

Words

The New Literary Forum

SEVENTH ISSUE
December 1985

£1.20



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CHRISTMAS BOOKS
COMPETITIONS : £3,000 in Prizes

VISITING THE POUNDS IN 1971

by
Olivia Temple

Olivia Temple since she was about 21 has kept a meticulously detailed journal. In the Spring of 1971, she and her husband, author Robert Temple, spent some weeks in Italy. During that time they became acquainted with Dorothy Pound in Rapallo, and her husband Ezra and his friend Olga Rudge who were by then living together in Venice. What follows is the section of Olivia Temple's journal recording these encounters, in which Dorothy Pound revealed much that was personal and otherwise unknown. Robert Temple went through every single page of the CANTOS with her, and wrote down full explanations of all the passages which had previously been puzzling and inexplicable. Part of his account will appear in a future issue.

We arrived at Rapallo at 7 p.m. exactly and heaved our cases along the platform and found a taxi outside. We decided to go straight to the Hotel Italia where Dorothy Pound lives, and stay there too. No point in going elsewhere. It was wonderfully situated, with the sea on three sides hitting the stony beach with regular spasms. An old tower, pale and sturdy, stood knee deep in the water and, I should imagine, never dries. We booked in, a good small room with green curtains and a blue tablecloth, facing the tower and the sea . . . Then we asked for Mrs Pound and the pleasant man at the desk pointed to a grey haired old woman in a black dress sitting with her back to us in the adjacent dining room. We introduced ourselves as friends of Omar's and she was pleased but rather startled, so we asked to see her for lunch tomorrow and left her in peace. [Her son, Omar Pound, was supposed to have told her we were coming, but had forgotten.] When she had finished eating, we had our supper; a

very friendly waiter . . . The hotel looks onto the whole bay at Rapallo with its curved harbour and beach, and pink and orange houses climbing up the hill into the trees. The glass-fronted restaurant and promenade reminded me of a play, even the food, – a perfect setting for Somerset Maugham or Agatha Christie. We had an early night.

Tuesday, March 16: . . . We had arranged to see Mrs. Pound at 12:30 downstairs for lunch . . . She was waiting for us. She is quite a tall, strong woman although one immediately thinks of her as a "little old lady", with very thick glasses which make her eyes a big "froggy" from the front and only in proportion from the side. Her white hair was mostly hidden by a black woollen hat with a crocheted band and fixed with a pearl pin. She wore a navy blue crepe dress with a crocheted waistcoat of slate grey, worn and friendly, and a crinkled chiffon scarf in descending shades of black, grey and cream, and

round her neck a long gold chain on which hung a linked gold fish with a blue turquoise eye.

She wore three rings – her wedding ring, a square one with a centre stone of green on her forefinger, and a very lovely one composed of four rows of gold (joined at the back) each dotted with green and red stones. She later took it off to show it to me and explained that E.P. [Ezra] had found it for her in Paris. Last year someone broke into her room and stole the few pieces of jewellery that she had, not precious to a connoisseur but of immeasurable value to her, rings that had belonged to her grandfather, who was born in 1810, and other family treasures, a jade necklace of her mother's, and things she had wanted to leave to Omar's daughters. We had lunch in the corner of the dining room and she sat beside R. so that he could yell into her left ear; she is very deaf. We had to speak unnaturally loudly, which is rather disconcerting with a stranger with whom one has to



A previously unpublished watercolour by Dorothy Shakespear Pound entitled PLANE TREE and dated 1918. The painting is owned by Ezra and Dorothy's son, Omar, and appears here by kind permission of Omar S. Pound and by courtesy of the Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London.



A previously unpublished photograph of Dorothy Pound in Paris during the 1920s.

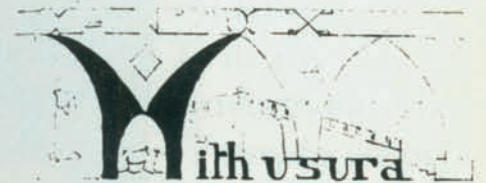
tread carefully and when others are sitting close by. But it wasn't difficult to relax with her and she was delighted that we had come to visit her. She soon proved her steadfast devotion to E.P. and explained later that she approves of his ideas on finance, etc., and philosophies, as an individual with views of her own, *not* because she is his wife. We discussed general subjects at lunch time . . . Then we moved upstairs to the balcony of tables and benches in alcoves which she calls the "Dress Circle". The round tables there have salmon pink cloths on them and plastic flowers "grow" from trellises; we had coffee with our own jug of foaming milk and we sat at a table overlooking

the castle and the sea, and we stayed there talking solidly (mostly she) until 7:30!

Altogether we were with her from 12:30 to 9 o'clock in the evening, eating lunch and supper together as well. She simply couldn't stop recounting incidents to us and practically told us a lifetime of events occurring to her and E.P. How can I write it all down? Perhaps between us R. and I can remember and record everything. Surely we are the only people who know! She said to me when R. went up to get the *Cantos* that she had never told so many things to one person, only snippets, but felt that R. was the right person to tell more. I assured her that he

was! She told me (later in the day, in answer to my question) that she and E.P. had met when her mother Olivia Shakespear, who loved literature and poetry, met the young E.P. at an American woman's house and invited him to tea. He went to tea!

It is a strange situation now with E.P. living in Venice with Olga Rudge (who had his daughter, Mary), and D.P. here in Rapallo alone and virtually widowed; she hasn't seen him for 18 months and there is no doubt a rift that we won't know about. She and E.P. lived in Rapallo for 20 years, until he was taken away [at the end of the War]. They had a flat on the 5th floor of a large building on the front which is now the Hotel Rapallo. Two weeks after they moved in, the lift broke down and wasn't mended again, so they had to climb five flights of stairs. She has always had a "natural aversion" to cooking and wouldn't do so. They always ate at a restaurant below and took friends there.



These designs were by Dorothy Pound for the *CANTOS* But were never published because of the onset of World War Two. © Omar S. Pound.

She prepared breakfast, and occasionally tea, for visitors. With the War they moved up the hill to a house behind Rapallo belonging to friends (i.e., to Olga, – or at least inhabited by her), and E.P.'s old mother was with them. She (the mother) and D.P. didn't get on particularly well and this friction was made more difficult when E.P. was taken away. They were practically starving up there on the hill during the War, and E.P. earned very little per week when he went to Rome to make broadcasts to American troops, basically non-political, more theoretical, on economics (pro-Mussolini, anti-Hitler). He spent the money he earned entirely on his fares to and from Rome, and D.P. doesn't know how they lived. (Obviously no royalties from book sales came through during those years.) Then one day the communist guerillas came and led him away to Genoa, an unknown prison address [apparently a dungeon] where he stayed for a month. Then, after dreadful anxiety D.P. had a note that she could see her husband, who had been moved to Pisa, for half an hour. She couldn't catch a train because the railway had been bombed and the rails were standing in the air all twisted, so she walked down to Rapallo to try and get a lift. She didn't succeed until the tenth time, when a very unpleasant "ambiguous" car-load of people pulled up, two or three men and a woman, who demanded quite a fee to drop her wherever they were going in Pisa. The woman in the car was wearing an expensive fur coat – most suspicious – and the men looked like gangsters. She took their offer through necessity, with great trepidation. It turned out that they had no intention of dropping her at Pisa at all. Many miles before Pisa, they stopped at a seaside town and told her that was the end of the journey. She was bundled out of the car in a fishing village and left to fend for herself. In a sense, it was a relief, because the people in the car were so sinister, she was pleased to be away from them. She walked on for miles and managed to be picked up by an American Army jeep; the officer very kindly took her to the very road leading to the Pisan concentration camp, which was an American Army installation. D.P. doesn't know how she would ever have found the camp at all, if she hadn't had the good fortune of being picked up by American soldiers who knew its location. It was only recently built and was outside Pisa quite a distance. So she walked down the last road and made her way to this "Rehabilitation Centre", i.e., concentration camp, where she asked the American soldier guard

where her husband was. He was nice to her and she felt most relieved. He called out: "Tell Uncle Ez his wife's here!", which relieved her even more, that they should call him such. The place was pretty awful but she didn't see the worst of it. She was allowed to see E.P. at a table with an American military guard sitting next to her – *only about two feet away!* E.P. talked of the CANTOS and copied out a Chinese character for her to remember to tell the printers not to print "downside up". She will never forget her shock when the guard reached out suddenly and wiped the piece of paper off the table and put it in his pocket! He thought it was a coded message for the enemy!

Instead of half an hour she spent one and a half hours with E.P. and they gave her a large meal. She had to make her way back to Rapallo somehow and altogether spent two nights away. She walked with a man whom she remembers for his kindness and genuine willingness to help – a doctor, a Northern Italian who said that if she "would trust herself with him" he could put her up for the night. They walked for about six miles, talking, until they reached his house, where the doctor's wife was somewhat surprised at opening the door to her husband and a "disreputable-looking woman"! D.P. was wearing her father's old Aquascutum mac and a black scarf. They had a little food and D.P. contributed her sausage and piece of bread that she had taken with her from her meal at the prison camp, and they gave her cold soup and hot milk (both of which she hates!) She slept peacefully and the next day got a lift with the milkman. She stayed the second night in Sestri Levante and got

home to a very desperately worried mother-in-law on the third day.

D.P. visited E.P. again a month later. By then transport was a little better, and she knew the location of the camp at least. She only ever made the two visits to E.P. while he was at Pisa, because that was all she was given official permission for. Then when he went to Washington she didn't see him for a year, as she couldn't get a pass or visa out of Italy. (Even though she was an American citizen, that country refused to let her in.) [Note: Dorothy Pound was born in England, and her American citizenship arose from her marriage.] Finally she was able to get to Washington. From then on she lived in a small flat and a bus took her into the "lunatic asylum" every day where she spent two hours, from 2 to 4pm, with Ezra. It was with much effort and proving herself responsible that she persuaded them to move E.P. from the degrading company of criminally sick men and murderers down in the basement of St. Elizabeth's. Down there was a long corridor, too narrow for a rush of rioting prisoners to burst out of, with a hard chair every few yards and at the end of this corridor she was allowed to see E.P. He was kept in a barred room like a criminal.

So with extreme difficulty she managed to get him transferred upstairs, after a year of this brutal basement existence. In his new situation he was placed in a ward for less desperate, harmless cases, where he had a partitioned bit to himself for a bed and a few books. When the weather was fine they sat, with a guard at first, outside on the lawn under elm trees, and could eventually receive guests there. Visitors had

The U.S. Army "holding cells" at Pisa. Ezra Pound's cell can just be seen on the left of this photograph and was specially reinforced with air-strip steel. Pound was to write in the PISAN CANTOS that, "No man who has passed a month in the death cells believes in cages for beasts."





Ezra Pound in 1963 in Venice as photographed by Horst Tappe.

to check in and have E.P.'s wish to see them, and one time a journalist got in, shadowing a friend of theirs who didn't realise it, and the journalist was promptly thrown out. D.P. then asked us suspiciously if we were journalists! (Her permanent phobia.)

D.P. told us of how, in the last year of Ezra's confinement, she was despairing as to whether he would ever be released. She stressed that it is because E.P. knows too much that he has been treated in this way, - knows too much about the financiers and the tyranny they exercise and that it was no doubt hoped that being certified [i.e., certified as insane, though this was a fiction to prevent him being executed for treason] at St. Elizabeth's would drive him crazy and keep him quiet. But it just left him very melancholy and sad. He had always wanted to live in Venice but it

made D.P. ill when she went there and she thinks it will sink at any moment and has no foundations. She said she couldn't possibly live with all that water around her - it was unhealthy and it made her dizzy just to look at it, the way it rippled and reflected. Ezra now is happy in Olga's house there, he has his wish to live in Venice at last, and Olga looks after him, but perhaps bullies him a little.

D.P. told us the financial situation and how she is responsible for everything of his that is published or printed and the earnings from it. When Ezra was released from St Elizabeth's, he was put in her charge, and she is the "committee" for him. He is legally insane and all finances and decisions are in her hands. Despite her position of total control, she sends Ezra and Olga a cheque every month and does not touch one

penny of Ezra's earnings and royalties for herself, but lives independently on the income from money her mother left her. It is not a lot, she said, but it is enough for her modest existence and total financial independence of Ezra, who chooses to live with another woman. She is worried about who will take on all her responsibilities when she is gone; it cannot be Omar or Mary because it would be unfair to them, having access to money which they must not use, when they both could use it!

What else did she say? Well, there were several hours devoted to going through the *Cantos*, various references which had puzzled R. and which one could never guess the answers to. Names and places mostly. She remembered them all and said things like, "Oh yes, I was there then", or "I remember when we went there!" Even the cat that came to scrounge off them and grew fat which they called Schwarz: invaluable details all, that R. is making a detailed note of, as this information is so important and may never be known by anyone else if he doesn't record it. She also discussed various people who have written books and criticisms on Pound and R. brought down his armful of E.P. books which proved his devotion to the subject.

D.P. wrote down Ezra and Olga's address in Venice and said that Ezra usually has coffee in the Piazza in the afternoons. Olga often shuts the door to visitors so we must be very careful. She went to fetch a book *hers* that has just been published of her watercolours and a few early notes when they first met. It is called *THE ETRUSCAN GATE* (from the subject of one of her paintings) and well printed on grey paper, unfortunately not in colour. She also brought some chocolates down wrapped in a napkin and showed me how she folds the coloured wrappers into bookmarks. I was terribly hungry and exhausted, her energy was almost unnatural but as she's always alone, it must store up for the odd occasion when she can talk. I had been watching the sun over the bay and the changing highlights on the water and hills until it crept away onto the other side. So at half past seven we went down to eat. She was quieter then, probably becoming tired, and we said goodnight at 9pm. I was too exhausted even to write down an account of the day and wrote this the next evening.

Wednesday, March 17: [We went to see Thor Heyerdahl near Alassio, a memorable day. But the lengthy account of it is omitted here as being irrelevant.] . . . We walked from the station to the hotel and bought some flowers from a florist

which was just closing, to give to D.P. She had eaten by the time we got back so a maid took them up to her. She had left a note saying that she would be too tired to come with us to Portofino tomorrow as we had planned. We had a quiet meal and sat in the "Dress Circle" writing like mad to catch up on everything. R. has so much to write down it'll drive him crazy! I went up . . .

Thursday, March 18: We were called at 9 as we had hoped to go to Portofino. The weather was bad and threatened rain, so we changed our minds. We had coffee downstairs and D.P. appeared soon after us. She comes down at 10 to check her mail and then has tea back in her room. She sat with us for a while and thanked us for the flowers. They all brought back memories. The freesias reminded her of her earliest memory of all – from earliest childhood when she was two years old and her mother had been sent some white flowers and among them were freesias with their strong smell.

Anemones she has always loved – the colours, and the way they open and close. The others, which I think of being a double geum, tightly packed red petals, she thought were double ranunculus; a similar word is mentioned in Catullus. When Ezra came across the word in the Latin poet's work, it reminded him of the name of the flower which D.P. was always talking about and so he fastened on it and used it in a Canto! [This actually may have been auricula.]

D.P. told us that the market day in Rapallo is today, and that we should visit it, and how to get there. We borrowed an umbrella from the man at the desk who is always very nice and set out cashing travellers cheques and buying a fat notebook for R. on the way. It was quite a long walk in the rain to the market . . . There was torrential rain on the way back, which we managed to avoid, and wild foaming surf scattered noisily all over the promenade. The sea grew brown and angry and so relentless and

masses of gulls and pigeons sat motionless on the old castle roof outside the hotel. We had lunch with D.P., a large delicious meal; – apparently they always give you more to eat on Thursdays, Sundays and Festas (Saints' Day). Tomorrow is St. Joseph's Day, which must be why there were so many sweets and cakes in the shops. I remember at the Convent before Sports Day, the nuns put out small wooden statues of St. Joseph all over the lawn to prevent rain. Sometimes it rained. And it's raining today.

D.P. told endless tales of the CANTOS, and I'm ashamed to say that I've forgotten most of it and must rely on R. writing down the details, with his photographic memory! I remember her talking of Henry James, which intrigued me. He was rather plump and wore a red waistcoat with embroidery. He and Ezra (fellow expatriates) got on very well and spoke together usually when D.P. wasn't there. She and Ezra met him and a woman companion while out walking in Kensington Gardens (near D.P.'s parents' house). The woman immediately walked ahead with D.P. leaving H.J. and E.P. to talk! So she missed most. E.P. afterwards told her that James's first words had been: "Is she a compatriot?"

We sat upstairs again afterwards and talked and had coffee and I fetched our sweets. The glasses of wine I drank at lunch time had made me tired; I was longing to shut my eyes. At 3 o'clock she went to have a rest and we wrote some postcards and journal . . . That evening the rain was falling horizontally like telephone wires and from my seat in the dining room, looking up to the solid portly castle, the sheafs of rain as they flew past the lamp could have been snowflakes with the light enlarging them. The waves were furious, yet seemed to be enjoying themselves in their constant battle to climb the wall and rocks and conquer the town. We again sat upstairs and talked [with D.P.] this time till 11:15 . . . R. has endless questions.

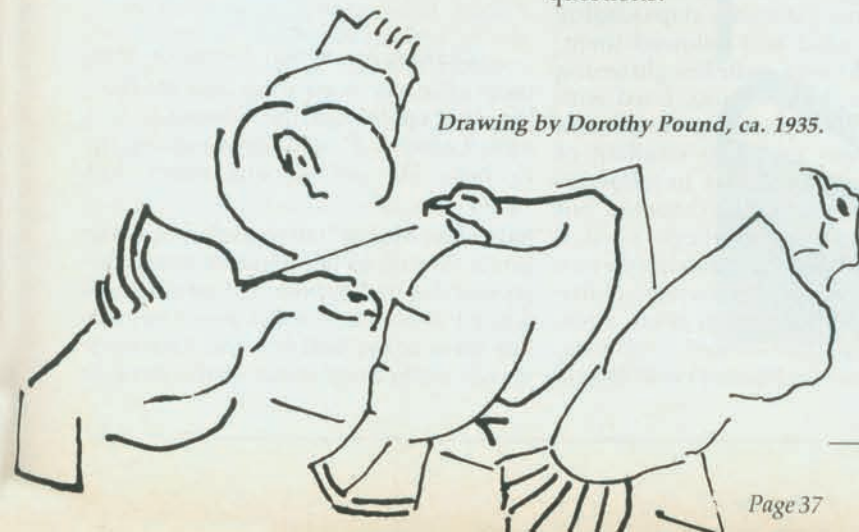
Friday, March 19 – Festa de San Giussepe!

As soon as I woke I opened the window for more air and to see the weather. It was to be another wet day and there were many mackintosh-clad, umbrella-clutching figures on the promenade which indicated that it wasn't an early hour. It was 11 o'clock. We arose and had coffee in the Dress Circle. The hotel had many more people in it today, because of the Festa, so the dining room was almost full and I'm afraid we irritated people with our near-shouting to combat D.P.'s deafness. Before lunch I dashed out to the side of the hotel where there is a pathway round to a bar and the road and stood watching the sea. It was turbulent and brown and full of twigs and floating remnants and the beach was littered with sticks, plastic bottles and odd shoes! I wonder whose? The air was delicious and full of clean salty breath from the ocean where the mermaids are. We talked upstairs again, until three, and I think D.P. is tiring a little. She wants to talk for hours but knows that she must be careful. And it was R. who said we should stop.

We stayed in our room because the sky was black and thunderous rain smacked the pavements . . . I noticed the castle door was open and people going up the steps so we rushed out to go inside too. There was an old man sitting at the door and some sort of wine exhibition. Dusty bottles marked 1883, Mouton de Rothschild and Moët & Chandon. The basement, dungeon part of the castle was clearly divided into five prison cells, with thick worm-eaten doors with a small window grill and bars over tunnelled windows leading up to a patch of sky. The waves hurling onto the walls made me feel insecure and must have been traumatic for prisoners. A woman friend of D.P.'s was in here for a year or more during the War as a prisoner of the Germans and was totally changed and hopeless when she came out.

All the walls are recently cemented and grey and a huge fireplace with a hole in the floor for pouring boiling oil. There was a young bird, very large and ugly, perched in one of the window ledges on some straw and in another one sat two white eggs encircled by sticks and straw. We decided to go for a long walk and I left my coat behind and wore three jumpers. It was exciting weather for walking, the time after a storm by the sea, a warm strong wind. We followed the road by the coast and went down hundreds of steps to a small inlay of rocks and steps where the waves were foaming and churning. This

Drawing by Dorothy Pound, ca. 1935.





Ezra Pound walking up the hill from Rapallo to Sant' Ambrogio where the Pounds lived during World War Two. The photograph is by Vittorio Contino from EZRA POUND IN ITALY published in 1970 by Gianfranco Iwancich Editore of Venice.

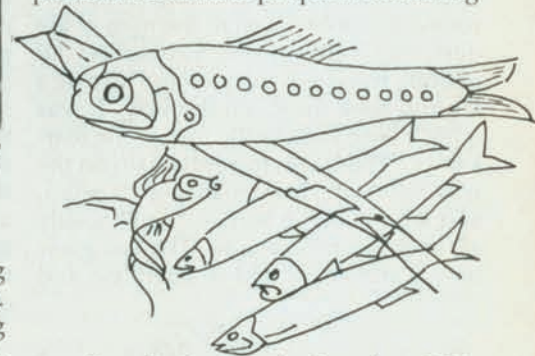
was "the shingle under Zoagli" mentioned in Canto LXXX. This area was marked by a sign: "Sant' Ambrogio, Comune di Zoagli", on the road above the sea here, we had noticed.

We saw more steps which we followed and they led down and up again to a further bend in the road. We walked back along that road looking for a path to take us up the mountains towards Sant' Ambrogio, where the Pounds lived during the War. [The Nazis ejected them from their residence in the town and they had to move in with Olga Rudge up the hill at Sant' Amrbogio.] It was comforting to imagine them walk-

ing the same ways and E.P. remarking names and places to use in his writing. We found some old mossy steps leading up from the road and followed them, cautiously. When a path lies glistening and curved in front of you, lined with grey flint walls sprouting clover and grass wet from rain and smelling of earth, it is impossible not to follow it. Our following led us, exhausted but exhilarated, to Sant' Amrbogio itself, a very high point with an amazing view, a church, a few houses and layers of olive trees lined on bright green grass, a few daffodils, weather-beaten mimosa, winter jasmine and orange and lemon

trees. I want to pick an orange off a tree and eat it and I never have. Even here they were growing in gardens and out of reach. As we got to the top a woman leaned out of her gateway, peeling an orange from a tree behind her. Most of the hills beyond Rapallo were crowned with black clouds which split like a fruit to show a livid orange Apollo who raced on and the clouds closed. The church stood open and we went inside to a practically pitch black interior lit only with the thin candles of offering. The atmosphere was strong and pleasant and not too Catholic, safe for us here and swept with clean air! I lit a candle. It was growing dark rapidly and all round the coast lights twinkled on like fallen stars struggling to ascend. We asked a Moorish-looking woman on her way to the church which was the quickest way down and she told us, we are picking up so much Italian. Tilting down all those steps was very uncomfortable; there must be a secret way of stepping. (When D.P. used to come down in the evenings for events in Rapallo, she wore plimsolls for the hill and carried her good shoes into which she changed when she reached level.)

We stopped outside a house perched by the path where a friendly couple showed us which path to take and we talked to them a little, about snow and about how to get to the house. (There is a road for driving.) In a horribly quick time we had reached the bottom and were back in Rapallo. It was 7 o'clock. Just time to wash and breathe before supper. We always eat at 7:30 and at 12:30 lunch-time, because D.P. is very punctual. Still more people in the dining



Drawing by Dorothy Pound, ca. 1936.

room. We sat in a corner and ate fish. We went upstairs [to the "Dress Circle"] until 9 when D.P. said she was going up to bed. We sat in our room and wrote . . .

Saturday, March 20th: Again on waking I duly rushed to the window to see the type of day and to breathe that clear sea while I am so near it. It was not sunny, but grey again and the swollen sea's waves methodically beat on the glisten-

ing rocks. But no rain. It was 11 o'clock and we had coffee in our room and biscuits that we had bought. We stayed in our room until lunchtime and when we went down asked the man at the desk about trains to Verona on Monday. We intend to stop a night there, the journey to Venezia [Venice] being 8 hours and Verona being a place of interest on the way to be visited. (E.P. mentions several things there in the CANTOS.) We had lunch with D.P. in the crowded dining room and we tried to keep off the subject of CANTOS and questions. We told her we were going to Portofino in the afternoon and she insisted on lending us her umbrella. I went up to her room with her to fetch it and was surprised at how tiny her room is. On the corner of the building, with full sea view from the large windows leading onto a balcony with a few geraniums. Not many books, a table by the window where the flowers we had given her looked bright and comforting, an armchair and shawl . . . I wonder what she does all day. I believe she quite looks forward to death, which comforts me in a way, and she said later on in the day that she hopes she dies before her passport runs out and avoids the trouble of having to renew it. She became an American when she married Ezra as was the law then.

We walked to the station square to catch a bus along the coast road to the tiny point of Portofino. [Account of Portofino omitted.] . . . When we got back to Rapallo we went into a small shop almost completely hidden by hand-made lace and crochet; more of a nest, containing a portly fairhaired elderly woman who I could well imagine was sitting on some eggs! We bought a long silk scarf for D.P. in navy blue with a grey and green pattern and one for my mother and one for me. R. is always so generous. He wanted to buy me a large yellow silk shawl . . . In Portofino we had bought some hankies with D. on them for D.P., some O.'s and P.'s for me . . . D.P. was pleased with the hankies and had been hoping that she'd be given some at Christmas, but hadn't been. And the violets we bought for her were put in a glass on the dining table.

There was only time to wash and change when we got back because of the number of people eating here this weekend, - we mustn't be late! We tried not to ask D.P. too many questions as she obviously becomes tired and she explained after supper to R. while we were sitting upstairs that it has been a most strange experience for her to reopen the doors on her past and revisit these old friends and names and places

with us, all of whom she hasn't thought of for years: "I never look back, don't believe in it," she said. However, she did tell us a few more. She has said some interesting things about Mussolini about whom I knew very little. From what D.P. says, he had some good points. D.P. remembers when he came to Rapallo. He apparently had a peculiar quirk and was famed for knowing every bridge over every river and walked round enthusiastically looking at towns and villages, seeing for himself how people lived. So when he visited Rapallo, all the people brought out the best of their possessions to display, as was the custom. Those who had tapestries hung tapestries from their balconies. The Pounds hung their best curtains over their balcony (this was still the Hotel Rapallo on the seafront - before the Nazis came), and they stood and watched from there. Because they were "the enemy" in the War and lived in such a suitable position for "dropping a bomb on his head", they had to have two friends with them who checked with the police when they arrived and when they left. As for Mussolini when he was passing by: "He looked up at our curtains all right," said D.P. mischievously . . . Sometimes she lights up and goes quite pink at remembering things,

especially about Ezra. She really adores him from afar and is his most faithful fan. She always wanted to travel and now Olga has been the one to go abroad with Ezra. Two years ago they went to Athens and Seferis [George Seferis, the Nobel laureate poet] looked after them there. And they went to America.

I finished reading the VITA NUOVA, which is a unique little book. One is mostly affected when reading it, by Dante's complete honesty with the reader. He exposes his heart and soul and his mistakes without any hesitation and that is, to me, where the charm and magic lies. It is a book of many layers and the pages can be peeled as many times as each person wishes and will always find more, and likewise the lines of the sonnets. After that I fell sound asleep quite exhausted.

Sunday, March 21st: R. had stayed up writing frantically. He has almost filled a fair-sized notebook with well remembered anecdotes and clarifications of the CANTOS. . . . We stayed in our room until lunchtime and I started to read E.P.'s essay on Dante in THE SPIRIT OF ROMANCE. It is so rewarding when things fit into place; there would have been no point in reading it if I hadn't read something of Dante. It was not a



ALDEBURGH BOATS by Dorothy Pound, 1914, a fine example of Vorticist art.

sunny day, but it wasn't raining either and the sea was calm and regular. There weren't as many people having lunch and the Festa weekenders had gone. But there were masses of people walking outside, milling and sifting, in all shapes and sizes. I took a walk while R. wrote and it was mild and not as lively and exciting as the last two days. I enjoyed the storm and busy sea, previously. Bought some sunglasses. We didn't talk with D.P. after lunch but sat in our room and read and wrote before catching the funivira (cable car) at 4 o'clock. It took us precariously to the top of a huge expanse of hillside called Monte Allegro.

It is an odd sensation, floating 20 feet or so above ground and must be very similar to being a bird. . . . We walked round the top and admired the skirt of land beneath us which revealed, at the hem, the tiny clusters of Rapallo and Santa Margherita and the hidden niche of Portofino. I love the freedom so high up, breathing the pure air. We wanted to walk down rather than take the cable car. D.P. said she and E.P. did it frequently and she got left behind! There was a lumpy stone pathway probably made this century, which we followed. There were some marvellous flowers near a house at the top, green hellebores, which have green petals almost leaf-like, hiding under grass and freshly opened quite large. I picked one to press. There were a few old stone houses with accompanying vegetable plots, olives, mimosa. An old woman was sawing at a black branch with a long curved knife and a man in a beret bound a trellis. Two men and liver-coloured dogs were shooting - brown faces, green clothes. Watery sun, - a beautiful, memorable walk. As we joined the last stretch of "proper" road it trickled with rain. I noticed several times groups of tiny wild grape hyacinth; blossom is just opening, in profusion, and some of it has been swept away by the wind and rain. I saw orange and lemon trees in a large orchard/garden and nearby two weatherbeaten peasant women were winding tough pieces of creeper into bundles. Out of sight I found my longed-for moment of picking one of those fruits off a tree. With the help of a loose branch I pulled a lemon within hand reach and plucked it! Later when we got back, very weary, I ate it all and it was delicious. Rather sweet like a grapefruit and very firm. I had a short rest and R. wrote before supper. A good pizza to start with. R. asked a few hasty and final CANTOS questions which were duly answered. He knows the answers to nearly all the puzzles now

which are personal to E.P. and D.P.'s experience. He is delighted.

After supper we drank fresh orange juice upstairs and I gave D.P. her scarf with which she was delighted. I also gave Illia, the very pleasant and kind waiter, a little chicken-shaped Easter egg. Among other things, D.P. told me that one of her favourite writers (the other being Henry James) is Thomas Hardy, and she has always loved the West Country because of him. She doesn't like D.H. Lawrence, but added that E.P. admired his style. She met him a couple of times, and made a shivering-spine face and movement: "No, I didn't go for him." She also expressed her dislike and distrust for Russians: "I don't believe in them. They tell such lies!"

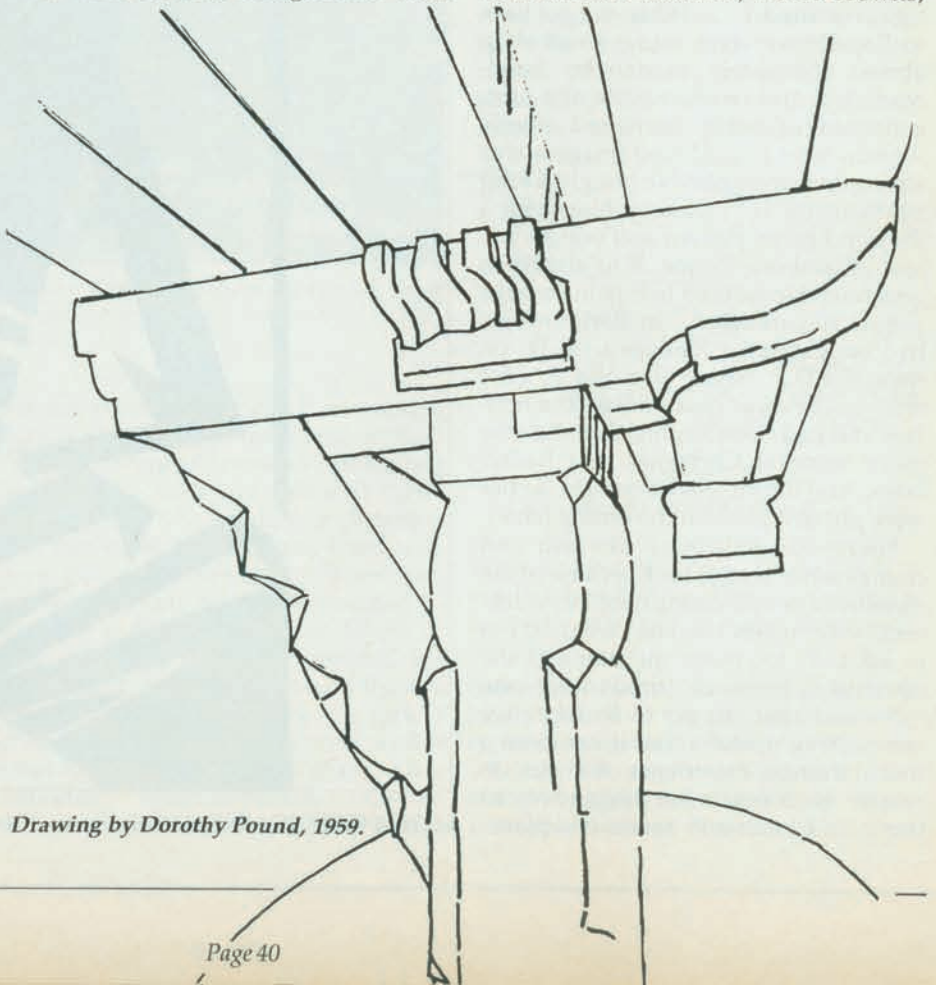
It was awfully sad to be sitting together on this last evening and I think we will miss each other - she is a lovely person and when we watched her walking down the corridor, past the photographs of Ezra and Olga which are framed and hanging in the hotel corridor as "famous guests", in her yellow woollen shawl and white hair, we could have wept. Will we see her again? She should be with E.P., that is what is so sad.

The rest of the evening was spent packing and writing . . .

Monday, March 22nd: TO VERONA

R. went out and brought D.P. more

flowers. We were finished packing by 11:30 so walked for half an hour. No more rain, perfect blue and white sky. We had our lunch at twelve on our own and D.P. came down for hers later. We said goodbye with the taxi waiting and it was awfully sad. I felt as if we had been living there and with her in the past as she told us all her memories during the past week. We'll be able to imagine her every day . . . the man at the desk waved as we left and it was quite a family; he gave us a hotel salt shaker! We caught a local train to Genoa, catching our last glimpses of the sea, sparkling so brilliantly. I felt very strange leaving the sea and the castle behind, we had grown so fond of it. At Genoa we got a train to Milan which then sped on to Verona. I spent most of the three hour journey watching Italy go by and the Alps looming out of reach. We even passed Lake Garda; I didn't realise it was so big. I read a lot more of the Pound chapter on Dante which is wonderful. That sent me to sleep! We arrived in Verona at 6 and R. had looked up the Hotel Academia in the Green Guide book, so we went straight there. D.P. had not been able to suggest anywhere to stay overnight in Verona. R. chose the Hotel Academia because it had the same name as Plato's Academy. He thought it would be a philosophical hotel. In fact it is awful. Verona is even more beautiful than Florence, a perfectly soothing network of brick in ochres, muted browns,



Drawing by Dorothy Pound, 1959.

dusty pinks, and beige, and surrounded by endless Ghibelline shapes on turrets and bridges. A vast Castelvechio, built by the Visconti family, where there is now a museum, and a perfectly preserved Roman stadium are features of Verona. We didn't like the hotel but there was no point in finding another. It proved to be worse than imaginable later and we had a dreadful night, hardly any sleep. A clock tower just outside the window struck ten strokes on every hour – *twice* – all night long! It had gone berserk. Then at 8am when we were hollow-eyed and harrowed and learning to sleep through the clock which had gone mad, workmen began drilling, hammering, and bashing sheets of corrugated iron or something – just outside the window. It was a nightmare which was so nerve-shattering that if we hadn't been so utterly exhausted would have been hilariously funny. . . .

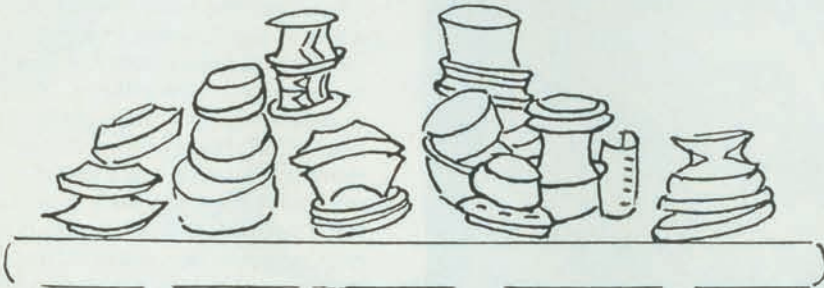
Tuesday, March 24th: VENICE

How wretched we felt in the morning, vowing never to stay there again! We left the cases downstairs and walked to the market place . . . Then we went by taxi to the castle and museum. The old castle is superb . . . R. found a very weird painting called *Tre Santi* [*Three Saints*] which fascinated him, and he stood and looked at it for absolute ages. He didn't want to leave it. A smaller painting of a Madonna and child by the

the CANTOS: the Dodici Apostoli (Twelve Apostles), which was very near the hotel, as it turned out. It was here that the waiter had said about English tea to his assistant when E.P. and D.P. were there: "Ecco il té," – demonstrating for the first time the strange English brew. The restaurant was so Victorian and Mrs. Beeton-like, with fruit arranged in a pyramid and a cardboard waiter who had tried to adopt a grand English accent and was quite extraordinary and very funny. He had somehow picked up the phrase "Can you afford? . . ." meaning, he thought, "Would you like? . . ." which was rather alarming! "Can you afford a table for two?" "Can you afford a salad?" etc. The food *was* exquisite and we ate a thick creamy celery soup which had in it melted Gruyere cheese, served in huge wooden bowls, followed by fresh salmon baked whole *en crouete*, but in a bread dough instead of pastry. And a jug of local white Soave wine, which is a produce of the Verona region. The waiter sniffed the cork of the wine he had opened and poured the first inch away. It is best to drink fresh young Soave out of a jug, we decided. R. thought it took in air through this process and that Soave is "happy in a jug". . . .

VENICE: . . . We made our way to the Pensione Cici ("Cici's") which is only a few yards away from the Pound settlement and very quiet. They showed

friend Peter Russell, who is a poet and is a friend of Ezra and Olga, and who also published some of E.P.'s works once . . . we phoned him and he was pleased to hear, and Kathleen had written to him explaining a little. He suggested we go over straight away to the Lido where he has lived for six months since leaving his large flat in the centre of Venice. So we followed his instructions and arrived at the Lido, which is a long narrow island where the story DEATH IN VENICE by Thomas Mann is set. We walked for 20 minutes to the very end almost, San Nicolo, where we found P.R.'s house under an archway in a tiny courtyard and the name GAUDIO on the doorbell but not his own. He said this meant "I rejoice", and was not meant to be a name. He is a striking-looking person, with pure white hair with strange streaks and layers of dark grey, a red face, very pink and white skin, blue eyes accompanied by glasses and a heavy white beard. He lives in a chaotic uncomfortable way, living mostly in his small kitchen with a table under the window, which crawls with ants, an alcove kitchen, a rocking chair and a bachelor's atmosphere of home-making. He had a wife, has a son, and now has a red-head Italian girlfriend of 40 who visits him every weekend. We sat in his kitchen breaking barriers and trying to probe. He was keen to hear news of Kathleen and is extremely close to her and sends her poems to look over. He has had endless ghastly things happen to him, – being cheated by people, precious books stolen including an E.P. SELECTED POEMS containing a page-long note in the front from E.P. which an American girl stole from him under the most elaborate false pretences! I almost feel that he *wants* these things to happen to him . . . he is pleasant to listen to and converse with; he knows so much about so many things and he and R. had a great deal to discuss and discover. We went to look for somewhere to eat but all the bars and restaurants were closed for a one-day strike and we walked to no avail, very hungry. Peter never eats anyway, but smokes endlessly, gasping down the smoke with desperation. He hardly sleeps either and has duodenal ulcers and liver trouble, from too much alcohol. He has had to stop drinking entirely, and never touches a drop. In other words he's killing himself. He's 50. We all went over to Venice where everywhere else was closed as well. Peter says that if anyone dares to open roving gangs of Communist monitors will spot it and break the windows, and that all the restaurant owners are com-



Drawing by Dorothy Pound, ca. 1936.

same painter (*Madonna dal ventaglio; Madonna with the fan*) was extremely bizarre and somewhat resembled the style of Wyndham Lewis. What an odd artist for the Renaissance. He is little-known, named either Francesco Benaglio or Domenico Morone. We saw the huge statue of Can Grande della Scala on horseback "with a grin like Tommy Cochran's" which so fascinated E.P. and is mentioned in the CANTOS. We bought a large wall poster of it for E.P. as a present. To me Can Grande looks like an idiot; R. thinks so too! We wondered whether the artist was having a joke. . . . We then treated ourselves to the *most fantastic* meal in a restaurant D.P. told us about, also mentioned in

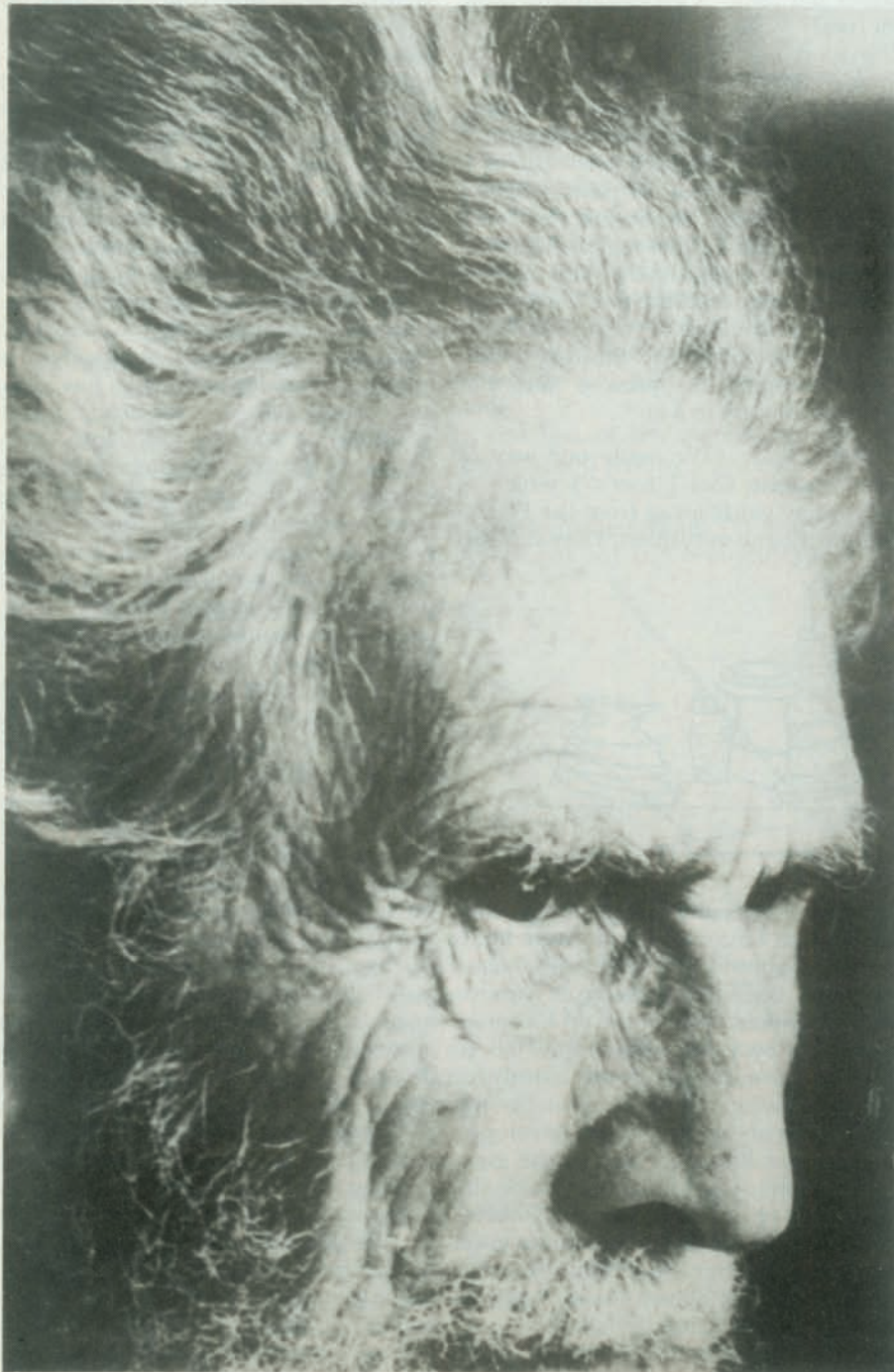
us three rooms and we chose the third which was larger and with more light. There are about 100 English school-leavers here, boys and girls, from various public schools, who come on a course, organised by a man called John Hall, to Venice, Florence, and Rome, mainly for an appreciation with lectures on the arts and Italian art history. R. has developed a particular liking for one of the girls, named Jane, who turns out to be the daughter of an M.P. named Nicholas Ridley about whom R. has many good things to say. Her friend Emily Smith is also very nice and lives across the street from the Kenworthys. Small world. . . . Kathleen Raine had told us that when we went to Venice we must see her old

pletely terrified and cowed. If they resisted strenuously their premises would then be burnt down. We bumped into Teresa Smallbone and Mary, two of the English girls at Cici's whose room is across the hall from us, so they came with us, and we had a good 4 o'clock lunch in Harry's Bar, which was the only place to eat in all of Venice which was open - by special arrangement with the Communists, apparently, as it is an extremely expensive place which caters for rich tourists. The two girls had orange juice, and they left after not

long. We sat in there until 7:30 talking and then went back to the Lido where we made tea and looked at more books. R. is delighted that P.R. is so interested in the Neo-platonists, and knows about Thomas Taylor and Proclus, and that sort of thing. They talked a lot about Ezra and Olga. Peter hasn't seen them in a while but did see them practically every day for a long time. He has known Olga for years, and is her particular friend, but she exasperates him, and at the moment he is taking a break from their company. . . . We didn't leave his

house until 12:30am when I was so tired. We just missed a boat and had to wait almost an hour in the lonely cold for another one. Awful. We didn't get to bed until 4:30am. While at P.R.'s we had composed a letter to Olga Rudge to leave for the morning, which we did. Peter had advised us to do this, and said he mustn't give us their phone number as he was under strict orders never to do so. We slipped the letter to Olga through her door, around the corner from Cici's, before going to bed.

Ezra Pound, 1970, as photographed by Vittorio Conti.



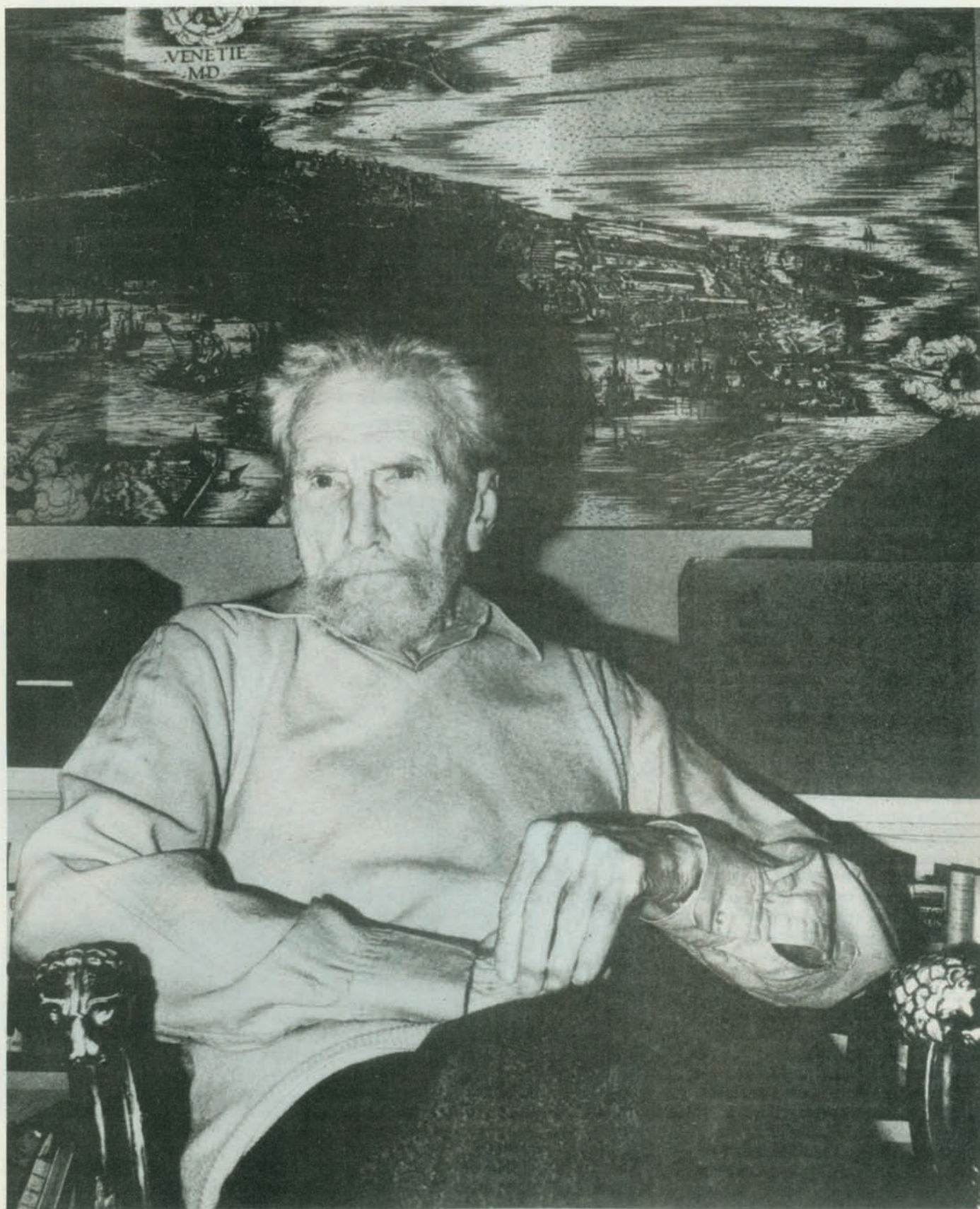
Thursday, March 25th: Well, what woke us was Olga Rudge phoning at 9:30, asking us to go round at 12:30 before they went out to lunch! We feared we wouldn't have much time with them. We immediately phoned Peter Russell who had been woken by Olga at 8:30 and she talked for half an hour to him going round in circles, saying apparently that they like to see people and yet they don't want to! She also confirmed that we did indeed know Peter. I have written a long letter to D.P. explaining our encounter so I think the best thing is to copy it out here:

**March 26th
Venice**

Dear D.P.,

Yesterday we met him!

We arrived in Venice on Tuesday, having stayed a night in Verona, - what a beautiful town! We saw the pillars at San Zeno and loved it there: we saw Can Grande, who had been moved to the Museo at the Castelvecchio; and I bought a poster of him for E.P. When he opened it, he stared at it for ages, and a look of recognition of an old friend crossed his face. I was so struck with the beauty of your husband's face, it will always remain with me; his is a face which has all the joy and all the happiness of the world, together with all the pain and suffering. His expression, though severe, and a little daunting, is so gentle and understanding. I know I can say this to you. Robert wrote a note to Olga, which explained that we had letters for them and the jade [Dorothy Pound had written Ezra and Olga notes to be delivered by us, and entrusted to us a gift of green jade to Ezra from an American admirer. However, she doubted that Olga would let us in the house despite all of this, and only Peter Russell's intervention got us in.], asking her to phone us at a Pensione called Cici's in San Gregorio. She phoned at 9:30am asking us to go round at 12:30, before



One of the last photographs of Ezra Pound, by Horst Tappe. It shows Pound in his home in Venice in 1971 where, earlier in the year, he had entertained Olivia and Robert Temple.

they went out to lunch. So we arrived on the dot, and Olga opened the door looking rather fierce. We sat down in the ground floor room where there is a large open fireplace and she went upstairs and we waited a few minutes before she said from the top of the stairs: "Would you like to come up?"

Mr. Pound was sitting in his chair in the corner, with sunlight shining through the yellow cloth curtains onto his brown velvet jacket and lighting his white hair. He didn't smile but looked at us very sharply under his eyebrows with those amazing blue eyes which are piercing and sharp and kind and gentle all at the same time. [Note: his eyes were green, as D.P. points out in a later letter.] I must admit I was very nervous and so was Robert. We shook hands and gave him the poster and the jade, both of which he placed beside him on a low table which was covered in books. He didn't open the jade while we were there but he did look at the poster and a Penguin book of Mencius (a new translation) from Robert. Well, I began to talk to Olga, about painting, about the number of pigeons in Venice (it is full of them!) and about window boxes! I wanted Robert to be able to talk to E.P. He began telling him of his interest in Confucius, and his translations, and about his admiration for Buckminster Fuller, whom he knew, – not asking questions, but trying to talk. E.P. did say several sentences, quite willingly and nothing cross! [Ezra Pound by this time had hardly spoken a word for about two years, so this was most unusual.] He said that Buckminster Fuller was known of 20 years ago; he said he hadn't ever been to Yeats's house in Fitzroy Road which Robert mentioned; he said something which was a cause of much laughter – Olga laughed long and E.P. laughed too, but not outwardly! Robert said that Seferis had translated some of E.P.'s work into modern Greek and E.P. said quietly: "Just a scrap . . ." Robert thought he had said: "Just as crap!" which made us all laugh and Olga said: "Well Ezra, which was it, scrap or crap?" He looked very serious and blinked for a few moments and looked a bit sulky before saying: "Scrap!"

Unfortunately I didn't hear the other few things he said because I wanted to talk to Olga in order to let R. talk to him. I remember at the end of our visit that R. asked E.P. if he believed in reincarnation. E.P. didn't say anything so R. continued on that subject and asked if he followed the

Confucian belief of not speculating on the after-life. E.P. said: "Of course everyone has to speculate!" Then R. said, "Have you come to form an opinion on that subject?" Another pause, before E.P. said, "No."

He seemed very well and fit, much more agile than I had imagined. As you said, he doesn't like to miss anything and when we got up to look out of the window into the courtyard with Olga, he got up too to see what we were doing! Likewise when we went downstairs to leave, he came down also, very silently and stood behind Olga as we waved goodbye. We shook hands with him and said we hoped we hadn't disturbed him, to which he replied, "Not at all." And when R. said he was very pleased and honoured to meet him, E.P. said, "I've heard that many times before." We were there for one and a half hours and I wondered if they really were going out to lunch! I think Olga is frightened of E.P. being rude to people, or ignoring them; she was

She wanted us to hear the new record of him reading his Confucian Odes, but she phoned this morning to say the gramophone was broken but perhaps she could arrange for us to hear it on someone else's on Monday. But we are leaving tomorrow. Who knows what they thought of us? But I think Olga was quite pleased and perhaps he made up his mind later! But for us it was a fantastic and unforgettable experience and we feel extremely lucky. Likewise our meeting with you. We can't believe that we only knew you for a week, but more of a lifetime; it was so lovely staying in Rapallo and talking to you. We did miss the sea at night, sweeping in! And the castle!

We have enjoyed being in Venice and hope very much to return. Thank you for everything,

With affection,
Olivia

P.S. Have the swallows come?
[End of letter]



Pound's hands, photographed by Vittorugo Contino.

very nervous. She doesn't really bully him. As she talked she kept looking at him and saying: "Isn't it Ezra?" or "What do you think Ezra?" not really giving him time to answer, but obviously wanting him to participate.

I must also say that E.P. has beautiful hands – they hold a great deal of movement and shape and he holds them together on his knees, sometimes lifting them and examining a finger or a nail. He stared beyond me onto a certain part

of the wall where there are several sketches of him including a Wyndham Lewis. When we left we felt so proud and alive and wanted to run . . . we had been looked in the eye by a marble man; a monument to life had spoken to us.

We phoned Peter Russell and he asked us to go straight over. Before we did we wrote letters . . . then we traipsed over to the Lido again. P.R. was as yesterday and very pleased with our

account of this a.m. We ate a dreadful meal in a Trattoria next door which isn't worth describing. Peter and R. talked for hours and I was desperately tired. We made tea and I tried to keep awake but when they finally went upstairs to look at books I sat in a large chair with my feet up and fell asleep until 12:30 when they came down and R. said at last that we must go. We caught a bus and missed a boat, so waited in the cold for ages!

© Olivia M. Temple

Transcript of letter from Dorothy Pound to Olivia Temple.

Dear Olivia,

I expect you will be back in London by now – hoping your journey after Venezia was pleasant, I am most grateful, to both of you, for long letters re E.P. and thankful to hear he seemed in good condition – and that you had some conversation with Olga – Thanks also for the charming card of ancient Verona. I am so glad you found the points I mentioned, and liked Verona – which I am much devoted to. I forgot to tell you of "Juliet's Balcony" – which I believe is spurious, anyway!

I imagine Can Grande della Scala has been moved indoors – to preserve him from the air – pollution – which is ruining all the marble and bronze in Venezia – (works at Mestre emit poisonous fumes)

Now! You, an artist – call E.P.'s eyes blue!! All the journalists do that. They are green. –

I think Olga is probably more frightened lest she should have opened the door to a wrong person – she made one bad mistake . . . and she and I are

not agreed about a couple of others . . .

Sea gulls left three days ago. Except for 8 or 10 – who disappeared the next day. I haven't seen the ghost even, of a swallow. I have often wondered if all the 'planes have made different air currents for their journey. The ones who pass here I believe go to . . . the N. Pole – the ones to England, come up via France. (All this, hearsay.)

I missed you both for several days – but have now sunk back to my usual schedule.

Pouring rain today. Hoping to see you this summer.

Affectionate greetings

D.P.
Dorothy Pound

[Signed thus twice and folded into a paper triangle marked "Olivia". It was a custom of D.P.'s to fold confidential notes in that way.]

[Dorothy Pound's letter printed by permission of Omar S. Pound.]



A "tail-piece" designed by Dorothy Pound for the CANTOS.

Both the author and the editor wish to thank Omar S. Pound for his cooperation over the illustration of this article. All of the artwork by his mother and the photograph of his mother, Dorothy Shakespear Pound, appear by kind permission of Omar Pound. Some of these drawings can be found in THE DYING SORCERER, Omar Pound's most recent collection of poems published in Canada by Tarlane Editions and available from Box 135, St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, B2G 1C0. (Priced at \$9.95 Can. and \$7.95 U.S.)

About the Author OLIVIA TEMPLE

Olivia Temple is an artist who has had one-man shows in London and whose work may currently be seen in mixed exhibitions at Clarges Gallery in London, and at the Nevill Gallery in Bath. Her next one-man show will be in London in 1986.

