

9/9/71

Dear Js,

Tonight/this morning I'm on your side of the same moon. Got up a bit before 3 and couldn't go back to sleep, so I'm going to work and perhaps, if I can, take a nap later. I've been trying to reform my hours and, to a degree, have. I still awaken after about 4 hrs sleep, but I can always turn over and be in a deep sleep almost the minute I finish turning. Don't know why not this a.m., but there is plenty of work to attack.

I asked you for copies of the San Quentin shootout stories. PH sent that from the Chron for the 28th. Yesterday's Post carried an LA Times piece on the plight of the guards.

As you go over the States, if you see any stories on the Mississippi arrests of the group that I think calls itself the New Republic of Africa, I'd appreciate any that might not be too much trouble. While it is possible that in the future I might again write of these things, as I did in COUP, an unfortunately accurate forecast, my chief present interests (aside from any reflection of an overall method, a federal hand) is in being able to get black writers to address these things. If the immediate prospects of this are not encouraging, I have initiated some efforts in several directions.

Netinks t e next black generation will have a bitter slogan, "Black Is Splinter". But I can recall too much in the white past, going back to the rupture of the French popular front and the schisms in the US left of the 30s to be sitting in judgement.

Anyway, perhaps I am on the threshold of literary arrival. Rex Stout has invited me to join the Writers' Guild. It seems that when I was my own publisher I was not eligible. And for some reason when my first book had a first reprint of a quarter of a million, that also did not meet the eligibility requirements. To be eligible I must have had a commercial, hardback publisher. No matter that this publisher is one to whom the Guild, in pursuit of writers' rights, should address itself (it won't—that is the job of agents, a point on which it is quite explicit). He is commercial, and that is the prerequisite. Naturally, when this letter and the enclosures were addressed to me, the publisher first read it before sending it. In fact, the envelope was missing, even though my name was on it from the letter. But then this does mean that he is not incapable ~~of~~ forwarding any mail. I suppose it is possible that nobody else wrote me c/o them, for there is always a first. But at no time in the past was this the case.

Interestingly, the orders on our own books are holding up. Nothing sensational, but regular. Yesterday, much better than most, there were five. We do not get one every day, but it is encouraging that this is the case, that there is persisting interest, from individuals directly and from bookstores. Libraries, too. LSU, for example, wants a copy of out-of-print O in NO, even at xeroxing cost, and the professor who also did and agreed to provide a xerox master for two copies, one to use thus, hasn't responded in three months. So, I have no master. Xerox, that is.

Before I re-enter the salt mine, one other tidbit—and this is NOT an encouragement to get a TV: David Brinkley has radicalized. Yup. Seriously, I'm not putting you on. There has been a series of NBC experiments beginning with Chet Huntley's decision to go back to Montana and bury it there. In cattle, motels, etc. The present evening format is John (Johnson's USIA chief) Chancellor at anchor and, when he wants it, David Brinkley's Journal, a frankly editorial statement of opinion. The times I've seen it it has always been opinion and the remarkable thing is good opinion. Last night it was as radical as you can get on Pacifica. I didn't even taste the weight-watcher's 126 $\frac{1}{2}$ -calorie TV dinner (not too bad, as a matter of fact) of spinach and a small piece of fish) that Lil, who was retyping PMIII too late to cook, served up. He really went after the gross unfairness of taxes, come out for easing the burden on the poor and placing it on the fat cats (using Hunt as an example) and the corporations and their richbitches who have made him and his network rich. If the millennium is not across the next kilocycle, what a change! Even that aging dowager, the Post, has engaged in meaningful, non-Agnewstic self-criticism, on the ed page, and said right out that (unnamed) Wiggins dictated policy in Viet Nam, a line to which all writing had to hew. And they say this was wrong. Hope you are nearing the end of the dark cycle. Best regards,