

June 15, 1971

Dear Marge:

My God it is unconscionably long since I've written you; but not that long have you been out of mind. Lately, it's almost been a matter of embarrassment because of my dilatoriness and because of the need to write a really good letter - and for some reason in the midst of my new old book business and various absorptions and self doubts I have just allowed myself to think you letters rather than writing them.

If I hadn't been reminded in my ordinary way, a big piece in the New York Sunday Times on June 6 would have done the trick. I wonder if you saw this rather good account, in the summer vacations section. All about the importance and meaningfulness of Hemingway's Michigan days - which course happens to be my own main thesis. It even dabbled a bit at the short stories that grew out of that time, including THE END OF SOMETHING; but it didn't really get into that very much I was relieved to discover. I feel I own that story somehow. But this writer had a good deal of good feeling about Hemingway and his early days; a good bit more than the more prestigious Carlos Baker. If you haven't seen this, I think you should, and I will be glad to loan you my copy if you will be a good girl and send it back. It is really quite good -- although drifting off a bit at the end and digressing into general history and geography from time to time.

I think an awful lot about Michigan, partly because these friends of mine who own a house in Sugar Hill, go out there every summer to run the Menomqua Beach Club for the fancy people of Harbor Springs (or Harbour as Hem spelled it). They see old Paleolithic all the time. He is about 74 and a sometime occupier of the wagon but they generally try to steer as clear of him as they can. Believe it or not, he is still a womanizer and think even now that he is God's gift to womankind. But it's not Paleolithic (this is my own name for him and I refuse to spell his name any other way) that catches my mind about Michigan, it is that wonderful country which, as this late writer says, remains unspoiled. My God the story even reproduces a picture of old Miss Potter of the boarding house. She has become rather an expert on Hemingway don't you know, although when I spoke to her all she could remember about Hem was hearing his typewriter going and the fact that he had it bad for Marjorie Bump. I doubt she ever really saw him. Did I tell you her final comment when I asked her what she thought of Hem's writing? "Kind of crude wasn't it." Some one had told her Hem wrote dirty and that was enough for her. She, like everyone else I spoke ~~him~~ to, including his own sister, Sunny, had never read the man's writing. His life was too easy a target to bother reading his writing.

I love your letters and hope you don't cross me off your list because of my decrepitude at writing. Flash Bulletin.... We would love to rent your apartment in December, January and February if that is at all possible. I'm afraid we can't handle another winter here even though we have this book business around our necks. I took a rain check on one kind offer of yours and now wonder what your status is. Abjectly and with love, Marge,