

[handwritten in pencil] Fri. Feb-10, 1967

Dear Don,

I have had to tell you about the compulsion under which I sometimes write, for I want you[crossed out n in black ink] to know that I am not really deserving of your thanks. I would have preferred to leave your first letter unanswered. I didn't want to tell you I would be in Florida. I had to, and an unexpected circumstance sent me east early. Perhaps you should thank the shades of my ancestors, and those of Ernest, with a common goal.

Ernest, like Faust, sold much of his soul as he gained fame. As long as he could drink he could stand it. When he could no longer drink, his world turned to darkness. He was afraid of the dark.

The twenty year old Ernest became, for me, like a lighted torch to follow. The people I met were measured by the yardstick of his standards. The books I read were measured by the standard of what I felt he would like or reject. He himself, in his life and writings, did not always measure up to the standards he had at twenty, and so I rejected those things. At twenty he wrote because he had to write, not [handwritten o in black ink] because he wanted fame. Although he was young in many ways, [crossed out t in black ink] he had the perception of the ages. I have never caught up with the Ernest Hemingway at twenty.

[handwritten with pencil] Marge -

Ernest, To me, was like a soul remembered from some past existence, but unable to reach in this one. Perhaps it was meant to be that way, for I would not have been able to survive his earthiness, either in his life or his art.

BX5434

Daytona Beach, Fla.

Mr Don. St John

Franconia

New Hampshire.

[stamp in the top right of the envelope reads "DAYTONA BEACH [indent] FEB10 PM 1967
FLA." [stamp in the inner top right corner of envelope reads "8 [cents sign] U.S AIR NAIL"]