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The Boat House,
Laugharne,
Carmarthenshire.

September 15, 1951

Telephone number: Laugharne 68.

My dear Madame Caetani,

First of all: Thank you, very deeply, for your forgiving letter and for the money which you should not have sent me, because I had broken my word, but which I was so terribly glad you did, and surely that sentence is askew. The money saved my life again, or, rather, paid a horned and raging bill. Oh, how many times you've saved my lives now! I've as many, I suppose, as a Hallowe'en of cats. And the lovely letter of forgiveness was so good to have, though it made me feel only more ashamed that, in a moment of need, I had to sell my best poem for years to an aloof stranger.

Perhaps Davenport, who rang me this morning, will have told you how this came about. Day after day, in London, I tried to get settled some jobs which were (and still are, I hope) to support me this winter; and one of them, I was led to imagine, was to begin at once. So it didn't matter, then, in London, not having any money at all, nor not being able to send any home, because soon, very soon, I said to myself, tomorrow perhaps, or the rich day after, the job would just BE, like that, quick as a flick of the fingers, and then everything would be alright and the bills would be paid and the summonses silenced and we'd buy new clothes and the bells would ring fit to bleed; it was nice thinking this. But, of course, and a hundred of courses, the jobs, day after broke day, drifted further & further away. "Oh, yes, they would materialise", the suave man said, "Eventually". You must



learn to take the long view. And, yes, yes, yes, we know you must come, at once, to London to live, because you can live no longer in your ivory Laugharne, but remember: home was not built in a day!" And the daft bellringing billpaying dreams, full of new suits and gold boots and flowers in the buttonholes and Something Coming In Every Week — (the wonderful wish words that sing like thrushes at night, out of the down-at-heel darkness, to the dispossessed in their little black beds) — they all faded. And there I was, not a potential man of affairs any more, solid shrewd and distinguished as a whiskey advertisement, with a smile that would float a merger, but a lost, plump bum with a bucket of words waiting "Woe and woe" and nowhere to go. Or, at least, I felt as outcast as that. Or I romanticised myself into that shabby posture, and looked at the greasy, inviting Thames with wild (but, thank God, craven) eyes.

Castlin was ill, at crumbling home, with, of all things, mumps. I almost wish it had been a more imaginative, and dolorous, illness. I had wired her to say, "Okay, all in hand," meaning the work and the money was mine. And she had wired back to say how good that was and would I please come home that day and bring some money which was so much needed for the carping shops. But nothing was okay, and all was out of hand, and I couldn't even buy a ticket for the journey. I thought, then, of sending that beastly palm — how over-important all this dreary business makes it! and it's no Paradise Lost! — straightaway to you and wiring you that it was on its way and could, would you, please, please wire me some money for it. But I couldn't. It was too damned abrupt. And it would



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take too long, however quick. I was quite sick with despair. So many days had come to this black blank. I had to get away. And so, having nothing else, I took the detested poem to a magazine and sold it there and then and bought a present, vainly, to try to lessen the pennilessness of my arrival, and took the night-train back that said all the way: Welsh fool, Welsh fool,

I wrote to you a letter in a scrambling hurry. And then your letter came, and thank you again for it. I'm busy now piling up books and bits and pieces to take, when we can, to London, if there's anywhere there, and have lost your letter in this sad and grisly bustle, your letter that told me when, and for how long, you would be in England. Then, this morning, Danerpart rang and said that you were leaving for France very early in the week of the 17th of September. I'd thought you were staying, oh, very much longer. And so now, I suppose I can't see you at all? There are several things I should like to talk to you about; and I do very much want to meet you. If there is any chance of your staying a day or so longer, could you wire me or ring me — my number is at the head of all this rigmarole — and then, perhaps, with luck and some scraping together I can come up to see you before you vanish again? I very much hope this can happen. And thank you, once more. And I grieve that poem like hell.

After yours,

Dylan.