

## **Letter from Heinz Henghes to Ezra Pound**

June 10 1953

France

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From a series of letters to Pound

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La Peyriere . Tursac . Les Eyzies . Dordogne

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Dear E.P, - I have long had it in mind to write to you, in fact for years, but it was really not possible to write to anyone from England, that muddy island, which I have now left, - I hope for good. I am living in this place in France and for the first time in years, - since 1935 in fact, working does not seem an effort, a struggle against some glue flow which cloy around ones legs like it seemed in England, that admirable country. God-damn to hell their virtues, their honesty, their dulcet behaviour. I could have lived in Italie but decided that it would take more moeny than I am likely to have a la longue and anyway, Italy is all beauty and human civilization while here, in the Dordogne, which was Aquitaine, there is nature with all its teeth and claws. I am surrounded by savage and illiterate peasants and by a few retired intellectuals, the intellectuals all slightly pathological, world-shy, - meaning one sees little of them. The peasants are busy with their hard work and their talk is no strain on ones mental capacities. They live in retrospect. Their conversation is wholly about the dogs which ate crow poison 3 years ago and the illness of the liver that comes from water.

Thank you for your card saying "Thanks 4 Kat..." I assume that it means that you like the drawing which I was very happy to send you and this assumption gives me pleasure and flatters me. I brought 2 Siamese cats here with me from London, the drawing you have is a portrait of the female whom I had for 12 years. She was a splendid animal. Both cats have disappeared since we have arrived here, either gone wild in the woods, shot for eating baby chickens or taken in some nefarious trap which the peasants with their love for something for nothing set to catch rabbits.

You would be glad to hear that I have been successful in England, - several exhibitions, fairly steady sales, eventual arrival at the position where one or 2 of my works was automatically included in all major exhibitions etc... for this I was in the normal course of events rewarded by being given a teaching job in the Royal College of Arts, very well paid, - £500. - a year for 2 days a week and this year, just before I left, the Tate Gallery was flirting with me and the Academy was obliquely inviting me to why not exhibit in our show this spring. Had I stayed I should no doubt have become an R.A, or A.R.A. anyway, Professor of the sculpture school of the Royal College in another 10 years and would have been given public commissions in good time, - Memorial statues for Westminster Abbey, - AFTER reliefs for colonial postoffices etc..... for some years. It would all have gone its hieratic way and it gave me the jitters in the end. I just couldn't stand the slow surety of it all, the safety of it all, the sensibleness of it all and so I kicked it in the teeth and went

with very little money to this savage and materialistic country to start almost all over again as far as career is concerned. As for art... I feel sure of myself. I have set myself against Modern Art, - as exemplified by at best Picasso, all that vitality and genius of his which continues to play with senses and feelings which never STATE, never crystallise into a clear form and expression of an opinion, tires me. I am on the way to a classicism of our own age... but best is that I send you some photos. These you need not return. Your opinion of them would be valuable to me.

Re yourself... Neither your work nor you as a person are in any way forgotten. In London, in Italie and in France there is far more talk of you than ever appears in the papers and still the same profound admiration for your poetry as 25 years ago. Elliot is now barely read. He has been replaced by the inarticulate meanderings of Dylan Thomas, but your work and person are as much and as little read now as ever, - I mean by no more nor by less people. Only Joyce and you have held their place. What you write now is eagerly expected and when it appears, - as little discussed as it ever was, - because discussion of a polished and final work is barely possible. What can one say about the piazza del Campanile at Pisa except that it is right. A great many people think as I do that your confinement is nefarious and are trying to find means for your release. You are, I think, too positive a person to suffer active unhappiness because of your confinement, but I hope that the assurance I can give you that very many people are trying to find ways to get you out of there may be some comfort to you.

I should be very glad to hear from you

H. Henghes

Photos will follow under separate cover