

Dec. 9, 1968

Dear Marge:

Sometimes when I ask dumb questions I hope you will not mind too much; it's just that I haven't done my homework enough. For instance I asked about Hem's nicknames and forgot one he used a lot: Red. I used to say to red-heads that I wanted to talk to and didn't know or just to be a barrel of laughs - Hi, Red --- by the papers. Cute, eh? This is so you'll have a few letters waiting for you in Calif - although I have probably missed the last pony express by this time.

Cold is what it is here. We've had our first near zero weather, and this is a kind of portent of the real weather we will have in Dec., Jan. Feb. and March - 2- and 40 below. What I judge things by is how easily my little Italian Volkswagen starts. It was balky at 10 above but now I hope I have the battery charged up well enough so that it will start as well as Ruth's car - a small economy Buick which is about ten times as big as the Volks. We got quite a jolt when ew returned from abroad to find what the Americans thought of as compact cars. But do you know just since I've been back in June, the Volks has already started looking littler to me and the American cars not so disgustingly huge as originally. It just shows howabsolutely lacking in this world is ~~mammm~~ such a value as absoluteism.

I am happy to report I have a daily flock of Evening Grossbeaks wintering with me - a rather large black and yellow bird to you, Miss Dixie. Also have one private little white throated sparrow (Peabody, Peabody, Peabody: the call) who somehow got lost and has forgotten to go south. And a flock of tree sparrows who will leave, alas right after Christmas. The Tree sparrow has a superman mark in his unstreaked breast. End of Audubon lesson, and remember, Marge, we do not have the cosmopolitan panoply of subjects to talk about here in the north country.

Ruth is heavily involved in running the college thrifty-gifty shop and is loving it. It's a great hit and the so-called beats of the college are actually a nice lot, including the Negroes who surprise the natives by seeming downright human. End irony. (The students, on their own, furnishing the paint) in a great barn-raising ant-hill mass, painted one of our two village stores, the one which is nice to them. But of course that kind of thing is not news to our great American press. I call the press, not the fourth estate (their self-name) but simply another arm of show biz, which is all right, I guess, but why must they pose as something else while they are making trouble hither and thither. Caution: I am not a reactionary, although I have switched back to the Repub party after the Goldwater hiatus. Of course Ruth voted for Humphrey, and I didn't dislike that gent either, actually. Opposite from most folks, I thought the country couldn't lose either way. I will look forward to having a technician run the country for a change, rather than a personali'

End of page and letter but not end of love,