

SAUK CITY, WISCONSIN

21 March

Dear Howard,

All thanks for your letter. ... I am just sending an air-mail special to Long at 230 West 97th Street, without knowing whether this is still his address: I found it in an old letter of HPL's dating 1927. If it is not, will you get Long on the telephone and ask him to telephone in turn to his own address and redirect that letter? Please. It contains a letter to Barlow for forwarding, though your note reached me in time to change the address on an earlier letter to RHB. As for Barlow, I believe I can work around him. Of course, I am not desirous of obtaining any of Lovecraft's mss. with any view to anything but publication. And I believe there is a surviving aunt who is none too well off, and who might be able to use royalties, et al. Barlow is I am sure a homo; from what I have heard, so was the late minister-weird taler Henry S. Whitehead. And anybody with a mandarin moustache is vulnerable to the kind of flattery, larding I can do very well. So let us to begin with not to show any open animosity. Barlow is the kind of chap who exists apparently only for the droppings of the "great", always after galleys, proofs, mss. etc.; so no doubt he does mean as you suspect to make off with HPL's things. But never fear that he will retain anything for very long, because if there is anything valuable there, anything the rest of the gang should know or have access to, little Augie will get his hooks on it if he has to make a special trip to Florida to do it. Sub rosa, please. The fact is, I believe I can persuade Scribners or some other topnotch publisher to issue an omnibus volume of HPL's work, and I intend, frankly, to back it with my other books' income if it is necessary. At any rate, I shall guarantee their expenses. ... How like Lovecraft to spend his energy detailing a diagnosis! And you can tell me nothing about how people took advantage of him; I know. I have written him time and again that he needed a strong guiding hand, and, believe me, would have had it had I ever descended upon him. Such a waste of his life! Such a waste of his talent -- in revising the crap people handed to him! What irony, what bitter bitter pathos! I am still too damned depressed

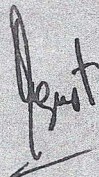
ii.

to do a thing, cannot remember when last I felt so badly! I have gone over all his letters, making a list of titles he mentioned, and have some 50, including the two major rhyme titles - Psychopompos and the Fungi. He was never certain of the merit of his work; and often he did his mss. irreparable damage by this uncertainty. A suggestion that this or that paragraph be changed, that motivation be made stronger or more subtle was enough to arouse in him a profound distrust of the entire story, and nothing was ever done. The Milwaukee teacher is M. W. Moe, whose address I have. ... The point about those five mss. -- do you know, are they new stories? If so, it becomes vitally imperative that they be got hold of. The last stories I have record of HPL's writing are The Shadow Out of Time, The Haunter of the Dark, The Thing on the Door-Step, and just before that latter, the Dreams in the Witch-House. His own lack of faith was justified time and again by the occasions on which Don, Schwartz, and I have landed mss. for him. I got Wright to take no less than three, and I know that Don landed one at least with AS and persuaded W. to take the Call of Cthulhu.

Of course you can do nothing else, Howard. Keep me informed, that's all. Especially of the opinion of others in the circle. Please inform them all that I have the best chance of seeing justice done to Lovecraft's memory, so that there will be no annoying disagreements between his surviving friends to make things any more difficult for me. I intend to ask all of them for contributions to the biographical section which I hope to include in the book. I have written Long, as above. Moreover, I have decided to do a precise duplicate of the letter enclosed in Long's to Barlow and send it to Providence. One should reach him.

Meanwhile, I wish to God I could shake this profound grief.

All best to you and Connie, always, and thanks for your promptness,



129. (LOVECRAFT) Original two page letter from August Derleth to Howard Wandrei, dated March 21, 1937. On Derleth's elaborate, personal, stationary featuring a duotone illus by Frank Utpatel, and w/original Derleth stationary envelope. Lengthy letter w/great HPL Circle content. Derleth begs for Wandrei's help in getting HPL's manuscripts together, finding addresses of Barlow, Long, etc. Many mentions of unpub. HPL titles, omnibus plans, etc. Also some scandalous allegations about Barlow, Arkham author Henry Whitehead, and plans to get rights to HPL stories from Lovecraft aunt in need of cash. Much about HPL's style, grief at his death, etc. A great display set.