

April 16, 1962

Dear Boris:

Thank you very much for your nice letter of 7 March, 1962. Since its receipt I have given much thought to the matter of following up my tentative acceptance of your most courteous invitation to attend the party or parties to be given to celebrate your 70th birthday anniversary, and have reached a conclusion which will be disappointing to all of us. In short, I find that it will not be possible for us or even for me, to attend. There are several reasons and I don't think I should trouble you with details.

Primarily our personal difficulties with regard to Barbara's unfortunate marital affairs are such that we do not want to leave Washington for some time. Everything conspired to go against her in a terrific battle with a vindictive and rich ex-husband whose principal aim is to hurt her. We got the best legal counsel--highly recommended, yet they turned out, at least in our opinion, to be incompetent. For some time things seemed to be going very well for Barbara and they became over-confident and let down their guard. So Barbara is very much upset, although she is putting up a tremendous and courageous battle to regain her equilibrium. We don't want to leave her at a time when she needs loving support. She has a nice position in the office of a congressman and has done some very creditable work, but that is not enough to help her make a good adjustment to a very hard change in her personal life.

This legal battle has been very expensive and I just don't feel that we should spend what it would cost to come over for a few days. Yes, I realize that you generously offered to finance the whole trip--but I just cannot let you do that. You will recall that from the very first contact I would not accept any favors, gifts, and so forth, and the position I took at that time has been reinforced by several recently issued directives of considerable stringency. So I am regretfully having to tell you very frankly that I just cannot accept any financial assistance from you which would facilitate our joining in the celebration for your birthday. I think you will understand why, will appreciate my decision, and won't allow it to interfere with our long-standing friendly relations.

It is possible that some consulting business will bring me to Europe some months from now. I shall not be eager to go, but will do so if it becomes necessary. Should this happen I will of course pay you a friendly visit if you are available. We do miss seeing you and Annie and we hope that you may soon come Washington, at which time we should be very happy to entertain you and Annie.

My paper on Shakespeare is about finished. It has involved a lot of work--but no financial return. Quite the other way round, because it has caused me a good deal of expense for typing services, as well as so much of my time when I might have been engaged in financially profitable research.

I am rather tired out from the constant grind of the research and writing I have had to do in connection with the Shakespeare paper. The long version, which runs probably to a couple of hours reading time, what with innumerable footnotes, appendices, etc., will be published in the Proceedings of The American Philological Society. This, we are told, is the greatest academic honor in the United States. (The A. P. S. was founded by Ben Franklin, "For Promoting Useful Knowledge", and thus is the oldest learned Society in the country.) The short version of my subject, which must be confined to 20 minutes, is the talk which I shall deliver on April 27. Elizabeth and I are now engaged in reducing the Large to the Small--a very difficult task, as you probably know.

With most affectionate regards from both of us to both of you, and with great regret that we cannot join you in July,

Sincerely,

P.S. Elizabeth typed this for me, so forgive errors or erasures. She's trying to conserve my energy and time, the sweet lady! B.