

July 30, 1968

Dear Marge:

I seem to be undergoing withdrawal symptoms, withdrawal from Europe that is. On the one hand it already seems very far away - it never happened, the Italian words don't come into my mind, the landscape is all gone, a second passed that I was away and then here I was back in prosaic New Hampshire worrying about paneling a room, restoring the grass where the new water line was put in and wondering if my trees would ever grow tall enough to obscure the highway. But on the other hand, instead of being back, now that Italy's gone, I seem to be somewhere in between and the work, the writing seems very hard to get at.

A piece I wrote a long time ago, an interview with Sunny Hemingway (Miller) was printed a long time ago and would you believe it has just come out in something called BEST MAGAZINE ARTICLES: JAN 1968. And yesterday there was a reference in the publisher's ad to a "delicious" visit with Sunny - all of which makes me very happy of course, although it is hardly a sensational accomplishment, but the fact is it all happened so long ago that I don't seem to be related to it. The whole business was before I met you and there is even a mention of Marge in the story, although it says nothing and of course reveals nothing because I didn't know you at the time. Sunny didn't like the story because I quoted her on an earthiness (not as earthy as Ernest's) that she didn't like. Actually she was very distant to me and the story isn't really bad because I do think she comes alive in it, even if not probably in her self-image.

Danny hipsters along, well in spirit and in beauty of head and in inclination to play, in everything but his ability to get around, and of course that condition does not improve. But we are learning how to work with it and how to handle expeditiously his occasional eccentricities of personal habits. Once you get used to an abnormal situation it isn't all that bad, and I only hope that we all realize that about each other as that old man with the scythe (or on a bicycle as Hem put it) catches up with us. The scythe man seems to be catching up to Harold I'm afraid, or else those forbidden milk shakes are too much for his cholesterol content. But we have a nice relationship now. Lately I have read two books that bore down hard on Hem, apparently because of his ungracious conduct in Movable Feast, and of course he deserves some rebukes for poor taste ala Stein, Ford and Fitzgerald, but none of these critics have tried to get at his writing -- only at his character. Harold Loeb, on the other hand, is smart enough to know that won't blow the man down and he keeps wondering out loud if Hem was really great or not; he hammers at Hem's repugnance for abstract writing and he claims Hem put in beech trees in the wrong places, but Harold seems to know he doesn't have a chance and I wind up with the feeling that Hem enriched his life, despite the hurt, and that he knows it. Well, enough for now. I hope you are well and happy and that your issue is likewise,

Love,