

Learner Resource 4 Romantic correspondence

Oscar Wilde to Lord Alfred “Bosie” Douglas (Wilde’s eventual muse):

My Own Boy,

Your sonnet is quite lovely, and it is a marvel that those red rose-leaf lips of yours should be made no less for the madness of music and song than for the madness of kissing. Your slim gilt soul walks between passion and poetry. I know Hyacinthus, whom Apollo loved so madly, was you in Greek days.

Why are you alone in London, and when do you go to Salisbury? Do go there to cool your hands in the grey twilight of Gothic things, and come here whenever you like. It is a lovely place and lacks only you; but go to Salisbury first.

Always, with undying love, yours, Oscar

Emma Darwin to Charles Darwin:

I cannot tell you the compassion I have felt for all your sufferings for these weeks past that you have had so many drawbacks. Nor the gratitude I have felt for the cheerful & affectionate looks you have given me when I know you have been miserably uncomfortable.

My heart has often been too full to speak or take any notice I am sure you know I love you well enough to believe that I mind your sufferings nearly as much as I should my own & I find the only relief to my own mind is to take it as from God’s hand, & to try to believe that all suffering & illness is meant to help us to exalt our minds & to look forward with hope to a future state. When I see your patience, deep compassion for others self command & above all gratitude for the smallest thing done to help you I cannot help longing that these precious feelings should be offered to Heaven for the sake of your daily happiness. But I find it difficult enough in my own case. I often think of the words “Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.” It is feeling & not reasoning that drives one to prayer. I feel presumptuous in writing thus to you.

I feel in my inmost heart your admirable qualities & feelings & all I would hope is that you might direct them upwards, as well as to one who values them above every thing in the world. I shall keep this by me till I feel cheerful & comfortable again about you but it has passed through my mind often lately so I thought I would write it partly to relieve my own mind.

