

LOEB

REF.

July 15, 1969

Dear Marge:

I'm alive, fine and hope you are the same; and I thank you for your typically sensitive and kind reaction to Danny's death. And your invitation certainly has a great deal of allure for both of us. Probably nothing will come of our desire, however, but this doesn't mean that I don't appreciate it very much. In the back of our minds is a nebulous plan to buy or rent a camper and head for the northwest, which is a part of the country known least to both of us - and, regretfully, furthest from the southeast I must say. Ruth, of course, would also like to go to Mexico, in fact she would live there because friends are settled there, but this somehow does not appeal to me, although I wouldn't mind visiting you down there. Who knows, perhaps, we will go west and then swing down south, or, if the time is right, we might even find you in southern California -- if I had the courage to venture in a vehicle into the land of the fruits and the nuts.

In any case you are on my mind even if I haven't demonstrated same via the mails.

Since writing you and hearing from you last we have spent a week as the guest of Harold Loeb in Weston, Conn. You know who he is, of course, I guess, from my letters, i.e. the Robert Cohn of THE SUN ALSO RISES. Oddly, he finds Baker's bilious book about Hem very objectionable. His thesis is that Hem may be a louse but he is not that much of a louse and in any case he is not the man who comes out of Baker's big book. The Times today, in commenting about another biog, said it was, unfortunately, continuing in the Charles Baker tradition of plowing a life from birth to death and assuming that the man will be on hand for the reader at the end which, the Times said, is simply not so. Harold said the fallacy of Baker's method is that of the daily press of the U.S., that is that by presenting the bad in Hem with the good indiscriminately the impact is disproportionate because the bad in life is always more memorable in its impact upon us, and so instead of presenting a so-called objective 50-50 picture, something like 90-10 is more like what the result seems to be. In other words it is up to the biographer or critic to put things into proportion and not expect the simple recitation of the so-called facts to take care of this for the reader.....In any case, we had a delightful time with Harold and his 50-ish South African (white) wife, Barbara, who is his fourth too. They have eight absolutely Edenlike acres of green trees of every description, flowers in established and tastefully placed beds everywhere, a river-like lake before them when they eat and a squadron of Mallard and Wood ducks that squawk loudly for Barbara to feed them each morning. We had an aristocratic time, eating, sleeping, swimming, cocktailing with exotic people, Chinese, literary, etc., going into N.Y. once (not too bad) and paying my respects to my mother (97 in a nursing home), my brother, aunt, and so forth. Harold is about 78 I think and still writes well and is nice most of the time though he can be a little spoiled sometimes, like when he clicks the tv on and off with his remote clicker while the rest of us sit there in torment. A nice idea, being able to click life on and off; thank God, old Harold is not King Henry the eighth or few of us would wind up with our heads. But he would be sorry later

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Graham I Tensell
plumbing & Repairing

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