

Dec. 3rd. 1966.

Dear Mr St John,

I find your letter most amazing.

It will be difficult to answer, for whilst I am glad to answer your questions, I have no wish to share memories with posterity.

Ernest and I were very good friends.

I always felt close to the whole Hemingway family. His sister Ursula and I remained in touch thru the years - and I probably had one of the last letters written before her death.

I first met the Hemingways when I was thirteen or fourteen years old. I used to visit at their cottage at Walloon Lake.

Dr Hemingway was a wonderful man and made a deep impression on me. I remember Leicester as little more than a baby - being looked after by everyone and Carol as a beautiful little girl. Marlene was a beautiful big girl - with admirers hanging about. Ernest was usually off with friends. I had a wonderful time with Sunny and Ursula.

When Ernest came home from Italy, we all listened in awe to the tales of

of his adventures. Being older he paid more
little attention to us. He was always like
an admired older brother.

When Ernest decided to stay in Peluskey
we invited to try his hand at writing - it
was only natural that he should take me
to the High School dances and parties.
He was often at our home. Our friendship
grew, for we could talk things out.
He read his stories to me and we were
sad together when rejection slips arrived.

But there was no romance. I was a
very young seventeen with college ahead.
The following year I did go to college and
soon after that Ernest married. I never
met his wives or children. I did have a
few letters thru the years and he did come
to see us. It was just before the publication
of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He liked my
husband and children, and it was a nice
reunion.

I think he wrote twice after that. I
destroyed all his letters. As he became
more famous I felt that perhaps they
might gain interest as public property, and
I didn't want that to happen.
As for the story in *Go, One Time*, I

came to realize it was just another of his
"spite" stories, of which there were too many.
Whenever he felt real or imagined rejection -
he struck back by writing a story. Feeling
that my mother was against our friendship
(imagined - not real) he wrote the story.
Later he asked me to forgive it, and I did.
I didn't resent it too much or think too
much about it, probably because my
mother didn't. I am sure Ernest came
to regret the "spite" stories deeply.

I have told very few people that I
ever knew Ernest. (m. I didn't like to call
him Slim as many did in those days)
The Ernest I knew bears little resemblance to
the image he created of himself over the
years. I think that is the image he
wanted to live, and I have no wish to
change it by giving any of my memories.

I also believe that no one - even with much
study - can give a picture of someone they
have not known personally. Spirit has to
be felt - not analyzed. I was interested
in Ernest as a person - not the author.

I am glad to know the friendship meant
enough to him to remember me as you describe.

Perhaps with a few changes in the sequence of
events in both our lives it might have worked
out that way. But it didn't. There was
never any discussion of marriage and
certainly no thought of it in my mind.

But back there where I am seventeen⁺eighteen -
he remains a vivid memory of one of
the nicest people I have ever known -
very sensitive and very vulnerable.

I hope this answers your questions.
Since my few people know my address here,
I can narrow my guess. But I don't mind.
It is nice to hear about people I used to
know in Petaluma. I haven't been back for
many years. My life has been very full
of varied experiences, with full measure of
joy and sorrow.

I wish your success with your venture,
but I feel too much has already been
written about Ernest Hemingway. With
too few drops of truth.

Sincerely,

Margie B. Main
(Mrs Sidney G)

Permanent address

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