

Sunday

Jan 25 1970

My dear Don,

What you say about writers fits in with a paragraph I have just read in Marquand's WICKFORD POINT.

"A writer of fiction is usually the happier for his ignorance" (of other writers) "and better for having played ducks and drakes with his cultural opportunities. All that he really requires is a dramatic sense and a peculiar eye for detail which he can distort convincingly. He must be an untrustworthy mendacious fellow who can tell a good falsehood and make it stick. It is safer for him to be a self-centered egotist than to have a broad interest in life. He must take in more than he gives out. He must never be complacent, he must never be at peace; in other words, he is a difficult individual and the divorce rate among contemporary literati tells much."

Thomas Wolfe has never been a favorite of mine, perhaps influenced by the fact that I lived in Asheville during the HATE WOLFE years, not unlike the HATE HEMINGWAY years as instigated by the families of each.

About Ernest, it is strange how many things come to my attention to make me understand him better. It is almost like a directed plan starting with your first letter. Whether meant to be or not it is happening. I can now see his name without cringing.

Have just finished being depressed by re-reading some Fitzgerald, and am now discovering Tolkien. I am strongly drawn to Hobbits. I have always lived partly in a world of fantasy, so feel at home in it. However the people in my fantasy are above earthlings, not below. They have escaped the bonds of nature rather than being bound entirely by it. But reading Tolkien gives me a sense of security in the validity of fantasy, and a better understanding of earthlings who must exist between what is entirely earthbound and what is entirely outside; a part of each. Does any of this make sense? Up to now it has seemed foolish to try to erase poverty, sickness, death. Those things will always be with the earth. But I see now that we have to try with courage, even tho we don't expect success. Ho! Hum!

Glad you are both ingesting London as you are. It is my idea of travel to stay long periods of time in one place. But so far I am too much drawn here and there by family and their needs. I have sent for a book on freighters and may feel that lure. I would love the safe anchor of a ship so as not to wander too far from a home base. (Like a Hobbit)

Hope you both avoid the London flu. So far I've stayed well.
Love to you both.

Marge -

(Marge sounds too formal)

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