Feb. 15th, 1963

Eleanor dear, wild winds all around the house and such cold, but I am warm within, with spring flowers (a valentine) and a wonderful crimson amaryllis just out— and word from you, heart-warming. How mysterious the whole d -- business is! I mean, your having these attacks, the way we all gradually fall to pieces—— the other day I heard about a friend just my age who has had a coronary and is in bed now for months. It all seems so queer and unjust. Just as we begin to achieve some wisdom, we are knocked down and deprived of ourselves/

I feel it much in myself— I had imagined that now would be the great time (years 50 50 60— I am now 51) but mostly I feel the exhaustion, what it is to lift each day— I am trying to write a little book (about a donkey) but have grippe and wake up to a joyless effort just to keep going. The two enormous folders full of un-anwered letters which I brought up here, glare at me. And outside, the 25 or so jays, chickadees, woodpeckers, shame my lack of courage— how do the birds manage? What is this consuming "urge to live" that keeps us all going, despite illness, fear, old age, etc? Mysterious.

Well, I am writing at once, as you see— a token of love. Yes, I am your valentine! I love your courage, the fact that you are a poet, come Hell or high weather. No, agents, alas, (at least in the U.S.) do not handle poetry— too little in it. I was so moved that you feel about Isak Dinesen as I do. I just can't bear it that she has gone. I like best "Nor any other Creature" but I have a hunch that it really ends with "øj your journey home"— and that the final stanza is another poem. Why not send these off right away to The Lyric (The address used to be Roanoke Va. and now I can't find it--) or Voices, Box C Vinahaven, Maine. Try Recognition on Ladies Home Jour al (they occasionally print something good!) What am I to advise? My poems come back from anywhere "classy". One is unfashionable, better face it!

But more and more I feel myself that the joy is in the doing— and to Hell with the world! Let them exhume us!

It is after one and I must go out and brush snow off the car, unbandelier it's from blankets, ad
drive the two icy miles to the village and get the paper. I make myself do this every day, just to keep the poor beast running! (the car, not me)

Here's the Greek poem. And much, much love and admiration, not to mention, respect.

Your