

105 Tyson St.  
Staten Island,  
N.Y.C., N.Y.

Thurs. Mar. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1961

Dear Thomas Merton,

James Laughlin has told me we might be able to visit you soon and I want very much to. We sent a copy of the 'Titans' and I read the 'Cultry Bystander', just before I went back home to Mich. to see my father for the first time in a long time, (my wife and I and three children have been back and forth to Europe now for a number of years - continuing the pattern I set before I married), the talks I had with him for 4 days before his death involved everything you say there. In this and in other ways you have helped me and I appreciate it; most of all it helps to know of someone here and now, within the reach of contemporaneity, who keeps the past working for us; take for example the forward to Bernard of Clairvaux's letters which I am reading now.

I am going to enclose with this an autobiographical poem, <sup>which</sup> I have just put together. (by way of introduction). Since I have <sup>been moving</sup> ~~moved~~ on mostly by means of reaction against the scandal of myself, that is what I deal with in it. But making a scandal for others is another matter and I hope I have managed not to.

2.)

In any case I would trust you to understand, (you talked about the problem in your secular journal), and also to pardon whatever effrontery may be involved in sending you this.

Today it is raining ice and it is necessary to keep busy. I hope I will get to meet you soon.

Sincerely yours,  
John Mills.

[I am a painter and print-maker and have written on historical subjects; Venetian art, 19<sup>th</sup> c. art, and some art criticism; I was battered in London 8 years ago by James Stuart of the Cambridge Brotherhood in Delhi, India who was a good friend the year I spent there on a Fulbright grant. I went out full of Coomaraswamy but the experience threw me back upon myself and what I might be - or rather upon what we are and have been - with irresistible force.]