

Jan 7, Mombasa

Peter dear; I hope this will be waiting in Nairobi to greet you when you return from the practically eternal snows. Today I got your postcard and all I want to say is: I rejoice, I REJOICE. Oh good, oh very good, oh best of all. Thank heaven you have kicked the stinking old year out the door, thank heaven you are re-born. It was terrible that you were being melted down my mourning; anger would have done your muscles better; the mourning terrified me for you. And now it's ~~gone~~ over; the snows (and perhaps the recommended golden girl on the ski slopes) have done the trick. I cannot tell you how glad I am. I do not like to see my fellow men unjustly done down; I am elated when they rise and shine.

We can (and I have no doubt ~~we~~ always will) be recurrently miserable in this life which may not be a vale of tears but is sure as hell no bowl of cherries. But I am in favor of being wretched over an immediate new source of anguish; I think one cannot afford to linger on past woe because then the damn stuff piles up so much it stifles you.

You are your usual kind, almost too charming self to suggest that I have anything to do with the immortals. (In my most self assured moments I am able to tell myself with pride that I am a good charwoman in the Temple of Literature.) But I have started to write again and God knows if it is not the worst sloppiest muck going; I write literally as fast as I can type because I have a goal, a self-imposed dead line. I am going to finish this book in two months and stick whether it's readable or not, it will be finished. Finally, writing has ceased to be art and become an act of discipline and self respect. But even pulling myself together this
much

cheers me; I could not endure the weeks of myself as a wailing coward, scared of the present and future.

You will read it for me? As agreed? My man is an odd concoction and I jolly well don't want him to turn out a fairy. There is a literary myth or tradition (from Hemingway all the way to Ian Fleming and all other men copy it) that a true man is screwing at least once a day or his male papers are not in order. I believe that to be a huge lie, and actually believe men are not much luckier than woman (I.E. supply and demand) and am determined to try to make what I think a real man, not a triumphant muscled cocksman with a brain like a baby I.B.M. machine. I want a man doubting and trying and failing and lonely and basically decent because he cares about being decent. I need your eye and criticism. Love, *Martha*

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Peter Marrian, Esq.

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