

Feb 25,

1964

Dear Scott,

You know I'm back on the right track when I send you a typed letter. I did not write on Tuesday as I usually do so that will mean another letter for you tomorrow, if I'm not so lazy. Of course you know that a typed letter demands more BS so bear with me if some of my little anecdotes seem manufactured. They are. No really, I bet you are itching to get to work again, now with the prospect of a summer show at the art Museum looming up in August. Your pictures will not just be seen by the right people, but by the many others who, though lacking in the social position which according to some is so conducive to the love of art, really do love good paintings, good etchings. It is this type of people that really appreciate your stuff. Yes, sir, Scottie baby we'll lay 'em dead. I am sending you some of my photographs which I took on the trip that Gundry and I made up the river. None of them is especially worthy of making a good picture (except the white barn which I like very much but just can't build a picture around.) However aren't they all "pretty". I think they are really good photos, pictureagee wise. How do you like the pictures of the wagon and the road leading up to the plantation house. It looks just like something out of "Song of the South" doesn't it. These two shots are my gift to you for the Spring day-dreaming season. I haven't gotten the "Wind In the Willows" yet but I will get it. How do you like the photos of Windsor, especially the shot with the cabin in it? I like the composition in it but I realize it would not make a good picture because the columns are too small for the cabin. Please store these pictures well and I'll see them again in the summer. I want you to send me some good pictures which will give me a good bunch of drawing exercise and painting exercise, like a couple of the snow scenes and the back of the plantation house which you made the etching of. I must admit that I am not drawing as much as I should. If I would stop wasting my time and make a more planned effort to cram everything in I think I could still do it and do all the rest of my work too. I know how you feel now because there just isn't enough time in the day. I devote two hours a day to writing. That has top priority, with studies second and painting third. My story about the God figure up in the tree has bogged down. I certainly have not given up I just don't know where to proceed, or just exactly what I am out to prove by the story. It's got the gism, but like in painting I am not yet able to isolate the gism and build the story

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around that. I've got the mood, the setting, the principle developements about the main character and vague idea where the story is heading. Its just that god figure that I don't know how to treat. The story stands basically as I told you with a few minor alterations. I'm working now on two stories at once and am getting a pitiful slow amount of work done. I'm doing more rewriting, re-examining of the stories. I am beginning to stand back and say to myself "now just why in hell has this or that got to happen to the characters or this result is not that closely related to the problems." I am beginning to see these little errors in the works of other artists too. Above all my work has to be definately plausible or at least logical. Creating those logical relationships among the characters is hell brother. You wind up getting farther and farther away from the original story. However there are merits to this. The merit lies in the fact that when the original idea comes to you it arrives like a new-born baby, wet, crying, "scarce half made up". There is more emotion than content and a lot of room to mature. All babies are cute and appealing, but not always so when they grow up. The same with my short story ideas. A lot of them so appealing at first become duds when mature thought is applied to them. This is as it should be, you know² the survival of the fittest. This is in a sense applicable to short ideas for only the best should be allowed to survive. However, it is when the writer must play god in chosing those who will survive and those who will not, that causes me trouble. I'm too soft. I want them all to survive. But if I were to allow this, then surely one of them would grow up and turn on me. The writer's ability is manifested in the ultimate choice he makes. That is where the honesty comes in. We sit and listen to Beethoven variations or look at great drawings by the masters and say why aren't these ultimately developed into their final form. The artist recognizes those babies that have the bad nature and the pinched their heads off in infancy. Oh well, enough analogizing. I know you know this. I just wanted you to know that I know this. It's the same thing as not drawing the pretty picturesque things. There's always a thin line that only the most perceptive artists make discern. I'm just not that perceptive yet.

S.A.