

June 5
1972

Dear Marge:

Never fear old Don is here. It was so good to get your last letter. I was unhappy to know that you had been disaccommodated. I am glad however, that you did not hesitate to take impulsive, quick action rather than doing nothing and brooding about your fate, as about nine-tenths of the world does. I was a little upset to have you beat me out with the next letter, since I had been gradually ritualizing myself into a state of readiness to write you. I don't write anybody anymore outside of the world of books, and this is of course bad, bad, bad. But you are such a great letter writer that I hesitate to rip off a little nothing to you. I feel as Dorothy Connally must have felt. I remember her telling me that she NEVER answered Hemingway's last letter because she couldn't screw up the courage to write him an equally good letter. Well this of course is some kind of nonsense and perhaps just padding here. Who knows. But in any event I do have a little news for you after this long hiatus, some good, some bad.

First the bad - Perhaps you have heard - but I will tell you anyway. Bill Smith died early this year, I believe it was while he was in Florida with his wife, Marion. She wrote Harold Loeb that Bill went to the hospital with something not critical and that he then got pneumonia and died in a few days. It was very upsetting to Harold, since Harold felt that his approachment with Bill had not been altogether complete. But I don't think Bill was sore at Harold. I just think Bill became a bit withdrawn in his last few years. Marge, Bill was about four years older than Hem, so that would make him about 75 or 76 when he died I reckon. He was quite frail looking. I saw him in Washington the same year I met you, but he won me over by being a kind of Gary Cooper Hemingway hero-type, in other words, high principled and close lipped but still able to smile. I didn't get the impression as a happy man then, although I don't think he knew it. He had a very forceful life of the persuasion who loved him dearly but she wore the pants. It was enough almost to realize both Bill and Hem wound up at the end attached to the same strings. I wrote an interview about our meeting which I am happy to say that Marion and Bill both liked.....Another death, which may shock you if you haven't heard, although it will not surprise you. Dutch Paleolithic died a few months ago of a heart attack at his home in Menomqua Beach. He was a year or so older than Hem according to informants although I had him reckoned as the same age. He was rich, at least, his rich sister having predeceased him. I hate to say so, but Dutch was an SOB to be with more than five minutes, a very self-opinionated man, although he polished up his memories of Hem to accord with the image in later years. He gave his inscribed copies of Hem's books to the Eau Claire County Historical Society, and one to a Mr. Carter of the Petoskey Radio Station who seemed to plug him nicely on all Hem matters.

The good news is that Ruth and I are going to Paris on June 2 to take part in a celebration marking the launching of a Hem book, called The Hemingway, by my friend Dr. Burt Sarason. It is just a phony publicity meeting excuse for fun, travel and talk. Sarason and his new wife will be there, and we will spend our three weeks with them, partly, and, totally, with Harold L. and his wife, Barbara (age 53). Will send you a drity French postcard. Hope to be in London to buy some books for our book business....Oh yes, have you seen the latest Postumous book, the Nick Adams story, which includes THE END OF A LONG JOURNEY

you, since one of those girls has got to be Marjorie you know that. Just for the record and sorry to be boring about it, but this remains one of my favorite stories, and the funny thing -- funny? phenomenal is a better word - the real Marge turned out to be every bit or even better than the fantasy. How do you like that, gentlemen?

At the moment, our little "Ready" piles-gather and I am experiencing that sinking feeling of imprisonment to sternly laid down plans of readyhood. At least we just received this morning our new passports and were transported to discover that we would not be proscribed from going to China or even Albania, although North-Vietnam and Korea and Cuba are still out without special permission.

Hope you are okay. Both of us are. I will be 60 on sept. 5. Ruth is a bit younger. Tell me if there is any cure for sixtyhood. But do you know Marge this is a lot of nonsense about 60 with all its intimations of oldness and uselessness and no-more-a handsome fellowness and soon to die ness. The fact is that I am still very young. The joke, at last will be on the world. When the time comes they will group around and bury an old man when if the truth were known they will be burying a lad of 14.

I will be looking forward to your next news,

All the very best,

Don.