

Monday, Feb. 6, 1967

Dear Marge:

Zapp, blop, Bingo, Wow, Smash, Plonk.

These, the trade mark sounds of Bat Man on TV, are the only way I can express my reaction adequately to your resounding answers to my big batch of questions.

It was terrific and wonderful and patient and long-suffering and far beyond the call of etc. and I guess you know I am grateful. I'm sorry I hadn't numbered the questions; it would have been easier; I suppose I didn't to keep it from looking like an out and out questionnaire.

Today I got some more letters, and I think your piece about the old days and about servants and the old rr trail is your best piece yet. It is very very good and I should think could be used as it. It certainly has the kind of flavor that is sought for. The best part of all this is that it is not done as by some oldtimer, someone who deplored the present and dreamed of a past impossible to recapture; rather the tone is that of a modern person who can relate the past to the present and who can pick out that part of the past that is evocative to the senses.

About Hem being younger than his years, you are only the second one who ever said that, I being the first. I know it is fashionable to think of Hem's great wisdom and sophistication but that is what comes through in the writer, not the young man, himself, about whom he was writing. In THREE DAY BLOW, particularly which you have not read, I think of Hem as about 15 years old, the bragging age, the old little boy age, the strictly non sophisticated age. He and Bill jaw as boys would jaw, not as you would expect of a returned war veteran and a college graduate. For Bill was three years older than Hem and in 1919 Hem was 20 and that almost has to be the year the story is about and it takes place, of course, right after THE END OF SOMETHING. I don't think Hem ever wanted to grow up, really. I think all his life he kept being surprised at this famous bearded, paunchy, wealthy, womanned character that was himself. He was the eternal amateur, for all of his vaunted writing professionalism, and that of course may in the end have been his charm. As you suggest, however, he found it increasingly easy to keep the wondering little boy away. Soon only the facade was left. The symbol remained and that which was symbolized had disappeared.

I'm going to send this out now to catch the pony express and because you are owed a letter; very much I owe you a letter. I'll get on with more tomorrow.

Don St. John

Monday, Feb. 6, 1967

Dear Marge:

Zapp, blop, Bingo, Wow, Smash, Plonk.

These, the trade mark sounds of Bat Man on TV, are the only way I can express my reaction adequately to your resounding answers to my big batch of questions.

It was terrific and wonderful and patient and long-suffering and far beyond the call of etc. and I guess you know I am grateful. I'm sorry I hadn't numbered the questions; it would have been easier; I suppose I didn't to keep it from looking like an out and out questionnaire.

Today I got some more letters, and I think your piece about the old days and about servants and the old rr trail is your best piece yet. It is very very good and I should think could be used as it. It certainly has the kind of flavor that is sought for. The best part of all this is that it is not done as by some oldtimer, someone who deplored the present and dreamed of a past impossible to recapture; rather the tone is that of a modern person who can relate the past to the present and who can pick out that part of the past that is evocative to the senses.

About Hem being younger than his years, you are only the second one who ever said that, I being the first. I know it is fashionable to think of Hem's great wisdom and sophistication but that is what comes through in the writer, not the young man, himself, about whom he was writing. In THREE DAY BLOW, particularly which you have not read, I think of Hem as about 15 years old, the bragging age, the old little boy age, the strictly non sophisticated age. He and Bill jaw as boys would jaw, not as you would expect of a returned war veteran and a college graduate. For Bill was three years older than Hem and in 1919 Hem was 20 and that almost has to be the year the story is about and it takes place, of course, right after THE END OF SOMETHING. I don't think Hem ever wanted to grow up, really. I think all his life he kept being surprised at this famous bearded, paunchy, wealthy, womanned character that was himself. He was the eternal amateur, for all of his vaunted writing professionalism, and that of course may in the end have been his charm. As you suggest, however, he found it increasingly easy to keep the wondering little boy away. Soon only the facade was left. The symbol remained and that which was symbolized had disappeared.

I'm going to send this out now to catch the pony express and because you are owed a letter; very much I owe you a letter. I'll get on with more tomorrow.

Don St. John