A constant process of adjustment is going on about the past--every ingredient dropped into it from the present must affect the whole. Now what Mr. Eliot says about the sequence of works of art [in "Tradition and the Individual Talent"] seems to be equally true of the sequence of events or even of pages or paragraphs in a novel. . . . but I know of no novel that makes use of this constant readjustment among the members of any sequence. ---Elizabeth Bishop, "Dimensions for a Novel," 1933

Some authors do not muse within themselves; they “think”---like the vegetable-shredder which cuts into the life of a thing. Miss Bishop is not one of these frettingly intensive machines. Yet the rational considering quality in her work is its strength---assisted by unwordiness, uncontorted intentionality, the flicker of impudence, the natural unforced ending. ---Marianne Moore commenting on "The Map" and two other poems by Bishop that Moore had chosen for publication in Trial Balances, 1935

"Their purpose (the writers of Baroque prose) was to portray, not a thought, but a mind thinking. . . . They knew that an idea separated from the act of experiencing it is not the idea that was experienced. The ardor of its conception I the mind is a necessary part of its truth."---Bishop, quoting the critic M. W. Croll, in a letter to Donald Stanford, November 20, 1933

A sentence in Auden's Airman's Journal has always seemed very profound to me ---I haven't the book here so I can't quote it exactly, but something about time and space and how 'geography is a thousand times more important to modern man than history'---I always like to feel where I am geographically all the time, on the map,---but maybe that is something else again. ---Elizabeth Bishop, draft of a letter, 1948

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror’s magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
     And music went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
     The Lady of Shalott.
---Alfred Lord Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott," 1832

To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.
---William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence," c. 1800