

# From T.S. Eliot's Copybook

by Con Chapman

*T.S. Eliot was placed on academic probation while at Harvard and almost flunked out, and his final transcript included six C's and one D.*

*The Boston Globe*



*T.S. Eliot*

Lab Report, Biology 101, Professor Evarts  
September 15, 1904

*The broad-backed hippopotamus  
Rests on his belly in the mud;  
Although he seems so firm to us  
He is merely flesh and blood.*



Mr. Eliot--

Please see me after class on Tuesday. The assignment was to write a lab report on the dissection of a frog.

Professor Evarts--

How's this?

*The frog lies on his greenish back  
awaiting vivisection.  
I fondly and I truly wish  
That I could take this class at Radcliffe in a coed section.*

T.S.E.



Dear Hermione--

*Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherized upon a table,  
To a place where syrup sauces all have labels--  
This one chocolate, this one not,  
Where younger poets like yours truly  
Eat ice cream and aren't unruly.*

*Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
The muttering retreats  
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells,  
I'll have you back in your dorm at ten,  
Unless you go through the ice cream line again.*

Tom Eliot

Dear Tom--

Thanks for the invitation, although you don't make the Undergraduate Verse Society Ice Cream Social and Poetry Slam sound very appealing. When boys court me, they usually ask me to go sit out under the moon in June so they can croon a tune to me--no disgusting images of yucky sick people on examining room tables.



While I would love to accompany you, I notice that we are scheduled to play Vassar in the annual spring "March Madness" women's half-court basketball tournament, so I will unfortunately be *very* busy this month. I will of course have to wash my hair and bathe afterwards, and then spend a few weeks recuperating so that I don't get the fantods. I hope we are not disappointed in the tournament as we have been so often in the past--April is always the cruellest month.

Yours 'til cats kill mountains!

Hermione Stimson, Radcliffe Class of '06



Introduction to Physics, Section II  
13, 1905

January

*This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

Mr. Eliot--

I'm afraid this won't do. I asked for an explication of the Law of Entropy, or the Second Law of Thermodynamics. I am going to give you a D, and that's being generous. What is all this stuff about "hollow men" and "stuffed men"? If you don't like the meal plan you are currently on, talk to the bursar's office, or there are vending machines with Cracker Jack and jujubes in the basement of your dormitory.

/s/Professor Lyne



*Grishkin is nice; her Russian  
Is underlined for emphasis;  
Uncorseted, her friendly bust  
Gives promise of pneumatic bliss.*



Dear Dean Briggs:

My name is Sofia Grishkin and I wish to lodge a complaint against a Harvard man, a Mr. Thomas Stearns Eliot. He has apparently written a nasty quatrain with an a-b-c-b rhyme scheme about me in one of the bathroom stalls at the Widener Library. Because it will many years before women are admitted to Harvard, and even then many more before there will be coed bathrooms, I must ask that you dispatch a custodian to erase it as soon as possible, or write over it if that would be simpler. Might I suggest the following:

*I've attracted the attentions of one Mr. Eliot,  
a fellow from St. Louis, an awful little twit.  
He says one day he'll be a world-renowned poet  
but from the stuff he's cranking out as an undergraduate  
you'd certainly never know et.*

