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October 16, 1972

Dear Nell,

Enclosed is a nice piece from PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, from an issue which they devoted especially to Western Publishing, whatever that is.

It seems to me that you haven't received your author's copies of MOTHER AND CHILD. We owe you ten free copies and will send them this week. The book is going pretty well, I think, and we are very optimistic about the sales to come. AND, more important, the things which were a visual affront while the paper was in the printing press are now absorbed into the harmonies of the whole book.

Because we did have so much new trouble with the book at the bindery, where they have virtually destroyed 1600 copies out of the 5000 printed, we will be in very short supply and face the very real risk that the book might go out of print again. We want to keep it available forever, and will soon have to decide what we would do differently were we to reprint it. I understand and share your coolness toward the cover. But I wonder if we still couldn't talk about the interior? Mightn't we choose this time a softer stock? (I don't want you to try to answer these questions. I just want to pose them for the moment.) The irony of the first printing is that, after all was said and done and all costs were toted up, it would have cost us about 13¢ more per copy to print at the plant in the southwest whose work you liked and we found to be too expensive. We did some faulty cost-accounting with your book, but our survival depends upon--at least in part--the way we price our books in relation to their manufacturing costs.

At any rate, do be thinking, please, about minor changes in another printing of the book. . .

Greta is neither feeling better nor worse. The depression is continuing and is worrying both of us. She and I ~~are~~ have gone and will continue to go to a counsellor, to see if we can discover what blames and disappointments we may be laying upon each other and to see what has gone awry with our own communication. The more pleasure I find in "work," the less good she sees in it and the less success she feels for herself. Her self-esteem is very low and her entire push right now is to escape into the future--into moving East or going to Europe for a year and the like. It does none of us any good to say to her "what you ought to do is . . ." since she cannot seem to move from self-examination and inner-directed anger out into the pursuit of an external object--a book, a photograph, a creation of her own. I communicate my love poorly at best; when she's "down" I become childishly annoyed and "hurt," since I have depended for so long upon her strengths and sustenance. <sup>e</sup> So we do have to communicate better and locate some hurts and GET OUT of the flat we live in. The latter will perhaps ameliorate everything and we should be able to effect that in the next two months. . .

I do not feel as though I have been telling you our "troubles," since I am not myself pessimistic. Nor is she. I feel as though I am describing an illness which can be cured and which we want to have cured. Your own very existence is a curative for us. Please do not feel as though you had to bind us together or heal us through your letters. It is enough that you remind us, as you do, of the importance of love and hope and the great gift of life.

The winter rains have come and in a few weeks, the green fuzz will be on all the hills. It will be our time for recovery . . .

Love,

*Mitch*