

Jan. 6th, 1967.

Dear Mr StJohn, (I feel I should call you Don, since you know so much about me.)

If your book is as interesting as your letters, you should have a best seller. Your letters act as a ⁱprimer, reaching for things in my memory long below the surface. I am so glad to hear about Bill. He sounds exactly as I might have imagined.

I do trust you about the pictures, but they are in an old kodak book with many things of no interest to you. Perhaps I can take out pages. Sid still hasn't sent the book, but he will. I also have a fairly large picture of grandmother's house as it used to look. I thought of having a glossy print made for you, but if you prefer I will send the picture.

Grandmother was a larger influence in Ernest's life than meets the eye. As I told ~~x~~ you, he wrote me that she was the most wonderful woman he ever met. He would visit with her while I did school work. I was the type to do my school work no matter who was there. I think he brought Hadley to call on her after I had left for college. She was the one who had the picture painted of the church at Hortons Bay, as a wedding gift. I think that was the picture copied in H EMINGWAY IN MICHIGAN.

I feel that you are still making the error of trying to find some element of true fact in the story THE END OF SOMETHING . You still see in it a romance that developed. In life it was a potential romance that didn't. In those days, each day seemed to me a new clean page and the unknown things ahead more exciting to think about than any known person or reality. When I reached the time for realities, ~~Er~~ Ernest was no longer near. I believe it was the same for him, for the remembered conversations were about a future when he would be a famous writer and I someone on the sidelines admiring. I never

pictured myself as a part of his future, but we were to always be friends. I had much more exciting things pictured for myself.

In real life there was never a brush off, as you call it. We parted as friends in Petoskey. When Ernest walked down the hill from grandmother's house, whistling- that last time I saw him there, we didn't know it was to be a last time. In those days there were problems of transportation. I will never know exactly why Ernest wrote that story, just as I will never know whether the friendship would have grown into a deeper relationship with a different sequence of events. There was no element of brush off when I saw Ernest in Florida. We exchanged a few friendly, understanding letters. I always intended writing again. I left his last letter unanswered, as was the pattern I knew he liked. I wanted to write when I heard he was sick, but Mary didn't know me, so I feared she wouldn't understand. Just as our friendship had no special point of beginning, it had no ending. Our friendship was truly that, probably because the Marjorie of those days was without knowledge or interest in sex. Perhaps Ernest saw in me the potential of the person I had become when he saw me in Florida, but I have no way of knowing.

I will always be glad to answer your questions or talk with you, even another eight hour stretch. I have always wanted to get across to someone a picture of the Ernest of those days. It must have continued to live someplace under the protective shell of masquerade.

As you can see, my typing leaves much to be desired, but it is better than my messy writing.

Cordially,

Margie M.

Notes;

The inclosed clipping is my favorite review about Ernest. You may keep it if you don't have one like it.

The fact that I was not in on the nicknaming shows that I was not one of the gang. I was an admiring by-stander. I do remember all the name changes. When I became "Barge the Mump", I felt I had arrived. I later became " Red".

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Mr D.M. St John
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