





Author's own copy - pres - copy

Uncle Doug. from all at No. 40.  
Christmas 1935.

1/99

005-OF-Series

581  
Raw

Verl Series

250~



*This edition consists of  
ninety-nine copies, all  
signed by the author, of  
which this is no.*



*An Epistle to a Friend*

TO A FRIEND

BY JOHN WOOD

PRINTED BY J. WOOD

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

BY J. WOOD

PRINTED BY J. WOOD

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

BY J. WOOD

PRINTED BY J. WOOD

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

BY J. WOOD

PRINTED BY J. WOOD

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

BY J. WOOD

PRINTED BY J. WOOD

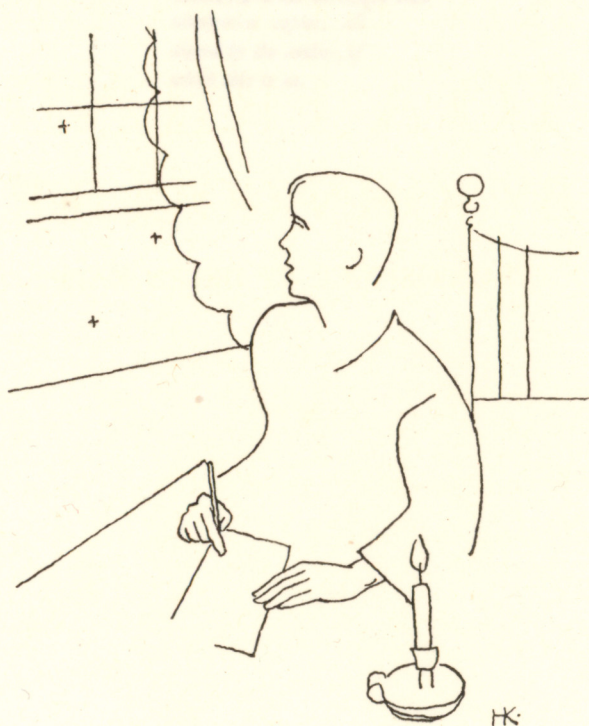
IN THE CITY OF LONDON

BY J. WOOD

PRINTED BY J. WOOD

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

BY J. WOOD





AN EPISTLE  
TO A FRIEND  
BY JOHN COLLIER

FRONTISPIECE BY HELEN KAPP

THE ULYSSES PRESS

20 BURY STREET, LONDON W.C.1 • 1932

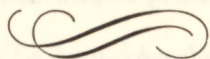
AN EPISTLE  
TO A FRIEND  
BY JOHN JOHNSON  
WITH A PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

*Published January 1932  
Printed in Great Britain*





## AN EPISTLE TO A FRIEND



*Hill-top inn; iron-bed chamber  
Smelling of ice; last of December;  
Stars crackling down to window-sill,  
Sapphire midnight, and so still  
The drenching cold strikes out no shiver,  
The candle shines for ever and ever.  
The mile-off barrow whitely burns  
With star-lit frost: the dead man turns  
Eastward, the hill turns, my thoughts turn too,  
Outstrip the rest, but catch not you:*

*For, as the earth-loving meteors  
Which start from midst the charted stars,  
Swoop free, but, entering grosser air,  
Fall as unheeded dust, these are  
Fore-doomed to fail when they descend  
Into your mind, my foolish friend:  
That mind in whose loud foggy night  
Cheap Chloe flares like naphtha light.  
Well may she singe the sorry put  
Who after such must toil and trot!  
What's left, hot Chloe's charcoal, then  
The devil shove his brazier in,  
Not for that sin which she'll repay,  
But for your cool "engaged that day."  
Engaged! and so cannot repair*



*To these chaste hills, and this pure air,  
Where in white field and jewelled blade  
A like decay is stainless made;  
Where in the robin'd, hollied wood  
Glow's redly all your hope of good;  
Where in the round of beef one sees  
A tower and fort against disease,  
Whenceforth, all ill's in chinks to bang,  
It sends its lighter skirmish gang,  
Batter, mustard, garden stuff,  
Bread, cheese and beer, till, "Hold! Enough!"  
Cries paunch, "You'll all obliterate  
The remnant of the foe, whose state  
Three hours and more agoe was shaken  
By burst of egg and cut of bacon."*

*“Yes, hold!” cries jolly paunch, “and leave  
Something for supper to achieve.”*

*Content, the knife and fork I lay  
Aside, trim pipe, and bless the day,  
And stroke the chin whereon the fat  
Piles up two fingers deep, and pat  
The cheek that smooth and rosy gleams  
As Chloe’s words, and Sotling’s dreams.*

*But he, because he comes not here,  
Eats not such beef, drinks not such beer,  
Keeps town on bright or rainy day,  
His tallow wastes, his lungs decay.  
Soon shall a feverish flush begin  
To burn upon a cheek so thin,  
So lacking flesh and blood, you’d swear*



*The skull glows like a gas-fire there:  
Soon he shall cough, and, coughing, spit  
His heart's blood up, at night he'll sweat,  
Each morning like dead Lazarus stare,  
All day like botchy Lazarus fare,  
At meals, like Famine's self, he'll faint  
At taste of food, and puff and pant  
More his uneasy bed to reach  
Than I these heights of chalk and beech.  
So shall his spirit wane and set  
Till, bankrupt, he pays Nature's debt,  
Two ounces in the pound! so spare  
His corpse shall be: and all declare  
His soul, like my grandsire, has straight  
To warm clime fled, and left estate*

*So eaten, rotten, wasted, drowned  
In debt, six feet of free-held ground  
Is more than is its worth, so he  
Must share a pit with thirty three  
Paupers of his dark slum, all who  
This season died of age or snow,  
Whom most he loathed, whom most his jeers  
Pursued when they rode off on hearse.  
They'll pinch him . . . .*

*What? You shake? Have I  
Woke your dull mind by prophecy?  
Fear not: as leanest debtors have  
Some days of grace, their homes to save,  
Your only home, your carcase, shall  
Be safe if yet you'll amend, though all*



*Chloe's attendants crouch to spring  
(Foolish!) upon the worthless thing.  
Come hither: where in star-quiet skies  
A crash of cock-crow peals and dies,  
To greet the little naked moon,  
Sparkling in mid-heaven alone,  
Waking the world's white sleep with dream,  
Bidding hush my thoughts, my candle-flame.*







*Typography, printing, and binding*  
by the SHENVAL PRESS









