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OUR LADY OF GETHSEMANI

Trappist-Cistercian Abbey

TRAPPIST, KENTUCKY

Feb. 24th 1951

Dear Mr Thompson:

Forgive this long delay in answering your kind letter. If you know anything about Gethsemani you will understand that our communications with the outside world are not rapid.

Unfortunately I cannot let you have the manuscript of the Seven Storey Mountain. This went long ago to Boston College and another carbon is with a member of the English Department at Marquette. I have no other manuscript of a printed book here. Two new books are going through the press, I will keep you in mind.

offer me

Your letter interests me, though: not because I want to think of myself as a public figure, planting a sheaf of documents about myself where people can write an M.A. thesis all about me and my pastiches! But I do have quite a feeling about being a Kentucky writer. You see, Kentucky is the only place where I ever lived for nine years at a solid stretch and prospects ~~xxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ an indefinite prolongation of ~~this~~ sojourn, either on top of the clay of this Commonwealth or else underneath it. Of all this I am happy. I will gladly do what I can to help you build up your documentation. Do you go in for "worksheets" like the lads at the University of Buffalo? I sent them a lot of "poetry worksheets" a couple of years ago. They are especially delighted with anything that is really messy and illegible. Of this I can always furnish an abundance. Suppose I promise you the rough work on a poem I wrote in ~~the~~ St Joseph's Infirmary, Louisville, after it gets in print. If I send them to you now I am liable to get stuck without a copy myself.

Meanwhile I am bundling up some things-- to begin with you may not have a series in Catholic World and Renascence, completing the picture of the Seven Storey Mountain by publication of some pages that were cut to shorten the first edition. Then you can have some mimeographed notes of conferences I have been giving here. I will also tuck in some odds and ends.

In return can you suggest or lend some good books about Kentucky? Have we ever had a Kentucky Thoreau? If we haven't I'll try to get Father Abbot to let me bid for the title. But he won't. I am thinking of ~~real~~ Kentucky things-- old songs, stuff about the people in the hills, about the towns too-- anything. We have nothing here but the WPA guide. Especially interested of course in Nelson county. God bless you, anyway.

J. M. Louis O.C.S.O.