

June 18, 1970

Dear Marge:

Belatedly I thank you for the great pix of you, wow, what a grandmother; still I must insist you didn't look so bad the one and only time I saw you. Hmmm. I'm wondering if that will sound the way I want it too. What I'm getting at is that in your letter you seemed to emphasize that the picture was taken a thousand years ago and maybe looked good and all for a grandmom but don't forget how long ago it was. Well, I love the picture, I must admit. It is terrific. But I also cherish the still rather sharp recollection I have of you in Daytona Beach. Well, anyway, thank you for completing or rounding out my Marginalia, check that, what I mean is Margeiana. If we can have Hemingwayana I think we can have that other.

It seems a thousand years too that we returned from England, and here they are today electing a primeminister (in effect) something they did nothing but talk about all the time we were there. I miss England, but not so much as a place; I miss it as somewhere that I could feel off-duty so to speak, goof off from my writing, not do any chores, always feel a little bit elegant, etc. strange. But the land, lovely as it was, I will forsake for my own. I am very happy here in my half acre amidst all the evergreens that I have planted and in constant touch with all the birds choosing to live with me - bless their good judgment. Have about eight swallow families, two song sparrows, two robin families, a red wing blackbird and a barn swallow brood right over the porch light in front of the front door. Most importantly, I have had a bluebird nest, but the brood has flown now and I miss them. The mother was killed shortly after laying the eggs, probably ~~when~~ when flying low across the highway in back of our house. But the doubtful little male fed the fledglings himself for two weeks and then launched them onto the world. He was pretty frazzled looking at the end. What a sense of responsibility. A tiny bit of rightness in a naughty world.

My Hemingway collecting goes on. What with my English purchases and other windfalls I have had to enlarge the shelves. But no sensational acquisitions, such as the two French books of 1923 and 1924. I had a chance to buy them for \$600 each ten years ago but was scandalized at the price. Now they are going for about \$1,500.....I may have told you I )and Ruth( spent eight days at Harold Loeb's lovely house in Weston, Conn. a couple of weeks ago. He has Canadian Geese and Woodducks on his pond no less. But Harold has come upon hard times the poor dear. I'm really quite fond of this irascible old coot; he has quite a bit of courage, the Hemingway code courage, of his own. His remaining son, Jimmy, aged 53, an airport operator, was killed recently and shortly after Harold developed an embolism in his lower leg. He was in bed most of the time we were there but forged up ~~mmmm~~ to have supper with us downstairs when he felt strong enough. It pains him continually and he may lose the leg. Of course he has this coronary condition too. He's 78, but not the least bit oldish in any respect. I noticed all his Hemingway books, a real array, and he said I was partly responsible for this. He reviewed Baker's big book for the Southern Review of La. State. Not bad.

All for now, Marge. Thanks again for the lovely picture.