

March 17, 1969

Dear Marge:

So glad to have that little map of those environs in Petoskey. It is really amazing, and something few people recognize, how much details like this help in the evocation of a certain point in time. Of course, you know, I have seen both your houses, at least from the outside and I have been up and down those streets and up past where himself stayed and several times I walked back down town to get the feel that he would have had in going to town or in going to the high school or in going to your house. Although at that time I had the idea he visited you in the Bump house rather than your grandmother's place. When I saw the houses (I think one time Dutch Pailthrop drove me in his car - did you know his wife fell last year and died without regaining consciousness? She was a nice lady; I guess they both had a problem with spiritus but she hid it well; I forget her last name, her maiden name, for the moment, but I was told her people had more money than old Judge Pailthrop. End digression) (Resume digression: Dutch has a beautiful new home on Menominee Beach, has his own roaring trout stream, and from his front yard can look across Little Traverse Bay to the hillsides leading to Resort Pike Road and Walloon Lake where our friend used to live. Coming back from town one time as a boy in a horse cart, young Hem looked back across the bay and could see the twinkling lights of Harbor Springs near where Dutch now lives. Dutch was one side of Hem, a very different side than yours or Bill's. He was rough in those days, I'm afraid, and thought only of girls, but the funny thing is, and don't get mad now, one of the first things he ever told me, long before I met you, was that it was his theory that Hem had written *The End of Something* to get even with you because you were impregnable, to put it in a way different than Dutch's. Because we are being literary may I go on to the additional vulgarity that Dutch said you were beyond Hem and himself because you were a, and I quote exactly now, a "Christer." According to Dutch young men were interested in other matters in those days. He never believed the story believed by the rest of the town to some extent that Hem was telling too much, kissing and telling. Just the opposite. And yet the last time I saw Dutch, a couple of years ago, Dutch seemed eager to clear up something with me. He had talked a lot about womanizing, he said, and that's what the world talked about in connection with Hem, and yet on profound reflection he didn't believe a word of it. Oddly, he said, Hem was not the type, and in any case, unlike other young men, never discussed women or conquests in the slightest way. Dutch came right out and said Hem was too shy and not much of a hand with women, certainly not the sly fox that old Dutch was. He went into all this because he had opened up with me in that hearty man to man way and by the time he got to know me more seriously he wanted to correct all the hogwash he had gotten off at Hem's expense. The closest that Hem ever came to talking about an actual woman with Dutch was in saying that *FAREWELL TO ARMS* was based on an actual experience but that the lady did not die. In this same field of thought, Dutch told me he had believed for years that Hem had had an affair with Irene Gordon (nee

Goldstein) There had been a big party one winter's night, either the winter of 1919-1920 or 1920-1921, out at Doc Ramsey's. It had snowed heavily, and Irene claims she and Hem made angels in the snow, which, it was explained to me you do by lying down in the snow and moving your armsuppaad down to form the wings. She told this to CarababBaker and it may be in his book next month. At that party, which Irene says was perfectly innocent and I believe her, were Homer Zipp, Dutch Pailthorp, Hem, Irene, Lina Green, Berenice Babbitt, Ruth Smith and one of Dr. Ramsey's sons, now dead. This was out in, don't make me dig into my notes, Bayville, where that kind of Chattaqua colony was. Well anyway, Dutch always thought the worst about Irene and Hem but it turned out not to be true. I guess this almost had to be the winter Hem went away if Dutch was so heavily involved since that is theonly time Hem saw him much. Later, the following summer, Hem saw some more of these people, and after that he left never to return except for his marriage in 1921. End second digression.)

I wonder now, talking in terms of the small evocative details, if anything returns of those stories I heard about you and Hem at the chocolate shop near the tracks. One of the Oneal boys told me about it first, how Hem used to have a soda with you there. Then another man, whose name I have somewhere and who was a soda jerk in the ice cream store in those days, told me that Hem used to sit in the shop in such a way that he could see if Mrs. Bump was coming and if, as she went to the hardware store, Hem thought she was going to come by the ice cream store, he would skedaddle off. This I'm inclined not to believe but it is hard to explain how these stories get made up in such detail. The young soda jerk couldn't remember a thing that Hem said or anything that he ate and he gave me the impression he was always broke. And yet this fits into the picture that other people give of Hem during the winter of 1919-20....

Do you know I even went into Hem's old room on state Street and talked with the daughter of his landlady. She had barely known Hem in those days but she remembered he typed a lot and that he was "crazy" about Marge Bump. That's all she could say, how crazy Hem was about Marge Bump. But when I asked her what she thought of Hem's literature, she answered:

"Pretty trashy wasn't it?"

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