

Jan. 27, 1967

Dear Marjorie:

I am remarkably lucky, I think, in our correspondence. I say this in the hot afterglow of receiving from you today your third person appraisal of that other person, the Marjorie Bump of 1919-1920, and indeed the even much younger Marjorie Bump. I so appreciate this virtuosity of yours. It is part of the creative process which you use without thinking much of it. I mean your putting these thoughts not only in [crossed out] text of conversation, not only in the rather harsh form of question and answer via letters but also in the form of scenes vignettes and third person appraisal. This is useful for change of pace as well as providing the exactly right format for different kinds of thoughts and descriptions. As I read your well-disciplined picture of those other Marjorie Bumps I thought of how difficult it is to express some thoughts in writing - as opposed to conversation, for example. I seemed to have no trouble talking to you, even about the most intimate things. There is something about the circumlocution of viz a viz that defies writing. I mean you sit there, feeling each other's mood and tolerance and beating about the bush and being darn sure you are not offending; one becomes almost Japanese in one's indirecti on and it is possible to cover very delicate ground without a jarring note. Thus I was surprised when in one of your letter you mentioned how amused your daughter was that I had asked you a certain question - and do you know that question must have been phrased so circuitously that I couldn't remember phrasing it myself and yet you understood it and cheerfully answered it and even laughed about it with your daughter. That's what I mean about the limitations of writing. It is hard to be as devious or as indirect or as tactful as in the give-and-take of conversation. For this reason I have been a little timid at times at just how something I have said would strike you, possibly to be misunderstood or cause irritation. I go to this peculiar length now to try and clear myself with you if I have seemed somehow gauche in the past or should be in the future. I suppose part of my reason for this little sermonette of mine is to knock down if I can what I gather is a kind of reluctance to questions, not a downright resistance, but a kind of gradually building and understandable thing. The appraisal, (horrid phrase) just received is simply marvelous; I can't tell you really how dear it is to me; but there is such a thing as getting things straight and elaborating a view from an external vantage point; and more than that, I suppose, there is always the hope that a question, even a sassy one, will trigger another scene. I would like more than anything, now that I have this much, to weave together a kind of sequential pastiche of that summer and winter in 1919. This may seem like a small part of a big life, but it is the important part to me. I will take one scene from 1919 or 1920 in the life of the developing Hemingway (or the life of some-one close to him) than a book of anecdotes about a grizzled member of the celebrity jet set(who is not really Hemingway to me anyhow, as you know) All of this as an introduction to the accompanying sheets [crossed out] which I ask your continued forbearance. Please forgive any unwanted abrasiveness and at least chalk it off partly to the limitations of correspondence. And ignore what you want. Or ignore it all if it seems wrong.

You say [crossed out] the important part of your friendship with Hem lasted about 3 months. If you had to say which 3 those were in 1919 which would they be? (Hem left for Toronto very early in Jan. of 1920.)

Since, from your own point of view, your relationship with Hem had no romantic content or any bearing on the future, what do you think it meant to Hem? Do you think it could have been only palship for him? He was, after all, a virile 20 years of age. Was he such a paragon or did he perhaps have other outlets do you think? Or were you, because of your youthfulness and immaturity a kind of [crossed out], a kind of uncritical, admiring young person with the attractiveness of femininity but none of its demands?

THE END OF SOMETHING and THREE DAY BLOW were published in 1925. Do you really think Hem could have felt spiteful that long after the fact, or that spite would have been crossed out] one as poetically disciplined as Hemingway - or that the story would have come off if spite had been the basic motive? Did Hem admit later, in 1939, that the stories were motivated by spite? There was talk, I remember, of "forgiveness." What was the forgiveness for - for using the name Marjorie and for other identifiable references - or was Hemingway regretting an element of admitted meanness in the stories?

How did Hem know how to get in touch with you in 1939? From a recent letter from you? What was the triggering event that brought you two together for the first time (communications-wise, that is) after you last saw him in 1920? I forget - did he hear of your marriage?

I forget if you ever decided how you possibly had hurt Hem. ("I must have hurt him," I hear you saying.)

Did he discuss his forthcoming trip to Toronto with you? (I remember the last you saw of him that winter he was walking down the street in the snow whistling and everything was okay.)(Looking back on it now from your present knowledge of men and women is there any possibility he felt, if you'll pardon the expression, unrequited?)

Do you think Hem stayed on in Petoskey that winter partly because he hoped to hook on with the Connablers in Toronto or was that a fluke?

Did Sidney Main read THE END OF SOMETHING and THREE DAY BLOW when it came out in 1925 and discuss it with you?

Can you remember a subject or scene relating to the brief moment in 1939 when Hem and you were alone and he looked at you with the same eyes that you remembered and dropped his little play acting?

Have you been able (in this period of forced recall) been able to remember anymore about your very first meeting with Hem? I mean does a scene come back, the kind of day it was, anything Hem might have said, whether you joked about it afterward? Did you not fish a single time with Hem, maybe off the dock, and did you ever talk fishing, aside from that first time? Did he ever fish with girls that you know of? With a sister possibly.

Do you remember any of the TALL stories that Hem told you in those early days? One story he told a George O'Neal in Petoskey that winter was that one of the snapshots he took at the front was blurred because he was hit by a bullet just as he tripped the shutter. Another was that his father had sent him [crossed out] to Petoskey for the winter to help his malaria. He also told Dutch Pailthorp a story about someone like himself who was caught in a triangle with a member of the fierce Arditi and his wife- also about his friendship with a Red Cross nurse.

Did Hem every speak slyly of his drinking or talk knowingly of wine? Did he ever see you when there was any suggestion of recent drinking?

Do you remember when Mrs. Wesler Dilworth's baby was born? I mean the year.

What was the year you went back to Horton Bar and stayed ar Mr. Ohle's house? That was the only time you went back I take it. (In other words you and Hem went back once each)

Can you remember how you first heard about the IN OUR TIME story collection? Was it from Dorothy Connable? It's a question of where you were in 1925, the fall. (What was it Dorothy said?)

What did your grandmother, who like Hem, think of the stories?

Did you see your family often after your marriage? I mean your mother. Would she come and stay with you? Were she and her mother close?

When did Grandfather Bump die?

Do you think Hem ever wrote a letter to Grandmother Bump? It would almost seem certain that he would at some time - and are your family heirlooms preserved somewhere?

Was Mrs. Hemingway, Hem's mother, the disorganized tyrant that most people thought her?

Do you personally think that Hem's writing belongs to the world great literature? What is [crossed out] your personal favorite among his works?

How is Pudge today? Did you take care of one of her children? Did Pudge like Hemingway? (I gather that Pudge was your only sibling.)

Although your mother was not really hostile to Hemingway is it possible that he thought she was and if so why? I gather she would not have reminded Hem of his own mother. Did she have any known attitude toward Hem's writing or did she, like his own family, think of him as a loafer? Might she have been alienated by his drinking or what she heard about it? Was she not like other mothers of Petoskey in being slightly concerned over the intactness of their daughters around an older man, a veteran?

Do you remember any more details of the incident in which you brought lunch to Hem and Bill? What was that fake lunch? Real lunch? Did you often get lunch for Hem and Bill? Was this a kind of job, like waiting on table, or just a personal favor for the boys?

Did Bill say anything to Hem or to you about waiting on table - before Hem said "I wish you wouldn't wait on table."? (I forget)

In connection with the Christmas brew drinking party at Bay Shore, do you think Hem counted you out because you were against drinking or because you were simply uninitiated?

Can you possibly remember what time of year it was that Hem visited you and Dr. Main in Ormond Beach in 1939? Did he mention Pauline or hint at Martha? And was anything said relating to his irritation at a writing friend (Harry Sylvester) who had helped suppress the showing of his movie, THE SPANISH EARTH, in Maine? (Trying to pin point this incident in time)

Did Hem seem genuinely interested in the Main children and did he pay any special attention to Barbara? What did your children think of him?

What was the year and month of your marriage?

Did you ever see Bull Smith in St. Louis when you went to Washington University? Was that kindergarten teaching you were studying?

Checking fact: You went to Florida in the summer of 1922 after finishing your second year at college - and got married about six months later?

Fact check: Roaring Rock, N.C.?

Is Sidney, Jr. a chemical engineer? and what is his responsibility?

Fact check: The three schools your three children went to? Didn't two of them get graduate degrees?

Has Dr. Main been incapacitated for long? Were you able to keep both housed and the servants during the crash?

Fact check: Both Dr. Main and Hemingway had brain trouble about same time? (Hem took his life in July of 1961)

Did Hem seem truly religious when you went to church services with him Petoskey or was it rather a kind of social function for him? Did he speak of the bible or seem to know it? Did he seem to be reverent in church? In those days did he betray any interest in the Catholic church or Cath-olic ritual? Did going to church with you originate with him or was it that all or most young people went to Sunday night services in those days? Did he seem to believe in a personal God or had war made him cynical about the eye-on-the-sparrow aspect of the Christian church?

What was it, honestly, do you think (of course one is not always sure about these things) that drew Hemingway to you - as opposed to other attractive young women available in Petoskey? Looks, wide-eyedness, admiration, unspoiledness?

Have any of the other stories that Hem read to you in 1919 come back to you? This is important since all this material was lost by Hadley in 1922 in Paris. I mean beyond the memory that he wrote you into a prize-fight story? DO you remember anything more about that one or whether it compared with Hem's prize-fighting story, FIFTY GRAND in his collected short stories?

What books can you remember that Hem suggested you read?

Was Grandmother Bump invited to Hem's wedding?

Do you realize now, long after, that Hem wanted acclaim not critical analysis when he showed off his stories? (D. Connable told me in Petoskey it still embarrasses her to remember the suggestions she made to Hem when he asked her how she liked something he'd written. She recalled he seemed stunned by her suggestions, but did not say anything. And yet, years later, in a letter, she detected a veiled reference to her temerity.)

What does your memory do with the quality of Hem's voice, especially when he was reading you his stories? About whether he seemed solemn or very deliberate or self-depraving or if his voice was slow or whether he tried for dramatic effects or emphasis or waited for laughs or peeked to see how you were taking it or if he seemed happy with his own writing or was basically dissatisfied?

Scene: The last snowy day in Petoskey when Hem went off whistling (If not included in earlier related comment.)?

You did take that picture of Hem in the Sam Brown belt? Others? Possibly that uniformed one of Hem pointing his pistol?

Do you think Hem may have combined actual experiences in his stories about you, Marjorie? I mean possibly spliced in a relationship with another girl or girls? Or simply made the rest up?

The 1920 Petoskey high school yearbook, I noticed the ad was McCabe-Boehm Co. of 416 Mitchell Street, formerly of 316 Mitchell Street. Was this still your mother's store, with Mr.

Graham connected with it, or was this a McCabe offshoot? When did Mr. Graham manage the store? ("We have changed our name. We have changed our place - but we still sell the very best in sporting goods and real good hardware.")

Do you remember anything more about Rev. Alburt? His first name?

Am I right in recalling the Hem attended your graduation? (This would have been in June of 1920 after his Toronto experience and your rift wouldn't it?) Was this before or after you went to the movies after seeing Ursula off in the train? (Gad, what does he take me for a taperecorder.)

The time you and Hem and Carl and Kate were together, would that have been in the late summer of 1919 do you suppose, or in 1920?

Note trouble: Was it Edward Van Every about whom you told Ernest (???) "he liked" you very much, at which point Hem reflected the young man might be interested in your inheritance? This would have been before Grandfather Bump died I guess.

Did you know that Hem played tennis with Irene Goldstein in the summer of 1920 and did you have any feelings about this?