just vacant after thirty years. It wagged a friendly tail at us in the shape of an apple-tree in the back garden, and my wonderful Scotchman got a twenty month’s lease. It’s rather ugly—quite mongrel; but it has three plum trees and an enormous maple, beside the apple tree.

One of my castles in Spain fell to pieces when we sold the Toronto house. It was to have Miss Lowell actually sit by our fire and look out of our windows:—perhaps even—oh there were no limits to the towers and turrets of that castle!

You were good enough last Spring to ask about my new book. Yes of course the core will be of Green Apples and Oranges. You have a good deal of the content in the packet I sent you. I hope it will be out this Spring—of 1924 that is. I seem to be tied up with “Macmillans In Canada,” who seem to be rather a power unto themselves. They did well for me here, but almost nothing in either England or the States. The President (Mr Eayrs) of the Canadian house is a good sort; far the best publisher in Canada I think. He seems much the most modern of any of the Macmillan people anywhere. He handles the Borzoi books¹³ here too and is keenly alive, in many ways—

I spoke a moment ago of my Spanish-castle-building. When you were still with Macmillans I built one, to the skies. It was to have my second book of verse published with a foreword by Amy Lowell! I knew it *never* could happen, but I dreamed of it—over and over—in secret. When that book of Winnifred Bryer’s came into my hands—the Scotchman discovered it by the by—how I did visualize my castle! (I’ve asked over and over for the next book that was promised in that one “Development”—and the next one to be “Adventure”—you remember? I do wonder what happened.)¹⁴

It couldn’t be—could it? *That preface?* Forgive my temerity! And if you do answer this letter, and it can’t be, just forget that I asked and consider it just a dream. I have so much besides that can never be taken away—your own work; your guidance; your letter; “Oranges”, and your belief in me.

The new book is to be called “Dream Tapestries” I think. I trust it has not been used before, and that you will like it. It will include “Oranges”, “Green Apples”, “The Enchanted Wood”, “Blue Moon”, “The Dead Violin”, and some others. I think I have others you would like better than “Pauline”, and I can easily take her out if you so advise. I have a cycle called The Old Fruit Garden:—studies of my Grandfather, Grandmother, and my Mother—Grapes, Red Currants, and Amber Raspberries, respectively; and another “On the Doom Of The Common Day” or maybe better just “Homespun”, to show the difference of weave and make them fit into “Dream Tapestries”. “Twins” is a study of two old men and a kitten, a long rhymed thing in common speech; and “Bob Cooning” is a giant in a side show but just a village lad all the time; done in the same

way. And then there is a little moment of drama in an amusement park, that I call “The Talking Booth: A Fantasy”, and a study of a Post Box etc. etc.¹⁵

I’m terrified to send this letter to you Oh Woman of Legend and Sun and Lilac and Floating World and Castle!¹⁶ It’s a greedy stupid letter—“soft”! Which last is the word my devoted little English maid of all work uses to describe any one who makes a false step of any kind. “Mam! Oh Mam! The telephone man has bored a hole through the dining-room ceiling by mistake! He thought he was comin’ out in the pantry! He’s *soft!*” So she has just called up to my cubby-hole—all apple-tree window and desk and table—where I write. She is a character and if she understood literary matters, and knew I had told you my preface dream she would say pityingly “Oh Mam! I’m afraid *she*’ll think you’re soft!” Alack yes! I’m afraid “she” will!

But I’ve had a gorgeous time writing this letter and now here it goes—off to the grim red magician at the corner. Are your Post Boxes painted red in Brookline? Are they everywhere? You ought to know.

Yours sincerely,
Louise Morey Bowman

* * *

4. Lowell to Bowman
6 November 1923

Mrs. Archibald Abercromby Bowman
495 Lansdowne Avenue
Montreal
Canada

6 November 23.

My dear Mrs. Bowman:

I am afraid, from my not answering your letter before, that you think that I am annoyed at your asking me to do a preface for you. On the contrary, I was very much pleased and flattered at your suggestion, but, alas, it is impossible for me to do what you want. I like your poems so much that it would be pleasant to say so in print, but, as you know, I am absolutely drowned in this Keats work, and to finish it in time for publication next Autumn will require all my energies. I have, therefore, had to refuse to do anything in the way of reviewing books or things of that sort until that is off my mind.

You will understand how hurried I feel when I tell you that I have also agreed—for which I am now very sorry—to write a little book on the modern forms of poetic expression: *vers libre*, “polyphonic prose,” etc. for the Princeton University Press series of “Men and Ideas.” That book is supposed to be done this Winter, and clearly it will not be, for Keats must come first.

The Keats book has taken so much longer to do than I expected, largely owing to a great deal of new material which has come to hand, that I feel crushed and crowded and simply cannot do anything else. I am sure you will understand.

It is interesting to know that you have moved from Toronto to Montreal. I have never been to either city, so that I have really no idea as to whether you have left a prettier place for one less so or not. You speak as though you regretted Toronto, so I suppose it must have a charm which Montreal is lacking.

I wish you would tell me something about the condition of poetry in Canada. I know of no Canadian poet but yourself whose work is interesting, and they do not seem to be publishing any little magazine for poetry and other things with you are as they are with us. I do not think much of our small poetry magazines, but they do show an interest on the part of the young people. One of the ladies I met at St. Catherine’s sent me the poems of a young man who, I think, also lived in Toronto, who

was an architect or artist by profession. His book did not strike me particularly. I am ashamed to say I cannot remember his name. It is a curious fact that in all the years I have been giving lectures and readings, I have never been asked across the border but that one time at St. Catherine's.

You have a most interesting person living in Canada now—my collaborator in “Fir-Flower Tablets”—Mrs. Francis Ayscough, who has just moved from China to St. Andrews, the ancestral home of her family. I believe she is going to England this Winter, but she expects to make St. Andrews her headquarters.¹⁷ Her lectures—with stereoptican views of her trip up the Yangtze River, with the various literary associations of the river, some beautiful pictures and explanations of the symbolism and laying out of the Chinese gardens, etc.—are particularly interesting. On one of Mrs. Ayscough's many trips between China and Canada, she told me that she had met some officers of the Authors' Club and that they were most anxious to have me come to Canada, but nothing more have I heard of the subject. I am not writing this to suggest that I come to Canada, for, as a matter of fact, I am refusing all lecture engagements this Winter, with the exception of those round Boston and New York, so that I may concentrate of my *Life of Keats*. I am merely considering what kind of a poetical life there is in your Dominion, for I found my audience at St. Catherine's splendidly concentrated and enthusiastic.

I kept the hope all Summer that you would turn up. I was here all Summer long grinding away at this book, and I kept expecting to receive a letter or a telephone call to say that you and Mr. Bowman were passing through Boston and would come out and dine with me. I hope it may be true another year, if I do not go to England as I am rather hoping to do.

I do not know much about the Macmillans in Canada. I had a large-sized disagreement with the Macmillans in New York, which was what induced me to change to Houghton Mifflin Company who had published my first book and who were personal friends of mine. Houghton Mifflin and Macmillan are considered our best publishers, I think.

If you have very little American sale, I think the Canadian sale on American poetry is also very slight. I have never heard any author say that his sales in Canada equalled those in America. I wonder why that should be, and I wonder if that is not a part of the condition I have just spoken of, that Canada has not, as a whole, felt the poetic urge which has been so rampant in the United States during the last ten years, but that, with admirable esprit de corps, prefers her own.

I am glad you liked my letter, but your silence, although emotionally the highest tribute which you could give me, caused me some anxiety, for I had the curious experience last Winter and early this Summer of letters failing to reach their destinations. I kept getting letters from the Dead Letter Office, returning to me epistles sent frequently to the right address, and sometimes to the wrong one. At that time I had an under secretary whose duty it was to address the letters, but who had a thoroughly impressionistic idea of the skill of the post office; knowing this, and not hearing from you, I feared that my letter had gone astray, and I certainly did not want to seem not to reply to your very nice letter and the splendid sheaf of poems you sent. I am relieved to learn that it was all right. You nearly received a second letter from me (if you would have received it, for I should have sent it Toronto) asking if you had got the first.

Do send me a copy of your book when it comes out, and realize how sorry I am that I cannot put in a little foreword.

Very sincerely yours,
[Amy Lowell]

* * *

5. **Bowman to Lowell**
December 1923¹⁸

495 Lansdowne Ave.
Montreal

Dear Miss Lowell,

Thank you so much for your long fascinating letter. Please don't think of the preface dream again. I knew it was too much to hope but hopes are so much more real than realities sometimes.

I know I shouldn't bother you any more about myself just now, but you were so nice about the letter I did *not* write, for so long, that I am venturing to send you my Mountain That Watched and my Toy Shop.¹⁹ I have been waiting till I could type them to write this letter. I have very limited time and opportunity for my work just now for my father is dying of an incurable illness—oh so slowly! It is a kind of gray hell.

I have been rereading and thinking about your letter. Canada is just beginning to stir a little as far as modern Poetry is concerned. People *are* writing a little in the new free forms, but they are not using freedom in a wise thinking way it seems to me. For the most part it seems stupid... unconvinced and unconvincing. They make it a tyranny somehow in Canada... one must do this... one mustn't do that. One must be bound or free... if you write "free verse" what business have you to employ rhyme and metre... etc. etc.... Oh if I could only *deluge* Canada with you! Is there any way I can get hold of an article I had and treasured and brutally lost?—One of yours in the N.Y. Evening Post Lit. Sup. "Is There A Reaction?" it was called.²⁰

Oh there is so much I want to tell you—ask you! Canada as a whole wants her poetry in the traditional manner, but here and there people are alive and thrilling to.... You... and to their own... little groping me. Some of my reviews were splendid! None were really bad here in Canada. The only really damning one came from Scotland! Our Universities... McGill, Dalhousie, and Queens, Toronto... all stood behind me in their critics' reviews and in other ways. Did you see Harriet Monroe's?²¹

We have no Poetry journals at all and our magazines are in a horrible mess. Bliss Carman (d'ye ken him?) is termed our Poet Laureate and much adored. English opinion tips the scale, except when it is a name like yours. People may like or dislike but they know what your work, in and

for poetry, really means and they either glow or shiver! And that means a very great deal to us who are trying to make dry bones live!²² I shall not soon forget reading and talking you (months before you came to St Catherines) in one of the most conservative and exclusive literary clubs in Toronto.²³ The results were amazing.

Of course *Moonlight and Common Day* was a first book and tempered somewhat to the popular taste. “*Dream Tapestries*” with “*Oranges*” as its core will be more of a test. But on the other hand Canada is more ready for it.

I shall wait anxiously for your opinion of the *Mountain*... will you tell me?

Also would you mind telling me which of your books contains *Purple Grackles*? Most of my books are still stored from our recent “flitting”. I have PG. in the *Bookman Anthology*.²⁴ But where does it belong? So many questions and you so busy. I can hardly wait for the Keats book and the Princeton text.

This is a stupid hurried letter but I want it to go without further delay. Here is a paragraph from a letter just in from a Toronto friend.²⁵ It may amuse you.

“...then in the wee sma’ hours the fascinating *North American Review*. So good of you to send it Dear. John and I devoured the Keats poem... he has just read it aloud again this evening. We adore it too. I cannot get used to her turning back to the oldest and most jangling of verse forms... like the jangling of sweet old-fashioned bells. But I like the poem so much. I think Miss Lowell could write the greatest novel of the century if she would.”

So there! There’s a very “mixed grill” for you Wonderful Person!

I’ve been sending the *N.A. Review* for October here and there as you see.²⁶

Good by, always gratefully,
Louise Morey Bowman

P.S. I am enclosing a thing I did today which I had no intention of sending you—but I have just shown it to the Scotchman and he likes it—he is really a most amazing person as you know—and he says—“stick it in—it’s sincere”!²⁷

L.M.B.

* * *

6. Bowman to Lowell Late December 1923²⁸

December something
1923

Dear Miss Lowell,

Just after I sent my letter to you the other day a letter came in from Mr Eayrs, telling me *he* had written you asking for a word for the little coat of my book and telling me, jubilantly, of your wonderful reply!²⁹ Though nothing can ever be to me what your first letter was—all my own and the answer to all the past years—I feel again, now, as if I could not thank you—as if I must just be silent as I was so rudely all last summer.

Of course I am shaking now for fear you won’t like “The Mountain” and “The Toy Shop” and be sorry. I hoped one of them might take the place of “Pauline.” You didn’t like her you know, *except* her being cremated—so funny and *wise*, and dear, you seem to me about her! Of course Canada will be horribly shocked with “Pauline” and her Jew and mummies. (What an awful word to spell with a pen! That can’t be the way!)

Oh how I am running on but I can’t stop now. Do listen just a minute. I do want to tell you how thrilling Quebec today is. You see everybody—doctor and nurse and my dear Scotch in-laws—just *ordered* me away for a few days, and “Archibald” picked me up yesterday and carried me off down here. I could hardly realize I was really off, and free, until we were

in the middle of the huge new bridge and I could see the black water swirling beneath the mammoth thing. And here I am with Archie, and Six French Poets, and de la Mare's "Midget" and Fannie Hurst's "Lummox"!³⁰ Doesn't it sound exciting? Quite a troupe!—

I haven't read the S.F.P.³¹ for some time and I am devouring it with new zest all over again. "He not only wrote, he not only sang; he shrieked and cut capers, and pounded on a drum."³²—That's what I want to do when I read this book. I'd forgotten a lot of it—"The modern poet dares to be happy and say so"—Its rather nice to be able to tell you, during a second reading, what a boon this book is to me. I'm an awfully poor French scholar—the result of my queer Puritan "complexes" in the very heart of French Catholic Canada (Sherbrooke Que.) And also of the result of my fantastic, and rapturous, "education"—which was really only a wild joy in books from the time my Grandmother Dyer taught me to read "coloured words" at five. Out of "William Mavor's English Spelling Book," adorably illustrated by Kate Greenaway, and just by the "look of the words" on the page. "Miss Jane Bond had a new doll and her good Aunt who gave it her gave her a yard of cloth to make a shift for it etc. etc." Absolute magic those words! "Doll" I could find at once anywhere on the page and it was a rosy red—and is yet. (That wasn't the Puritan grandmother! She taught me the multiplication-tables which I used to sing, loudly and lustily, and never knew they meant much. The Puritan G. was "Haldale Jane Foote" (Morey) and the other was "Sarah Julia Sherrill" (Dyer) and they both lived in the house with me till I was twelve. Such a household of Pagans and Puritans as it was! And an English governess for me—whose French was—non est.

But to return to Quebec. Last night we walked on the Terrace, all empty and our own, and it was like an evening of early Autumn, with laughter and gay French song drifting up to us, as we hung over the railing, from a coast-guard boat drawn up at a lower dock. There was even a [well] muffled splash of oars. But the sky was heavy and snow seemed near. And this morning we woke to find all the quaint roofs and towers outside our turret window all white with snow. Beyond them the great river is a queer sullen grey-green. The snow must have fallen *heavily* all night. We've just been for such a wonderful walk, all around the city and up on

the walls through St John's Gate. When we came out on the river side it was just noon and suddenly all the Church bells began to ring from all the myriad steeples and towers both sides of the river it seemed to me—echoing all up and down over the sinister gray water—not a note sinking in—just beating against the gray water as they did against all the great stone walls above and below us. And then when they stopped it was so still—so still—one was breathless! One could hear the “little noiseless noise among the leaves” of the pale dried grasses and clumps of dark dried flowers rising all about us from the thick powdery masses of snow—“born of the very sigh that silence heaves”—*you* know!³³ How my Mother and I adored Keats! And to think *she* never read that thunder-storm Legend, or the Charleston poems, or Lilac—and then to remember *her* white lilac hedge in the old Sherbrooke garden—bewilders me with the queerness of Life that stops, and still goes on.³⁴ Oh well—She died such *ages* ago.

Archie is shocked at my writing you again so soon. I'm posting this myself so he won't feel the fatness. “But you wrote her a long letter only last week!” As if I didn't know that! But I did so want to write and try to thank you about the book jacket—and fail of course—when I am all happy and free. We shall “go back” in a few days you see. And as usual Mother and the grandmothers and Keats, and the dried grasses and snow and the stone walls got all mixed up in a delicious jumble and I just had to tell you. Now I shan't write any more to you for months—I promise you—silence.

But you get more real—more—more—all the time!—And there's so much to ask you—to try to tell—

Yours

Louise Morey Bowman

Archie sends warm regards though still disapproving of a second epistle.

7. Lowell to Bowman
14 January 1924

Mrs. Archibald Abercromby Bowman
495 Lansdowne Avenue
Montreal, P.Q.
Canada
14 January 24.

My dear Mrs. Bowman:

I hope you have not thought because I have been so slow in answering your delightful letters that I did not appreciate them, on the contrary, they gave me the greatest possible pleasure, and you need never fear that you write too often. I have been rather ill with a nasty little penumo-coccus infection, which I caught on a brief lecture trip to New York and Baltimore. It was a breathless and very crowded trip, and I found it exceedingly difficult to keep my engagements, which, however, I did, only to come back and collapse for a couple of weeks or more, unable to do anything. Your first letter reached me in New York just as I was leaving for Baltimore, and the second was also received in New York on the night of my return from Baltimore but it was quite impossible for me to answer them then, or, indeed, until I was able to hold my head up again, which is of recent concurrence.

In the first place, let me tell you that I think your poem on the "Mountain" is simply superb. I admire it very much indeed and have read it over several times with great interest and delight. I also like "Prayer in Scarlet and White Paint" particularly. I do not think the "Toy Shop" quite gets there. The idea is good, but it has a kind of a monotonous and dim quality which leaves it on a lower plane than the others. You will forgive my saying this, I know, but it does not begin to be up to your best work. Your lyrical interludes in "Mountain" interested me very much; the whole poem is extraordinarily vivid and clear, and you certainly give the atmosphere of a city, a city which I have never seen, but of which I am quite certain that this is the exact picture.³⁵ As to your poem on me, I am very

agreeably flattered. I hope you will print it somewhere, I like it so much that I am just selfish enough to want other people to see it too.

[...] ³⁶

It is impossible for me to tell you what pleasure your letters give me. Your understanding and sympathy is exceedingly precious to me. Some times it seems as though the ignorance and hostility here would never cease although in the long run I do think that my work is being understood a great deal more and better than it was. Still, don't you find that it is a peculiarity of the poetic temperament that one notices the disagreeable things more than the agreeable ones?

[...]

Your description of Quebec makes my mouth water. I have never been there; in fact, the only places in your country I have been to are St. Andrews, where I stayed for a week one Summer some time ago with Mrs. Ays[cough] and that kaleidoscopic trip to St. Catherines last Winter. I do wish you could arrange to have me speak in Montreal some time, if possible. I should like to come up very much, and above all things I should like to meet you in the flesh; as you say, there is so much to say. Tell your husband that he need not worry at all about your writing to me too often. Your letters are always a pleasure, and I shall always answer them as soon as I can, and if there is any delay in the answer you will know that it is simply unavoidable.

I have just read your poem on me over again with every sensation of gratitude and pleasure. It is very lovely. I like your little autobiographical fragments in the letter from Quebec. Tell me some more. With best wishes for the New Year, including all sorts of luck for the book (a copy of which you will send me, will you not?), believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

[Amy Lowell]

8. Bowman to Lowell
3 February 1924

MRS A.A. Bowman
495 Lansdowne Ave.
Westmount
Montreal

February 3rd, 1924

Dear Miss Lowell,

Your letter came to me on January 17th—my birthday. Black lonely little days one's own birthdays are—pinched and lean! Therefore to have it made a—red letter day—you see? Archie gave me a Mah Jongg set (only game I've ever played that had any poetry or real things in it!) and I was greedy and could not wait properly so I had it a week before; and then for the first time he forgot the birthday. Was very much upset the next day when he discovered it, and quite reassured when I said "It was quite all right. I had my letter from Miss Lowell..."

[...]

I'm so awfully sorry about the "penumo-cocous" beast. I've had him too once, in the middle of a series of six operations (major ones) between 1914 and 1921. I nearly died of him. He's an awful Beast!

[...]

As for your coming to Canada again to lecture it is one of my dreams of course. At *least* I have begun to throw out lines here and there for it but oh Canada is difficult—horribly so. And this move of ours down here to Montreal has knocked me up badly as far as my own little sphere of influence is concerned—and with Dad's condition too. Here I have no club influence at all (Lord how I hate clubs anyhow!), and I find the people I know here—largely a certain "old Montreal" so hide-bound, and steeped in tradition and conservative Victorian ideals in *literature*

(nothing else) that I feel drenched in cold water. This is horribly ungrateful of me to talk this way! Every one is charming—I'm reading my poetry next Tuesday for instance; in the most enchanting, gray, red-gabled house on the mountain-side, in the most perfect setting, and to a group of about fifteen or twenty who will really be quite sympathica I fancy. It is entirely a private affair though.

I am not at all "in the public eye" kind of person naturally—though for the sake of "Barberries"—the "aching blood-red meat" I have been a little and would be again if I knew how to begin here. In Toronto I suppose I really was doing something, and was on the point of doing more—but here I can only write—and talk and read here and there—bide my time. But meanwhile—you are in the very marrow of my bones—just as you have been for so long before you ever knew of my existence—and would have continued to be if you never heard of me!

I met a woman from Prince Edward Island the other day:—rather a flat afternoon and I felt stodgy and "unknown" and dying for a cigarette—and then outside on an icy wide-swept road—"Queen Mary Road" no less!—she literally fell upon me! "You are Louise Morey Bowman—they have just told me! Oh—Amy Lowell—Robert Frost—oh we *must* talk—" all this on glare ice with the wind blowing ten below zero. She was leaving for "the Island" the next morning but we did talk—in the teeth of that gale and creeping over the most awful ice—and on the tram all the way back to the city. It was just outside at *Hampstead*—the new, rather "chic" suburb! Do you remember Ezra Pound's Paris Letter in the Dial for November 1922? I must quote it just here—verbatim—for the pure joy of doing so. "The problem (O gawd, how one falls into clichés) facing (O gawd, O Montreal)... Is it possible to establish some spot of civilization, or some geographically scattered association of civilized creatures? One is up against this problem in a decadent wallow like London, in an enervated centre like Paris, in a reawakening Italy, in an inchoate America."³⁷ I had missed that somehow in that number of the Dial (too intrigued with the Waste Land apparently) and in rereading some of my old numbers yesterday came upon it suddenly. It sounds like the Mountain doesn't it?

Prof. B.K. Sandwell formerly of McGill and now of Queens University (Kingston) was one of my hopes about getting you to Montreal.³⁹ But alas he has gone to Queens'. However... He is one, of the few, who really has a vision for Canadian Literature; and he gave me a fine review. I do not know him intimately, though he and his American wife have been in our house in Toronto and we have many mutual friends. He was very delighted over your kindness to me—the Blindman contest and your first letter which Prof. Pelham Edgar (another University critic of mine) made me tell him about. "B.K." has vision—if he doesn't get *too* involved with University clipped hedges.

There is a book coming out in the Spring I must send you—sonnets on the Habitant—"Blue Homespun" by another Professor—a great friend of mine—knew him before I was married, in the old Eastern Townships days.⁴⁰ I'm rather pleased about him. If you could have heard him talk about Modern poetry when I first took him in hand, again, a few years ago! He took quite a turn with "Wild Grapes" but now has gone comfortably back to his beloved sonnets (his real medium) but oh with such an improvement and freedom! He has three of his "Blue Homespun" in Poetry this month by the way. He also gave me a fine review—in the Montreal "Churchman"!! I'm sure you are roaring with laughter by this time! Fancy my going on like this—but oh wouldn't we have fun—FUN!—if we could be together a bit and talk? At least—if you would talk and I could listen. I'd be too awed to talk very much. It's your knowledge that scares me so—all the French and the mastery! The Poetry part—of course it's all Poetry but you know what I mean—I love that so much that it casteth out the fear.⁴¹ But I feel I know nothing except by flashes—by instinct—and that bluffs people—and the Lord knows I hate pretence. But Archie says I do *think*—deep, and straight, and crooked! I do try...

[...] ⁴²

Dream Tapestries is postponed a little. They want to hold it over for Fall publication and the Christmas sales which I missed before; and I see the advantage of it now as I did then—and I am too tired to fight them just now anyway if I had not. I hope you will not mind. It will be a better book

for the extra months on it I think. And if I might send you some stuff I am in doubt about including? Archie says I must *not* bother you about work for a long long time. But how can I help it when I feel that only you—really—know, for me.

Miss Monroe has just accepted a sequence called “Cold Tragedy”—three—Italian background—things. Her choice surprises me. And John Farrar has just taken a little thing called “Bread And Fire.” I wonder if I sent you that.⁴³

What do you think of the Dial award I wonder. Quite a leap from T.S. Eliot. Isn't it? I've never read anything of Van Wyck Brooks' except “Letters And Leadership”.⁴⁴ I liked that. What did you think of the Waste Land? Some day I'm going to make a list of things for you to mark with an X or a zero because I shall burst if I don't know! Things like the Forsyte saga and Five tales and The Midget and the Return and D.H. Lawrence and D.Y. Cameron and Monticelli and Mathew Maris and Moby Dick and Cyril Scott and Vaughn Williams⁴⁵—

And have you heard our Eve Gauthier sing songs?⁴⁶ I heard her in recital here two Sundays ago. Oh I am so proud of her! At last we have some one of our own who isn't just a song-bird—bubbling. She thinks!

Do you know a poem “Marigold Pendulum” by Dudley Poore?⁴⁷

I do hope you are quite well again. Otherwise this letter will be too dreadful. I will try and write properly, decently and sedately, next time.

I'm so glad you like the verse about yourself. It is dear of you to like it and understand. I shall try it then.

Sincerely yours,
Louise Morey Bowman

P.S. Now that the silence of last Summer and of the years before is broken I keep rushing to you (mentally) with some poem that I have not mentioned—and that “must be told”—“The Red Knight”—Oh he was so

glorious! And the Bishop with the cobble stones and the swans and Boom Boom—"I think it is a drowning—Black willows and stars"—and the moonlight for "a housecat and a pair of spectacles"⁴⁸—

"Say little things for my ears to catch and run with them to my heart"⁴⁹—
L.M.B.

* * *

9. Lowell to Bowman

11 April 1924⁵⁰

Mrs. Archibald Abercromby Bowman
495 Lansdowne Avenue
Montreal, P.Q.
Canada

11 April 24.

My dear Mrs. Bowman:

I do not know what you must think of me, but I am thoroughly distressed that you should think it, as I feel sure you must. My long silence looks indifferent and lazy, but please believe that it is neither. Your letters give me the greatest possible pleasure, but I am having a wretched time with my eyes, with consequent head-aches and general misery, and three hundred pages of my book yet to write and not enough time to do it in, and the work all hanging up while I gaze reluctantly at the pictures on the wall and the mouldings of the ceiling until I am sick to death of them.

With infinite difficulty and a wretched glass, I have made out the five poems you sent me. I am sorry to say that my eyes are so much worse that I cannot read them over as I write this letter. I am dictating it, and usually when I dictate I refresh my memory by reading over everything I talk about. That being impossible to-day, I shall have to give you my impressions of the poems remembered from my reading of some weeks ago.

Of these poems you have sent me, I like “Sympathy” and “Wild Horses” best. I am sorry to say that I do not like “The Talking Booth” at all, and I should recommend you not to put it into the book. It does not quite do what you mean it to do. One is more struck with its incongruousness than with its integral homogeneity, I think. “The Twins” is a very interesting story, but I think perhaps you should keep it by you a little longer and try to make it a little more dramatic and not quite so long. The “Dragon Orchard” is a wonderful idea. Poor old lady, I feel so sorry for her, dying as soon as the trees blossomed! And yet I do not know that I am perfectly crazy about even that poem. It is “Wild Horses” and “Sympathy” that I like best.⁵¹

[...]

I have received a letter from a lady in Toronto, asking me to speak before the Women’s Club there, and in that invitation I thought I discerned your influence.⁵² I am sorry to have to say “no” for this year, because I have barely time to finish my Keats book before it must go to press, and, of course, this bother with my eyes is going to delay everything and makes me feel almost desperate. I am refusing all invitations to speak for the balance of this year until the Autumn.

[...]

You will forgive my not answering your letters in greater detail this time, as I cannot read them over, and I do not get the same things out of them if I have them read aloud to me; in fact, this is not a letter, merely a little line to tell you, as well as I can under the circumstances, my impressions of the poems, and to assure you that my silence is due to nothing in the world but this eye trouble, and not to any lack of interest in your letters, which I enjoy so much.

With the very best wishes, and write again soon and forgive me for not answering at once, believe me,

Very sincerely yours,
[Amy Lowell]

10. Bowman to Lowell
24 April 1924

495 Lansdowne Ave.
Montreal
April 24th 1924
Dear Miss Lowell,

Thank you so much for your letter written in such a time of trial and deprivation. It is very precious to me, though I felt terribly guilty to think of you bothering with those wretched manuscripts under such strain. Words fail me entirely now that I am trying to convey to you my sympathy about your eyes, and my distress that you, of all people, should have such trouble. It made me just ache and I did not know whether to write you at once or to wait and not put you under even an added feather-weight of burden about un-answered letters. I have thought of you every day since your letter came and sometimes many times a day.

[...]

Mr Eayrs has my manuscript just now so I wrote him at once to remove “The Talking Booth” from it, and he did so, at once. I am *so* thankful to know about it. “The Twins” I may be able to do something with as you suggest, but I have a sense of finality about it—as if it was finished as far as *I* can see it. You know the feeling I mean. And I do want it in the book and Dragon Orchard too—though I don’t feel sure at all about the latter. Of course I took out the “Toy Shop” too. I am awfully glad you like my “Sympathy”—funny little child it is. I wrote it years ago on a train. As for “Wild Horses”—I did not include it in my manuscript of Dream Tapestries and I sent you my only copy except a rough one that has a lot left out and that has muddled me up. It does not matter one bit, only if your secretary could fish it out (if you happen to have my stuff together anywhere) and mail it back to me I would be glad. But I beseech you not to give it a thought if it is the least bother. There is a wretched Can. novel just brought out called Wild Horses and it has spoiled the name for me, and it wouldn’t be anything without the name.⁵³

[...] ⁵⁴

I want to send you a copy of my “Bell” which St. Nicholas has just accepted. I wrote it really for Dad one Christmas recently, about the old church and garden in Sherbrooke, but had to send an expurgated edition to St Nick as I was very frank about “the towering Roman against the sky, on any hill that was empty and high” and “the pealing, reeling, creed-revealing bells” that rang until “peasant and marchant gave money to carry them past the grave on the pealing reeling chimes” etc. It’s not for the book of course, but may amuse you. There is only one line in it fit for your eyes—“Bells that are dropping great silver tears over the years and the vanished dead”. I must confess it rather pleased and touched me to have the thing accepted there in old, St. Nick; and the editor wrote me such a *very* charming letter about it which pleased poor old Dad exceedingly. The church I speak of in the poem is one of the few Congregational churches in Canada and it might be transplanted absolutely from a New England village, white pillars and all. They have made over the inside now though to my regret. ⁵⁵

[...]

Oh my Dear how I wish I could do something for you! If I were only near you so I could—this sounds terribly egotistical—read to you for some little coloured hour when all the others had wearied you, as even the wisest and cleverest and best do. You don’t know how I long to bundle up any little nicenesses that people have found in me and give them to you to use in these gray hours. Some day when the mouldings of the ceilings grow more intolerable than usual (though I *trust* they are not any longer bothering you) read on them, in the most lovely illumination you can *possibly* imagine, Louise Morey Bowman’s gratitude and reverence and deep deep—“feeling” for want of a better word—towards you. Last week I was told I was far “too cold and intellectual,” and yesterday that I was “so warming” and “had never grown up”. If I could know what *your* tired eyes want—fire or cold—I would try to suit accordingly—What nonsense I write but I know—I have always known—that *you* would understand... nonsense.

I found you in an English anthology the other day. That one of Thomas Moul's Best Poems of 1922. It was not the one *I* would have chosen from that Dial group.⁵⁶ I liked The Red Knight much better. Foolish?

It seems to me the group in that American Poetry 1922 is the group of yours I love the best—it is a wonderful choice—Lilac, the Hokku, the bishop and his cobblestones and swans, In Excelsis, and Ronde du Diable. If it had Purple Grackles and Mr Keats at Teignmouth and Hedges and Bronze and Patterns—I wouldn't be much good in compiling group anthologies would I?⁵⁷ They'd be like Collected Works when I was through with them!

I must tell you about the funny career of that little foolish poem of mine called "Earthborn." You may recall it towards the first of Moonlight and Common Day. It was originally published in The New York Independent some years ago. Then it was reprinted in the British Weekly—then in the Kansas City Weekly Star, then in Los Angeles, and in Texas—then a press clipping bureau in New York followed it up and sent me eleven or twelve clippings of it—ranging from Maine to Florida—and now last week it turned up again in The Journal of Home Economics for April published in Baltimore! Macmillans here forwarded me a delightful letter from the editor about it and my book. [...] I felt quite like Ella Wheeler Wilcox.⁵⁸ It frightened me!

I've been hunting for that poem of yours about coloured balls—one stuck on the Methodist steeple—remember? I'm sure it was in Poetry.⁵⁹ Heaps of my books are still boxed in the cellar. We've no place for them and its so impossible to find the ones we want without unpacking all. They were all labelled but apparently the dodo idiots put Papa Bowman's theological library, which Archie keeps in memory, under novels and poetry. Maddening!

I do hope to hear good news from you—I long to get just a line to tell me you are better. You must not give me a thought otherwise—

Ever devotedly,
Louise Morey Bowman

Archie and I tramped all over The Mountain That Watched on Easter Monday. The city was a heavenly dream from the top—no leaves stirring yet—just brooks and birds.

Why have I written all these pages for you to be bothered with? I'm so sorry my poor little old typewriter is so small and pale. I could have put it all into a lacquer Print and you would have understood—

“If I could catch the green lantern of the firefly
I could see to write you a letter”⁶⁰—

We heard your Boston Symphony last night. Monteux does not seem a good programme builder to me but maybe he was playing down to French Canada.⁶¹ But it was superb in spots. Montreal went mad over the orchestra—more than over the Philadelphia. Of course the Phil, is adored of my heart these latter years; we have had them so much in Toronto. The Divine poem symphony by Scriabin was simply *beautiful* last night—I wonder if you have heard it. I do hope so—all blue and green ice and black wings, melting into a summer sky—but all so cold and beautiful—and a moment of little golden—flowing flute brooks of fairy land right in the middle that made one gasp. And then a ravishing waltz by Ravel with the melody all taken out and all the seductive rhythm and queer primitive beat left in—the kind of thing that scratches your heart—deliciously—with its pointed icy fingers.

Oh its good to be writing you again—
L.M.B.

* * *

11. Bowman to Lowell
6 October 1924

495 Lansdowne Ave.
Montreal
October 6th 1924

Dear Miss Lowell,

I have not given myself the joy of writing you for many months now for I felt that last Spring, during that terrible eye strain of yours, I only added to the burden of life for you, and I could not shake off the sense of guilt after the kind little note from your secretary.⁶² In spite of your beautiful friendliness to me I am too little and you are too big for me to quite lose an overwhelming sense of importunity when I bombard you with letters. But the moment I begin to really talk to you the sensation vanishes and I am just purely happy. So it is now.

It is just about a year since I found Mr Keats hunting the sun.⁶³ One of the things that I put among my best beloveds. And now you have done “East West North & South of a Man”.⁶⁴ Oh it is simply marvellous! I wish wish I knew how to tell you how I like it! I’ve read them over and over and over these last few days. “Hot with oranges and purples, in a flowing robe of marigold color, he sweeps over September spaces. Scherezade, do you hear him, and the clang of his scimitar knocking on the gates?” “whirled ochre dahlias” “September above an orchard of apples” “sweetness of spice-fed flame” “Green wheels growing whiter, whiter” and the “ineradicable complaisance” and the absurd lie and ceremonial banners and “write a book and he knows you better than you know yourself”—oh what superb stuff!

It’s so glorious to have you in the world writing. There *are* certain people that one cannot imagine the world without—you are one of them to me and always have been since I first found you in sand and under a dome of glass!⁶⁵

I have been reading too the saint in the Bookman.⁶⁶ I like it—oh of course I *like* it—but it does *not* give the rapture to me that the Harper cycle does. Does it you? I mean after it is done of course. I wonder which you did last. I hope the Harper one. But I must not chatter on like this.

You have become such a part of my life these last few years. It would be so even if you had never given me your beautiful endorsement and the letters—I felt you long before you ever knew of my existence, as I think I have told you. Just like yesterday for instance—the knowing that you

would see what I saw too and that it would soak in and become part of you and bear fruit. We were motoring all day up in the Laurentians—to Ste Agathe—have you heard of it ever? Oh such a day—the rarest October—and the color of the woods and forests was beyond words—even almost beyond *your* words it would be! Imagine! And *mine* would be only little floating gray gasps—inarticulate. I thought of you often; especially once on a stone terrace about a sapphire blue lake, with little islands and mountains, every one in shimmering veils of scarlet and gold and crimson and tawny orange. It seemed as if the whole world was burning up in sheer beauty. I have seen nothing so lovely in composition either, since the Italian lakes—it seemed like Lugano but the color and the air were of the new world—just “O Canada Canada Canada” like the white-throated sparrow that always says that to us you know. To you he says something different I believe does he not? Somebody said it was “Old Sam Peabody-Peabody-Peabody” Good New England that! But I’m no bird woman. I *love* them when they fit in but one gets so damned sick of the English and Canadian poets mooning over sky larks and robins one longs for a catapult at times. That I’ve done it myself and adore my own whip-poor-will—“whimsical lonely mystic of a bird, wistfully human yet so alien, linking familiar dooryards to the night”⁶⁷ does not make it any the less exasperating—rather more so if anything! I’m sure Squire must have “bats in his belfry” by this time he’s written and published so much about “feathered denizens” and “soaring songs”.⁶⁸ However—Kismet! I have a “moon-haunted robin” in “Dream Tapestries”.⁶⁹

Oh Miss Lowell I wish I could have seen you before the book went to press! But I seem so tied up in my little life up here. We were in Maine for August but I have not been to Boston for some years now. My father has rallied marvellously this summer (you may recall how desperately ill he was all last winter.) We got him down to the sea and back safely (quite a victory and somewhat of a strain at times) but my husband and I had a heavenly holiday down there. Dad motored to Ste. Agathe yesterday and is none the worse today. He’s a wonderful old Thing—and *such* a mixture of Puritan New England and Pagan Greece with a souçon of China! We dread the winter for him. He’s too old and frail to go in search of summer now. So I shall be very tied from now on. And I have the most terrible servant from Newfoundland! A sort of Viking throwback—with a

disposition like nothing I have ever encountered on earth before. She has been thirteen years in Montreal with one mistress and has never been up on the Mountain and won't do. On her days out she goes to the docks and stares at the ships. She is depressingly respectable but her idea of heaven is walking out with a sailor, and the world is Newfoundland and the oceans, and a few tiresome islands and savage continents which bore her to death. And she alternates between simply adoring me and wanting to cut me up in inch pieces. I am sure she is descended from pirates and ship-wrecked Orientals. She is a Roman Catholic who hates her Church and never goes to Confession or Mass, and of my book she says, "Sure an' did it all come out of yourself like? Every thought your very own? Or do you take it out of books like and do it over?" Uncanny? Now I ask you!

Of course I can hardly wait to see your Keats. They are getting it for the University Book Club at once. Of course we shall own it later—Archie and I. I am putting in my name for it first of any one in the club though as we can't have it *just* now.

It makes me sick that there seems no scheme on foot to get you to Canada to lecture this winter. Cold molasses seems to run along some channels! And again modern literature is the last subject to be considered in most club schedules it seems to me. Child welfare—politics—ah me—If only it can be arranged for one of the Universities to bring you—that is the *right* way. And the Keats will be a revelation to Canada—

Oh for time and strength to do what I want to do—and brains also! I have had to spend so much time—waste so much—this Autumn in "building up nervous tone which was very much depleted etc. etc." Such a bore! I walk tremendously and sleep and read enormously. But I'm not writing much just now. When the book is out and the first copy sent off to you perhaps I shall begin again. I'm working on my novel but that's chronic—just a way of working off mental fat and avoiding loneliness.⁷⁰ It will probably never see the light though the people in it are so real and rather beloved, to me. How funny and tragic and lovely one's brain people become!

Have you read “A Passage To India”, speaking of novels?⁷¹ I liked it last week. Wouldn’t you like to go to India? But I suppose China first for you. Or have you been? But you don’t need to go to countries—their hearts come to you like to your old ladder man.⁷²

Of course now Dream Tapestries is beyond my reach I want to tear it [to] shreds. Between the polity, policy, purity, prunes and prisims of publication here I feel wrapped in dishevelled tatters mentally.

[...]

Some day I *do* hope for another letter from you. Perhaps when you have Dream Tapestries you will write and answer this then. And I do trust the poor tired eyes are all well again and that there is to be a poetry book soon soon, with “Purple Grackles” in it (to show Squire how to do it now with skylarks) and lilacs and Bishops and swans and cobblestones and barberries and (look at the capital for the bishop will you! quite involuntary too) and In Excelsis and The Red Knight and Charleston and East West North And South of a Man and Hokku and Mr Keats at Teignmouth and all my other specials of the last era.⁷³

Au revoir—as ever—yours
Louise Morey Bowman

* * *

12. Bowman to Lowell
5 December 1924

495 Lansdowne Ave.
Montreal Dec. 5th [1924]⁷⁴

Dear Miss Lowell,

I am so longing to hear of you!—Won’t you have your secretary send me a word now of how your eyes are? I seem to be able to get no really authentic word about you.—I do trust you are well. The booksellers here told me this week that your Keats is postponed till January. That fills me

with a vague fear that you may be ill again.

That is my *really* truly excuse for this importunity, after my last voluminous letter;—but I also want to let you know about the French Government prize awards in Quebec province, which are just announced today. These are known as the “David prizes”. The jury is composed largely of Roman clergy, and a French author or two, with *two* pretty conservative and academic judges for the English portion. They are Sir Andrew MacPhail and Dr Cyrus MacMillans of McGill; Stephen Leacock having refused to act.

The book that took the \$350.00 is a novel of French Canada, written by a Canadian girl who is now, I believe, on the staff of the London Times.⁷⁵

The lists closed while “Dream Tapestries” was still in manuscript form last Spring. It is a jury of ten. I believe six must agree.—

It means *very* little compared with the Blindman Contest of 1922, but it *has* brought me pleasure, coming in my own country, and with the circumstances rather peculiar from racial and traditional and academic reasons.

I *hope* it may please you a wee little bit too. I only wish it could have been “Dream Tapestries.”⁷⁶ [...]

Did I ever tell you that your picture from “New Voices” hangs above my desk, with a spray of barberry beneath?⁷⁷ So often I look up at you and tell you things, and you listen!

Louise Morey Bowman

[...]

* * *

13. Lowell to Bowman
12 December 1924⁷⁸

December 12 1924⁷⁹

SEVENELS
BROOKLINE

My dear Mrs Bowman,

I owe you a thousand apologies for not having answered so many kind letters from you. It has not been my fault, but my misfortune, that I have been so long silent, and I assure you that your letters are always a great pleasure to me. But before I try to tell you why I have not written, I must thank you for "Dream Tapestries" and heartily congratulate you on the David Prize. The committee certainly showed an excellent and sound judgment in giving it to you, and I don't wonder that you are pleased. I am pleased as Punch about it myself, for was I not in the vanguard to say "Here's someone, good people, worthy all attention". "Dream Tapestries" is a better book than "Moonlight and Common Day", it seems to me. And as I think that we all like to feel that our last book is our best, you ought to like that. I read your book from cover and cover the other night, and recognized old friends, and saw what you had put in and what left out. I have a very poor memory, and, since Keats has addled my brain, almost none at all, so you must forgive me if I am not quite sure how the published volume differs from the projected one. It is most satisfactory as it stands, I think. I like the total effect much, and individual poems even more. "Oranges" of course. "Oranges" was my first love. And "Green Apples", and did I ever see "The Old Fruit Garden" before? If I did I must have liked it; I like it so much now. I am glad you put in "Portrait". But the "Cinquains" and the "Hokku" I know I have not seen before. The former do not follow Adelaide Crapseys syllabic model, did you mean them to?⁸⁰ I think the austerity of her scheme adds to its charm, otherwise I like yours very much. And, tell me is the title of your syllabic hokku a conscious or un-conscious plagiarism of my "Twenty-Four Hokku on a Modern Theme", published in the "American Miscellany" for 1922?⁸¹ Whether the first or the last, I take your having taken the title as a real tribute. I especially like the "Sketch" of your husband—very well done that. And "The Post Box" woke a responsive echo in my heart. I know the feeling, I know the act. I chuckled with responsiveness to your mood as I

read. But one cannot go on enumerating all these delightful things, can one? Certainly not within the confines of a letter, at any rate. Some day I hope we may talk of the old poems and the new instead of trying to write about them. But last, but not least, let me thank you for your inscription. Your attitude toward my work is a fine cordial I assure you. I appreciate it very much.

Now I will try to explain a little why I have been so dumb and apparently oblivious of your generosity. I am anything but oblivious, really, and the dumbness was a necessity.

After I wrote you last, when my eyes were in such a state, I suffered a great grief in the death of Madame Eleonora Duse.⁸² If you read the number of "Poetry" in the summer of 1923, in which we were all urged to print one of our youthful efforts, you will have read how it was Madame Duse who first woke in me the realization that I must write poetry.⁸³ I do not know whether you saw a sonnet sequence which I wrote to her, and which was published in the "New Republic" just after she died.⁸⁴ They were written months before, but the publication was arranged to be synchronous with her farewell appearance in New York. But there were no farewell appearances in New York; she was lying dead in Pittsburg and I was there too. I went on in response to a message from the lady, her friend, who was travelling with her, but not until the end had come. I stayed round, in the offing, as it were, until after the funeral in New York, until every one connected with Madame Duse had sailed away, and then I came home and set to work on Keats. The not writing for those weeks had rested my eyes, and the work I have done this summer has been a very great deal. No time off except to eat and sleep. But I was under contract to the publishers and there was nothing else to do, and besides it was a good thing for me. And after all neither I nor they could get the book done in time, and new material at the last moment complicated matters still further. Hence the postponement of the book. I never worked so hard in my life, and there were moments when I thought I would give out. But I haven't given out; I have merely let my correspondence go hang in the most abominable way simply because I couldn't help it. Now they announce publication for January 31, but to obviate the loss of the Christmas sales, they have got out some Christmas cards for people who

want to give the book to their friends, and one of these I send to you. Since you cannot buy the book I must send you one as a kind of *amende honorable* which I hope you will like.

[...]

Very sincerely yours
Amy Lowell

* * *

14. Lowell to Bowman
12 December 1924

Mrs. Archibald Abercromby Bowman
495 Lansdowne Avenue
Montreal P.Q.
Canada

12 December 24.

My dear Mrs Bowman:

You see the danger of impressionistic writing! Being left alone yesterday, I did not have the energy to go to my files, where I keep the copies of your poems which you sent me last year, and therefore I did not tally up the manuscript of the first arrangement with the published volume. But I have done so to-day, and am wondering what you must think of me for not having been a little more specific.

Let me say at once that I think you have greatly improved the poem to your husband by leaving out the top and the bottom of it; it is much better as it is now.⁸⁵ I noticed that you have left out "Pauline" and "Toy Shop," which I think a very wise thing. I find I have seen one of the "Cinquains," but the "Hokku" I knew I had not read. I am glad also that "Piano Recital" went out; that was not quite equal to the rest, I think, and I suppose you must have thought so too since you omitted it.

Altogether I think you have greatly improved the book, and I wanted to add this little line to my undecipherable letter of yesterday to emphasize my certainty of that.

Behold, my book is finished—and it is possible that I may be a human being again some day!

Very sincerely yours,
[Amy Lowell]

P.S. I forgot to say that I am really profoundly touched at your having cut my picture out of Mrs. Wilkinson's book and hung it up above your desk with barberries underneath.⁸⁶ The barberries go straight to my heart. It is annoying not to be able to talk; I fear I have said very little of your book, but you must forgive me I am tired as I never was before. Your birthday is on January seventeenth, is it not? Many happy returns, and the best possible luck.

The correspondence published here is from Harvard University, Houghton Library, the Amy Lowell Collection, MS Lowell 19 (box 118; letters from Bowman) and MS Lowell 19.1 (box 130; letters from Lowell).

Notes to the Correspondence

- 1 Archibald Abercromby Bowman. See the Introduction, above.
- 2 Lowell's "In a Time of Dearth" was first published in the September 1916 issue of *The Century Magazine*, pp. 766-7. The poem describes an empty desert scene: although the speaker longs to see "a caravan," "a herd of Arab horses," or "a mirage," she is surrounded only by "sand— / Sand lying dead in the sun. / Lines and lines of sand— / Sand." Quotations from poems by Lowell in the notes are from *The Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell*, Houghton Mifflin, 1955.
- 3 These lines, from the third stanza of Lowell's "La Ronde du Diable," compare poetry to barberries: "a bitter, blood-red fruit at best, / Which puckers the mouth and burns the heart." This poem and the symbol of the barberry were particularly meaningful to Bowman, who kept a sprig of barberry leaves and a photo of Lowell above her desk (see letter Bowman to Lowell, 5 December 1924, below). Bowman also wrote a short story, "Bitter Berry," published in the January 1929 issue of *The Canadian Mercury*, pp. 29-30, the title of which might have been inspired by the image of the barberry.
- 4 From (Winifred) Bryher's *Development: A Novel* (Macmillan, 1920), Book III, Chapter 5, "The Colour of Words": "It was the rhythm of words which gave them their emotion. The more sensitive her ears became to the curve and pause of a cadence the less able was Nancy to read rhyme or any definite metre. Syllables had a movement

- and a spirit of their own; to force them into a crude jingle of regular beats was to mar their loveliness, rob them of life” (168). Lowell had written a preface to the novel. Bowman later indicated her career-long dedication to experiments in “cadence”—or, free verse—with the title of her final volume, *Characters in Cadence* (1938).
- 5 In *Moonlight and Common Day* Bowman’s “Two Compositions by Debussy” (p. 55) is a poetic response to the third part of Debussy’s 1903 *Estampes*, “Gardens under [or ‘in’] the Rain” (*Jardins sous la pluie*), and to his 1910 prelude, “The Submerged [or ‘Sunken’] Cathedral” (*La cathédrale engloutie*), both for solo piano. Among the poems that Bowman had sent to Lowell were “The Dead Violin,” later published in *Dream Tapestries* (pp. 54-6), and “Piano Recital,” which remains unpublished. “The Enchanted Wood” is the second poem in the three-part series titled “Dream Tapestries” (*Dream Tapestries*, pp. 15-21); on the back of the first of the draft pages that she sent to Lowell, Bowman wrote in pencil: “Notes / Enchanted Wood / really symphonic poem—”, and then she outlined the motifs and instrumentation for each of the “symphony’s” four movements. See the Amy Lowell Collection of Manuscripts, MS Lowell 20, items 30, 36, and 32.
 - 6 “A Portrait” (*Dream Tapestries*, pp. 50-1) is a portrait of Bowman’s good friend Eva Janes, daughter of the wealthy Toronto real estate developer Simeon Janes. “Blue Moon” is the first poem in the “Songs of Women” section of *Dream Tapestries* (p. 45), and was also published in *The Canadian Forum*, June 1924, p. 270. Bowman never published the long dramatic poem “Pauline,” but the five-page typescript draft copy that she sent to Lowell remains in the Amy Lowell Collection of Manuscripts (MS Lowell 20, item 35).
 - 7 “Green Apples” is the third in the “Dream Tapestries” series; “Oranges” follows it directly in *Dream Tapestries* (pp. 25-30).
 - 8 Lowell, “View of Teignmouth in Devonshire: March, 1818,” *The North American Review*, October 1923, pp. 497-503.
 - 9 Lowell, “La Ronde du Diable.”
 - 10 Keats wrote of “Charm’d magic casements, opening on the foam / Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn” in “Ode to a Nightingale”; Bowman also wrote of “open[ing]” a “casement window” in “Moonlight and Common Day” (*Moonlight and Common Day* 13).
 - 11 Bowman is alluding to Lowell’s “View of Teignmouth.” In the poem, Keats, out for a walk, “comes to a stop” beneath three “girls ... over the Bonnet-shop.” It is a gloomy March day, and the poet tells the girls, “There’s a hocus-pocus to-day in my ink / Which would not let me write a line.” He asks them if they have “noticed anything / Which points to a near-by Summering?” One of the girls—“Number One” (Bowman’s “little One” here)—answers that she has, and her response gives Lowell’s Keats “proof complete” of the coming summer and the inspiration he needs to write.
 - 12 The Bowmans spent nearly every summer in Scarborough, Maine.
 - 13 The “borzoi” was the icon of the publisher Alfred A. Knopf; the publishing house marketed their books as “Borzoi Books,” as though they were part of a special series.
 - 14 Bryher, *Development: A Novel*, with a preface by Lowell. See note 4, as well as the Introduction, above.
 - 15 Bowman did not include “The Talking Booth: A Fantasy” in *Dream Tapestries* in the end, following Lowell’s advice (see her letter of 11 April 1924, below). The “study of the Post Box” here became just “The Post Box” in the volume (*Dream Tapestries*, p. 88). The final section of *Dream Tapestries* is titled “Homespun” and comprises nine

- poems, including “Twins,” “Bob Cooning,” and “The Post Box,” which Bowman mentions here; it also includes at least one poem, “Song,” that she had not yet written at this time (see her letter to Hugh Eayrs of 1 March 1924; MF, B11F13), which suggests that the grouping was flexible as a “cycle.”
- 16 These are titles of poems and books by Lowell: *Legends* (1921) (though Bowman might also be referring to *Many Swans: Sun Myth of the North American Indians*, 1920, especially considering “Sun” in this list), “Lilacs” (1922), *Pictures of the Floating World* (1919), and *Can Grande’s Castle* (1918).
 - 17 *Fir-Flower Tablets: Poems Translated from the Chinese*, a collaboration between Lowell and Florence Wheelock Ayscough, had been published in 1921. Ayscough, who was born in Shanghai and met Lowell at school in Boston, moved to St. Andrew’s, New Brunswick, in 1923; for more on her relationship with Lowell, see *Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell: Correspondence of a Friendship*, edited by Harley Farnsworth MacNair, U of Chicago P, 1945.
 - 18 The letter is undated, but a note in pencil, probably by Lowell’s secretary, suggests “Probably December 1923.” The following letter confirms that this is correct.
 - 19 These two drafts are no longer among Lowell’s papers. “The Toy Shop” was never published, probably in part due to Lowell’s lukewarm reaction (see her letter of 14 January 1924, below, and the Introduction, above). Bowman probably also included “Prayer in Scarlet and White Paint” (which would be published in *Dream Tapestries*) with this letter, as Lowell recorded her reactions to it in her response of 14 January 1924.
 - 20 Lowell’s “Is There a Re-Action?” was published in the *Literary Review of The New York Evening Post* on 8 December 1922.
 - 21 Harriet Monroe’s review of *Moonlight and Common Day*, “A Canadian Poet,” *Poetry*, vol. 21, no. 1, October 1922, p. 43.
 - 22 Bowman is alluding here to Ezekiel 37:1-14: “The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones . . . bones that were very dry. He asked me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’”
 - 23 Bowman is probably referring to the Heliconian Club. The *Toronto World* of 22 March 1920 reports, for instance, that on the previous Saturday Bowman had been one of the hostesses when W.H. Greaves, Professor of Public Speaking at Victoria College, “gave an interpretation” of Bowman’s and Katherine Hale’s poems before members of the club.
 - 24 *The Bookman Anthology of Verse, 1922*, edited by John Farrar.
 - 25 Bowman does not name the “Toronto friend” but the reference to “John” in the quoted passage suggests that it is almost certainly Katherine Hale, whose husband was John Garvin and who was a good friend of Bowman’s (see the Introduction, above).
 - 26 The October 1923 issue of the *North American Review* contained “View from Teignmouth,” which Bowman’s correspondent (presumably Hale) calls “the Keats poem” (see note 8 above).
 - 27 A note in pencil, probably by Lowell’s secretary, indicates that “To Amy Lowell” was enclosed. The typescript draft of this tribute poem remains in the Lowell Collection of Manuscripts (MS Lowell 20, item 39); it was never published.
 - 28 The letter is written on “Canadian Pacific Hotels, Chateau Frontenac” letterhead. The Bowmans spent Christmas 1923 in Quebec City (Bowman also wrote to Hugh Eayrs

- from Quebec on 28 December; see MF, B11F13), and so this letter must have been written in late December.
- 29 No copy of this letter exists among the Bowman material in the Macmillan *fonds*, although Bowman's response to Eayrs on 28 December indicates her delight at Lowell's tribute: "I knew, of course, what she felt, but really did not dream that she would care to avow it in such a public way" (B11F13).
 - 30 Lowell's *Six French Poets: Studies in Contemporary Literature* (1915), Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget* (1922), and Fannie Hurst's *Lummo* (1923).
 - 31 Lowell's *Six French Poets*.
 - 32 Bowman is quoting Lowell, from *Six French Poets*; Lowell was referring to the Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren.
 - 33 Bowman is quoting Keats, "I stood tiptoe upon a hill," published in *Poems 1817*.
 - 34 The "thunder-storm Legend" is Lowell's *Many Swans: Sun Myth of the North American Indians* (1920) and "the Charleston poems" refers to a section titled "Charleston, South Carolina" of Lowell's "Southern April," published in the December 1922 issue of *Poetry*. Bowman's mother, Lily Louise Dyer, died on 29 August 1897, when Bowman was just fifteen.
 - 35 Bowman quotes this paragraph in her letter to Eayrs of 15 January 1924 (MF, B11F13; the letter to Eayrs is probably misdated, for Bowman claims to Lowell, below, that she received Lowell's letter on 17 January—a memorable date because it was her birthday; thus she probably wrote to Eayrs on that date or shortly thereafter). In that letter to Eayrs Bowman also wrote: "[A]fter the supper to Bliss Carman of the Can. Authors Ass. last week, and an evening last night at the Warwick Chipmans where I felt the pulse of literary Montreal beating in cool sonnets [...] I need Amy Lowell's letter this morning I can assure you." (Warwick Chipman published two volumes of poetry in 1915 and 1929, translated Dante's *Inferno* into English, and was also a prominent Montreal lawyer.)
 - 36 In a lengthy passage of several paragraphs, omitted here, Lowell describes her own publication plans for the upcoming years: she would complete her Keats volume in the fall of 1924 and she planned a new book of poetry for the fall of 1925, but she had to turn down Princeton University Press's request for a critical monograph (see her letter of 6 November 1923, above). She completed the Keats biography as planned, but her death in the spring of 1925 meant that the intended poetry volume would be published posthumously.
 - 37 See Ezra Pound, "Paris Letter," *The Dial* vol. 73, no. 5, November 1922, pp. 549-54, on p. 549. The letter concerns, broadly, advertising, patronage, taste, and the cost of producing "quality" art. Bowman also quotes the beginning of this passage in her letter to Eayrs of January or February 1924, and confesses in addition, "I don't know how or why he said it exactly, but he did—in the Dial" (MF, B11F13).
 - 38 In this omitted passage Bowman discusses her friend Eva Janes (see note 5, above), who had died the previous day. She notes that Janes was an inspiring reader who introduced her to Lowell's *Six French Poets* and regularly read *The Dial*.
 - 39 In her letter to Eayrs of January or February 1924, Bowman adds, tellingly: "Prof. B.K. Sandwell is a power down here I find. Not so Morgan Powell! I see he has come out as an ardent admirer of L.M. Montgomery's, and definitely against Vers Libre" (MF, B11F13). Samuel Morgan-Powell was editor of *The Montreal Star*; Bowman was clearly drawing a line in the sand between herself and the "popular" work of Lucy Maud Montgomery.

- 40 Bowman's "great friend" is Frank Oliver Call, and she is referring to his 1924 volume *Blue Homespun*. Below she alludes to his 1920 volume *Acanthus and Wild Grape*.
- 41 Bowman is paraphrasing to 1 John 4:18: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment."
- 42 In this omitted passage Bowman comments on her poem "The Toy Shop," which Lowell did not like (see her letter of 14 January 1924, above).
- 43 "Cold Tragedy" was published in *Poetry*, vol. 24, no. 6, September 1924, pp. 308-9, and "Bread and Fire" in *The Bookman*, vol. 59, no. 5, July 1924, p. 605; both were then included in *Dream Tapestries*.
- 44 Eliot had received the Dial Award, which acknowledged "service to letters," in 1922; Van Wyck Brooks received the award in 1923. Brooks's *Letters and Leadership*, a short book of essays, had been published in 1918.
- 45 This list reveals the breadth of Bowman's artistic interests: John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* (1906-21) and *Five Tales* (1919), Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget* (1922) and *The Return* (1910); D.H. Lawrence, the Scottish painter David Young Cameron, the French painter Monticelli, the Dutch painter Mattijs Maris, Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* (1851), and the English composers Cyril Scott and Ralph Vaughn Williams.
- 46 Éva Gauthier (1885-1958) was a Canadian opera singer and the niece of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. She was known for mixing traditional operatic repertoire with contemporary jazz music.
- 47 See *The Dial*, vol. 74, no. 4, April 1923, pp. 351-6.
- 48 Bowman quotes and paraphrases from three of Amy Lowell's poems here (after referring to "The Red Knight" by name): first "The Swans," in which "swans float and float / Along the moat / around the Bishop's garden" and "[t]he cobbles see" the action of men "coming—coming—on countless feet" as "the Bishop walks serene / ... Saying 'Boom! Boom!'" ; then the nineteenth of the "Twenty-Four Hokku on a Modern Theme": "Love is a game—yes? / I think it is a drowning: / Black willows and stars"; and finally "Lilacs," in which the "clear-cut, candid" lilac is "Friendly to a house-cat and a pair of spectacles" and makes "poetry out of a bit of moonlight."
- 49 From Lowell's "Prime."
- 50 Two additional letters from Bowman are omitted here. The first, of 19 February 1924 (the copy in the Lowell Collection is misdated in Lowell's secretary's hand as 1925), expresses Bowman's delight at discovering Lowell's *A Critical Fable* for the first time; she judges the satirical poem "delicious scorching fun!" The second, of 7 March 1924, prompts Lowell for a "verdict" about some poems Bowman had sent, as she was trying to decide whether to include them in *Dream Tapestries*. The poems are "The Talking Booth" and "Twins"; based on Lowell's response (see below in this letter), Bowman excluded the former and included the latter. She also notes that the (McGill) University Book Club had "ordered two copies of the [Critical] Fable" at her request.
- 51 Bowman published "Sympathy" and "The Twins" in *Dream Tapestries*. As she notes in her reply below, she had not included "Wild Horses" in the initial manuscript, and she asked Eays to remove "The Talking Booth." Those two remain unpublished. She removed "Dragon Orchard" only at Eays's insistence (see her letter to him of 21 June 1924, MF, B11F13), but she later published the poem in *The Dalhousie Review*, vol. 7, no. 2, July 1927, pp. 156-8.

- 52 Lowell's invitation had probably come from the Heliconian Club; though it was not strictly a "women's club," the Heliconian, with which Bowman had been involved when she lived in Toronto, attracted prominent international speakers.
- 53 Bowman is probably referring to *Wild Horses* (Houghton Mifflin, 1924) by Henry Herbert Knibbs, a writer of Westerns and cowboy poetry who was born in Clifton, Ontario, though he lived most of his life in the United States.
- 54 In this omitted passage Bowman informs Lowell that *Dream Tapestries* will open with "The Wingéd Cloak," and then she copies out the poem in full.
- 55 Bowman is referring to what was then the Plymouth Congregational Church in Sherbrooke; it is now the Plymouth-Trinity United Church. The impressive neo-classical building, designed by William Footner, was built in 1855, and its bell, made in 1792, has hung there since then.
- 56 Thomas Moul's *Best Poems of the Year, 1922*, published by Jonathan Cape in 1923, was the first in a series of "best poems" anthologies that would run until 1943 and it included Lowell's "Orientation." "Orientation" was first published in the October 1922 issue of *The Dial*, along with "The Red Knight" and "Easel Picture: Decoration Day" (pp. 392-4).
- 57 The group of Lowell's poems in *American Poetry, 1922: A Miscellany* included "Lilacs," "Twenty-Four Hokku on a Modern Theme," "The Swans," "In Excelsis," and "La Ronde du Diable," all of which Bowman mentions here, as well as "Prime" and "Vespers" (pp. 3-21). Bowman had encountered "Purple Grackles" in *The Bookman Anthology of Verse, 1922*, edited by John Farrar (pp. 30-3; see her letter of December 1923), "View of Teignmouth in Devonshire: March, 1818" in *The North American Review* of October 1923 (pp. 497-503; see her letter of 26 September 1923), "Patterns" in *Men, Women, and Ghosts* (1916), and the long prose poems "Hedge Island: A Retrospect and Prophecy" and "The Bronze Horses" in *Can Grande's Castle* (1918).
- 58 Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919) was a popular poet known for her cheerful, conventional verse. Any comparison to such a writer would indeed have "frightened" the budding modernist Bowman.
- 59 Lowell's "Balls" was in *Poetry*, vol. 14, no. 6, October 1919, p. 313, along with five other short poems. The poem's speaker observes, "All our life is a flinging of colored balls to impossible distances," and concludes, "Wouldn't it be a fine thing if I could make it [the ball] stick / On top of the Methodist steeple?"
- 60 Lowell's "A Lover," from *Poetry*, vol. 9, no. 6, March 1917, p. 303; the poem was part of a series of seventeen very short imagist poems called "Lacquer Prints" (pp. 302-6)—the opposite of "all these pages" that Bowman has written in her letter.
- 61 The conductor Pierre Monteux, who had directed the world premiere of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* with the Ballets Russes in 1913, led the Boston Symphony Orchestra between 1919 and 1924. Bowman attended the BSO's concert at Montreal's Théâtre St-Denis on 23 April 1924; the programme included, as she mentions below, Alexander Scriabin's Symphony No. 3 in C minor ("Le Divin Poème") and Maurice Ravel's "La Valse (poème chorégraphique pour orchestra)," as well as Richard Wagner's "Overture" to *The Flying Dutchman* and Gustave Charpentier's "Impressions d'Italie."
- 62 There is no copy of this note in the Lowell Collection.
- 63 *i.e.*, Lowell's "View of Teignmouth in Devonshire: March, 1818," in *The North American Review* of October 1923.

- 64 This poem, from which Bowman quotes in the remainder of the paragraph, was published in the October 1924 issue of *Harper's*.
- 65 Bowman is referring to Lowell's "In a Time of Death" (see note 2, above) and her 1912 volume, *A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass*.
- 66 Lowell's "The Conversion of a Saint," published in the October 1924 issue of *The Bookman*, which Bowman compares somewhat unfavourably in this paragraph to the "Harper cycle"—*i.e.* the cycle published that same month in *Harper's*, "East, West, North, and South of a Man."
- 67 In Bowman's "The Lost Shepherd" she describes the whippoorwill as "wistfully human yet so alien, / Linking familiar door-yards to the night" (*Moonlight and Common Day* 43); "whimsical lonely mystic of a bird" is not in that poem, although "lonely whip-poor-wills" appear in "The Mountain" (*Moonlight and Common Day* 23).
- 68 Bowman is referring to the Georgian poet J.C. (Sir John) Squire, editor of the *Selections from Modern Poets* series.
- 69 The "moon-haunted robin" is in "False Dawn" (*Dream Tapestries* 85).
- 70 On 6 November 1928 Bowman wrote to Harriet Monroe: "I'm busy and happy over writing a novel of New England called 'Secret Hill:' [...] It's a great 'outlet,' and so are my short stories, and to work off certain enthusiasms and desires in prose makes me very much happier in my poetry:—keeps it a clearer and more inviolate thing" (*Poetry Records*, B2F35).
- 71 E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, which had just been published.
- 72 Bowman is alluding to Lowell's "The Hammers," a five-part poem in *Men, Women, and Ghosts* which describes a man working on a ladder to build a ship and all of the fantastical stories of far-off lands that he hears (that "come to" him) in the shipyard.
- 73 See notes 33, 56, and 62, above.
- 74 The year is added in pencil, probably by Lowell's secretary.
- 75 *Another Way of Love* (1923) by Marjorie Grant Cook won the Prix David for fiction in 1924. Cook is best known for her many reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement*. She was born in Quebec City, though she had lived in London and Paris since the First World War.
- 76 Bowman is coy here, but she is announcing to Lowell in this letter that *Moonlight and Common Day* won the Prix David for poetry in 1924. This letter thus allows for a small correction to the record, as it has generally been assumed that Bowman won the prize for *Dream Tapestries* (see for instance Campbell, "Louise" 338, or Trehearne 4); but as Bowman says, with some regret, her second volume had not yet been published when the lists for the prize closed.
- 77 The book is *New Voices: An Introduction to Contemporary Poetry* (1919), by Marguerite Wilkinson. Lowell's picture shares a page with an image of Harriet Monroe; as Bowman told Monroe on 24 May 1924 and in September–October 1925, she kept the full page with both pictures framed over her desk (*Poetry records*, B2F34 and F35; see also note 13 to the Introduction, above).
- 78 A note in Bowman's hand at the end of this letter reads, "Copy made for Mrs Ada D. Russell on behalf of the eventual biography and the estate of Miss Amy Lowell. This letter was written by hand and is in my possession. Louise Morey Bowman November 17th 1925." Lowell notes in a passage omitted here that she does not have time to dictate a letter to her secretary during the day, and she asks forgiveness for her "scrawl."

- 79 The '2' in '12' has been added or corrected by hand, but it is probably a mistake; Lowell wrote the following letter the next day, as she explains (see below), but it is also dated 12 December. Since this letter is a copy by Bowman, the error is probably here; the date of this letter is probably 11 December 1924.
- 80 Adelaide Crapsey based her syllabic "cinquains" on the Japanese haiku: the poems had five iambic lines with one stress in the first, two in the second, three in the third, four in the fourth, and one in the fifth. The third section of *Dream Tapestries* is called "Cinquains"; it comprises five poems, though only "City Child's Easter" and "Deep Snow" are five-line poems. Their metre is not strictly syllabic, as Lowell remarks, but their five lines do expand and then contract in length.
- 81 Lowell is referring to Bowman's "Twelve Hokku on a Canadian Theme." In her letter of c. 11 April 1925, not published here, Bowman asked forgiveness for any misunderstanding her title had caused, and explained: "Of course it was *conscious* plagiarism I suppose, for of course I would never have known I *could* do it unless you had shown me the way. [...] And I thought my title would make it [...] such an obvious tribute" (emphasis in original).
- 82 Eleanora Duse, the Italian actress, died on 21 April 1924.
- 83 Lowell's contribution to the August 1923 issue of *Poetry*, which collected the early efforts of "The Established Poets" in one section and "The Youth of Today" in another, was "Eleanora Duse" (pp. 234-6); a note beneath the poem remarks that it was "written at the age of 28 [in 1902]" and was "not previously published."
- 84 The six-sonnet sequence appeared in the *New Republic* on 28 April 1924.
- 85 The draft of this poem is titled "Scotch Engineer," though Bowman changed its name to "A Sketch" in *Dream Tapestries* (p. 57). The "top" of the draft poem which Bowman left out in the published version is, "Ah! Je t'adore! / My Scotchman... / Little as I still understand / His soul," and the "bottom" is: "How he will hate this verse! / My Scotchman... / Ah! Je t'adore!" (ellipses in original; see MS Lowell 20, item 38).
- 86 *New Voices: An Introduction to Contemporary Poetry*; see note 75, above.

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