

me wrestling with an almost impossible task.
We're getting out a very elaborate catalog to
go with a big Samuel Finley Breese Morse
exhibition at Nat'l History Museum. At
the last moment, when the printer was waiting
impatiently for copy, the Council of Nat'l
Academy (I am on it) - found it impossible
to use a life of Morse sent us by Nat'l
Museum. And as I was the only member
present who had ever written a book,
I was asked to save the day by
writing a life of Morse in 48 hours!

Started Wednesday evening, as soon as
I returned from the meeting, and (after
submission first to Mr Hervey, (who wept
over it, blessing him) then to our President
Mr Lockman, who said not a word
need be altered) - I dictated it
to his secretary on Friday after
lunch, & handed it to the printer
at 3 P. M.!

Haven't dared look at, or think of
it, since - fearing to find all sorts
of errata & bad omissions - but
what can one do in less than 2 days?

I got writer's cramp still, so
~~no~~ more now, from you
Very grateful Brendie

356 WEST 22ND STREET
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New Year's Eve - 49

Laurie Darling:

Here's (metaphorically
speaking) drinking your health
& happiness in 1950!

It was swell of you to write
when you were so rushing
busy; swell of you to have
the lady in C. S. send me the
gorgefferous wreath which
glows on my door; swell
of you to pick out a book
which you well knew would
fill me with exquisite pleasure.
Those shells! I shall never
get over the prodigality of Nature!

Think of those exquisite shells-

P.S. Got a box of pink Texas grapefruit - but no card
in it. Might have been either you or A.V.H.? Have
written the dealer to tell me, so I can say thanks.

patterns, not only beaded deep beneath the sea, but most of them even covered with a viscous wrapping of membrane so that even the passing fish sees nothing but a blob of muck!

It is a book to which I shall turn, time & time again, when my spirits are low & the world looks a grim place. Thank you, darling!

I sent you not one blessed thing except thoughts & love.

But I do hope Christmas was truly Christmasy with you & Betty — a sweet time of relaxation after long months of jobs well done.

Whatever gifts I did send were all to the "have-nots", of which there seem to be an increasing number among my friends &

acquaintances!

Well, I didn't get a single prize on the medal competition, but thank the Lord I've at least been able to make a start on the first of my big heads — Selen. But how I wish he didn't have mustache & beard! A mustache completely covers that delicious corner of the mouth that expresses so much, & that is the birthplace of the smile — the mustache insists on growing down toward the jaw-line; how can I show the corner of the mouth going up, without using the undercutting that is taboo! A painter could do it, by making the hair half transparent, but the sculptor cannot resort to such tricks.

Speaking of the painter — this past week saw

For Laura

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Quote from Shirley's letter:

"It is your big package to me that is superlative — the photographs and the subjects. I had hoped some day to see a regular-size photo of the F.R., but to have these two big beauties — I shall prize the new addition to my B. P. collection. And how exquisite the torso is in reproduction. It seems to bring out the modeling even more than in the plaster, so I shall gloat over them. Laura sent us a gorgeous snow-silhouetted tree for a Christmas-card."