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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY 40208

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Mr. Robert Penn Warren  
2495 Redding Road  
Fairfield, Connecticut  
06430

Dear Mr. Warren:

As an undergraduate at the University of Kentucky six years ago, I became intensely interested in your poetry and prose, and I must have known then that your work would ultimately be the subject of my doctoral dissertation. I am presently a graduate student at the University of Louisville, and that dissertation is now beginning to take shape.

Ten days ago I received permission from Mrs. McCann, the manuscript librarian at UK, to look at the papers you have placed there. Since then, I have made five trips to Lexington and shall continue to go on a regular basis with your approval of my project. Although the primary topic of my dissertation was initially a study of your poetry, the first order of business seems to be a thorough cataloging of Kentucky's holdings since there is an abundance of material but only preliminary-finding lists. I have merely begun that process and am well aware that as I pursue this investigation the topic of my final work may change: for example, the manuscripts, transcripts and tapes for Who Speaks for the Negro? would make an exciting study in and of themselves.

Since I am the only person now working with your papers, Mrs. McCann has tentatively agreed to allow me to pursue my study to its termination without interference. Of course, I have not Xeroxed any of your materials, nor have I used them in any way beyond the note-taking stage.

I should like now to ask your permission to use the Kentucky holdings for (1) a publishable catalogue and (2) a doctoral dissertation. If I discover material for an article, I shall write for your permission to use that material for purposes other than the catalogue and dissertation. You may be assured that with my high regard for your work I shall treat your papers with the utmost respect, seeking scholarly precision at all times. My two directors, Professors Leon V. Driskell and Edward R. Hagemann, will, no doubt, see to the diligence and success of my work.