

July 24, 1967

Dear Marge:

I pen this missive by dint of great moral fiber in as much as we are all overwhelmed by what is now being called Rome's worst hot spell on record. Day after day, it blisters away, at 95 to 100 degrees in the shade with abnormally high humidity. It is very depressing to the human spirit and to the will to work and it becomes clear to me how much we are all prisoners of our environment. No longer will I make fun of the manyana folks. Perhaps I would be one too given the same climatic conditions.

Right now, Ruth and I are about to flee to the Abruzzi, a fine range of mountains a few hours from Rome. We will leave for L'Aquila tomorrow early and perhaps stay four days. We are going by bus because a week ago our Volkswagen was smashed from the rear while I was at a light, by a Group Captain of the RAF driving a ten year old junkpile with a right hand wheel. Our dealings with this "gallant officer", as he was described to me by the British embassy, is forcing me belatedly to shift my backing from the RAF to the Luftwaffe. Aside from the money angle, (there were no important injuries) the important thing is that we are without a car and thus our pullman ride to L'Aquila.

Our stay has just been enlivened by a young (27) former peace corps girl paying us a week's visit, that is using our guest room (your room). Through her eyes we saw Rome again and a few things more, which is usually the case. Ruth went to Aida with Freya Olafson, camels, horses, everything but elephants. We took her for a swim 50 miles down the coast and got her an invitation to a castle, so that she would be able to one-up whoever cross-examined her on her trip. She was in our accident so that is a special point in her favor.

We are all about the same, except for the wilting. Danny is better, and is starting to look black again. Work does not go on apace and defy any red-blooded man to work in this hot town. Perhaps we will toot off to Switzerland in early August if we don't feel too flattened by our car episode.

I loved your last letter, and thank you for passing on Joy, Jr.'s comments. I am glad to know what kind of a life you are leading and how you are scheduling yourself in the future. I must say your letter sounds cool and refreshing (climate-wise) whereas mine will make you sticky I'm afraid....I've just finished Moby Dick in Italian and now start on Taras Bulba (boys' versions.). My talk and comprehension, however, continue to lag. How is it possible that I have lived in Rome all my life and still can't speak the language.

Love to you,