flexible style. You took on a difficult assignment, and deserve commendation for your daring. You are right, I think, in feeling that it is too easy and fashionable to scoff at Longfellow, and right, as well, to compare his "popular" poetry to that of Kipling—though I would immediately add, not to that of Burns, who rejoices in a deep irony of the lower classes, a kind of pastoral and bitter knowingness; nor to Herrick, whose least efforts are classical in style and devotedly Jonsonian as well as Catullan.

Though, as I said, I have not read the essay quite through, I noted one or two things along the way that gave me pause. I hope you will not mind my pointing them out. On your p. 76 you write, "In Voices of the Night Longfellow created an influential new archetype in American culture—the poet professor. . . . Although the New Critics despised Longfellow, these poet professors were his cultural descendants. There is another side of Longfellow's version of the poet professor that has been influential." I find something disingenuous, tendentious and mistaken here, all for the sake of a petty irony involving the condescension of the New Critic Poet Professors to one who was, by your choice of language ("descendants") their forebear. But this is not strictly true. Longfellow was appointed at Harvard as a Professor of Languages, not of Poetry, and his poetic career was as independent of his professorial duties as Wallace Stevens' was of his duties as an insurance executive. By way of contrast, Ransom was appointed to his job at Kenyon, and Warren to his job at Yale precisely because they were practicing writers. At the time of Longfellow's academic career, there were few if any programs devoted to "creative writing" anywhere in the country. There were few even in my undergraduate days (the early forties) and such programs, as well as the faculty who teach them, are a fairly late growth and development, and it is faulty to trace them to Longfellow.

[. . .]

p. 82, "Longfellow, like the Elizabethan lyricists, understood that if a poet keeps the sense simple he can make music compellingly complex." I find myself filled with resistance to this collocation, and the statement itself; it grossly and dangerously oversimplifies. The subtlety, dexterity, emotional range and richness of allusion in the lyrics of Jonson and Campion, to take only two examples, is so far beyond the range of Longfellow as to be both pathetic and laughable. The writing of lyrics to be set to music does indeed require special skills and a careful sense of a limit to the complexities that can be allowed if intelligibility is to be hoped for. At the same time it is worth remembering that so densely packed and knotted a poet as Donne wrote songs, and they are very good. On the same page the lines of "The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls"

need only be compared with some of the lyrics of Tennyson to see how feeble they are.

Finally, p. 84. " . . . 'Mezzo Cammin' and 'The Jewish Cemetery at Newport' (the latter surely one of the great American poems of its century. . . ." I think I might have allowed this to pass unremarked had I not recently examined the second of these poems with some care, having been assigned to read it in public. It is a poem with serious blemishes. To begin with the slightest one which is grammatical, consider the second stanza with its confusion of third-person-plural pronouns. "Their" in the first line refers to the buried Jews; "their" in the second refers to the trees. (There is another third-person-plural pronoun in the third line.) This grammatical awkwardness could easily have been avoided, and would have been by a more scrupulous poet. More seriously, consider the fifth stanza

> "Blessed be God! for he created Death!"
> The mourners said, "and Death is rest and peace";
> Then added, in the certainty of faith,
> "And giveth Life that never more shall cease."

The last line of this stanza is a totally unwarranted Christian interpolation. There is only the most fragmentary authority (based on the summoning of Saul's ghost by the Witch of Endor) for any Jewish belief in an afterlife, a belief that is almost entirely ignored in Jewish religion, but central to Christianity. The point is that if Longfellow is going to write a poem that requires background knowledge, he ought to take a little trouble about it. (The same sort of carelessness went into the composition of "The Skeleton in Armor," in which Longfellow built his poem on the slender historical supposition that both the ancient tower at Newport and the skeleton in armor found near Falls River, MA, were thought for a while to be Norse.)

But what is most distressing about the poem under discussion is the final stanza. It has about it all the cool antiquarian and philosophic remoteness of one who might be writing calmly and aloofly about the Phoenicians or Pithecanthropus Erectus. There is a vaguely regretful but supremely calm and untroubled feeling about an extinct species, bolstered perhaps by Darwinian confidence in the survival of the fittest, and assured in its sense of the absoluteness of these evolutionary laws. If one were to judge only by Longfellow's poem, one could easily assume that the last of the Jews had perished, along with