

7/9/71

Dear Russ,

Using an airmail envelope, scratching out (lightly) the "via air mail" doesn't work. The post office pays no attention to such things. This seems to be typical of what lead to what you report in your letter of the fourth.

Nobody can do anything about the personal things. But about the typewriter, let me know the brand and I'll see if my friend who does fine things with those he handles can go over it while you are here, if you'll stay more than a couple of hours. You seem to be talking about a Hermes, but there have been copies, I suppose. He handles Hermes. His is one I got from him.

I've been too busy on too many things to keep track of the MM. I do know my source fell silent several months ago. I wrote him once. No response.

Please send me Lita's address in case I ever get to Chicago again.

People do change. Life changes them, their growth changes them. So do their mistakes. But if it had become what you describe, my unsolicited opinion is that it is best for both of you. I didn't expect it. She absorbed a remarkable amount for a young woman. Knowing how, without ever intending it, I abuse Lil if only with my work, I am more sensitive to this than most men, I suppose. And I suppose that most of us men just slip into doing what we thing we must without really being aware of what it can do to a woman, especially a woman who has to grow into the beliefs her man hold or may, perhaps, adopt them simply because they are his.

Plato said things exist in opposites: day by comparison with night, love with hate, life with death and life with death. I am afraid that for some of us things exist in extremes. Do not go from one futility to another. I tried, gently, to tell you the effort to help blacks by helping the Panthers could not work. Don't bounce to the other extreme and say it all has and had no meaning. You seem to forecast a copping out which is entirely out of character. Cool and it and think.

However, what you say you plan seems quite sensible. It is best to work at whatever work one does from a base. A job is a fine base. Don't live like I have. Radio is as good a thing as most, better, in fact. Getting the ticket broadens what you can do in it. That is an excellent base for writing, a novels are an excellent way of informing people, turning them on, if that is what you want. No work of non-fiction could have said what Seven Days or Stragelove did. And midst the pines and squirrels is a fine place to write, for there is no politics in pines, avarice in squirrels, so the environment is untainted for a writer.

This letter is so unlike you I think you are bouncing. We all do. When you stop, it will be somewhere near level. Don't worry. Spilt milk is for cats only.

Hope you can make it next month. Let us know first for we are expecting someone from Texas, unless her husband's recovery is slowed and because I have several legal entanglements of which I'll know the dates in advance. No point in picking a bad day. And why not drive here on a Friday night instead, not having to rush back the next day? Or that night?

Meanwhile, don't be talking yourself into anything. The wrong bites don't mean all bites are bad. Sometimes we get manna. Man!

Good luck, and see us soon.

July 4, 1971

Dear Harold,

Well, I'm finally sitting down to write you this letter which is about three months overdue. If the typing doesn't look too good it's because this is a new old typewriter and I haven't yet found out what's wrong with it. It's one of those real little portables and seems to be okay except for some letters not printing entirely.

I assume you're still holding onto that MM material and that you gathered from my silence that I intend to get down there to pick it up rather than having you go to the expense and risk of mailing it. I doubt that I'll be able to get there before August. I've got some more material for you then. Did you know they disbanded?

Lita has gone back to Chicago. After much soul-searching, etc. she decided she would feel better and be happier there and that our relationship had more or less reached the point where it was benefitting neither of us and we were holding onto it more out of habit than anything else. As I'm sure you know, I'm no longer the person I was three years ago, and neither is she. It's quite likely that if we met today we wouldn't be the least interested in each other, that's how drastic the changes have been. We live in very changing times, I guess, and most everything is subject to change.

As for my own situation, it recently struck me how close I have come in the past couple years to being a martyr, and who it was for. This realization has caused me to decide that I'd rather leave the fighting to someone else for the coming years, if there's anyone who wants to do it. In short, I've retired from the struggle. I intend to catalogue and index all the material I've collected (MM, Panter, etc.) and then either write articles about it or just store the stuff away for future reference. If I can pull together enough ambition in the next six months I hope to start writing novels again. To support myself I'm going back into the broadcasting business. I can stay at the Clinic until next spring, during which time I'm going to get an FCC first class operator's license so I can work as an engineer as well as an announcer. Another fellow and I are starting an Italian language radio show here in Pittsburgh in two weeks, which will get me back onto the air and into AFTRA. I'm tired of jousting with windmills for people who don't even care. Next year, if all goes well, I'll look for a small farm or some other piece of country property to buy, and I'll concern myself with the political intrigues of pine trees, and the avariciousness of squirrels.

So if you're going to be home I'll see you sometime during August -- I'd probably drive down on a weekday and drive back the same night.

Russ