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# Letter from Patty with the poem Portrait of a Poet

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Dear Jim,

Thanks for proof of the pudding. I guess my favorite is "University" because I could almost see and feel it in those beautiful clothes you put on it. However, if you're going to reflect on yourself so reproachfully, you'll have to permit a little larceny from an indignant fan:

PORTRAIT OF A POET

Your mirror lacks your depth,  
lacks the signature of self esteem,  
shows you only your naked face but  
creates for others the character  
of the inner eye. You are far more than  
what you are to the reflection. Break  
the glass and behind it the labels of love.  
Who cares who said, "I have traveled widely  
in Concord?" when it is your tracks others  
will follow and your shadow on the landscape  
of other minds that makes unforgettable landmarks.  
Your roots don't show. They grow too deep  
in the earth. A swollen seed, hatching egg,  
a helper dropping her first calf, the pain  
of something broken, life draws  
a first breath---you have seen it  
and therefore so do we also.  
As you look into the glass, no vision  
shines out for you but for us the halo  
of the spirit that you do not see.  
You lean toward tomorrow, no bricklayer  
without bricks, no newsboy trying to collect,  
no empty-pocketed old farmer, though  
impatient for another year, even as you  
give new sight to other eyes.  
The mirror face is a life story  
sung to the sound of music.  
Poet: Know thyself.

Love to you and Meryl from E. and me.

