


North York (Toronto), 15 Nov. 1988.

Dear Sir,

Before even introducing myself, let me first and foremost wish you many happy returns for the eighty fifth birthday that you must have celebrated two days ago!!!!

The grandmother (that I have still the pleasure to have on my mother's side) was, oddly enough, born in the same year as you (Sept. 23). She is ever so close to me - although I am rather far from home at the moment... My name is Agnès and I am from Bordeaux (France!). I have



lived in many places in France, being somewhat restless I suppose!, and also one whole year in London (England) I do much love. I have only been on this side of the Atlantic for the past three months. It was hard in the beginning - everything being so utterly different - and it took me quite a while to be accustomed to the big concrete americanized campus of York University and to the equally uglified quarters of downtown Toronto!...

By now, some sort of routine seems

to have established itself: I live on campus in a residence where people are supposed to be speaking French (you know this French craze). I am twenty eight now and have been teaching English for the past six years in France.

Here I currently teach French of course although it takes me little time and gives me the impression of being rather a nice game.

I have come here above all to be able to complete my M.A. thesis since I ^{was} ~~was~~ much engrossed by my job in France... I have always been keenly interested by what was labelled as 'Canadian Studies' when I was a student at Bordeaux University this explains why, out of sheer pleasure, I have asked the permission to attend a weekly seminar here at York University (on Canadian writers from 1920 to 1960). It has been of course nicely granted to me...

The reason of my writing this letter to you like this, out of the blue, is in fact because I have just walked out of one of these literary sessions and feel I simply have to contact you! I have been talking for a couple of hours almost (which was quite a thing for me since it was in English - addressing a group of ten people for the first time. {I confess I was a bit apprehensive in the beginning!}) ... Talking about you and your wonderful memoirs I read almost as in a trance! What an enthralling book! My audience



was rather puzzled for I was expected to do a presentation on your first historical novel and your first contemporary one - But they were pleased and almost preferred Twenty Time to His Majesty's Xinkees and The Nymph and the Lamp, which were found fascinating anyway.

I have this perhaps pretentious feeling that I know you almost by now and simply felt like telling you ... It is odd as I told you that you and my beloved ^{Grandmother} be contemporaries and I cannot help being amazed at the many resemblances I found in your two lives, which obviously have been thoroughly different. For one thing, she never wrote anything except wonderful letters. Now I feel like asking her to write her own memoirs! I hope she will be able to do that in spite of her diminishing eyesight.

By the way I hear that you are still affected with arthritis, I am truly sorry about that for I would so much like to read from you in person. And you know when my contract finishes here (i. e. end of April) I intend to come and visit your heavenly Nova Scotia. And of course I would be ever so honoured to have the opportunity to meet you!!! (I would like my parents to fly over too so I can show them your beautiful country.)

Anyhow, I cannot wait to read from you and truly hope that you will have the time and the possibility to reply to this lengthy letter of mine.

Yours sincerely,

Agnes F. Lebeau

Department of
French Studies
Département
d'études françaises



UNIVERSITÉ
YORK
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF ARTS

4700 KEELE STREET • NORTH YORK • ONTARIO • CANADA • M3J 1P3

P.O. Box 459
BoT 1K0

November 26, 1988

Agnes F. Lebeau,
c/o French Studies, Faculty of Arts,
York University, 4700 Keele St.,
North York, Ontario
M3J 1P3

Dear Mlle. Lebeau:

I am very glad that you like my book and it is
very kind of you to write and tell me.

So you are from Bordeaux. In a novel of mine called "Hangman's Beach"
there is frequent mention of Bordeaux because one of ~~the~~ men in my story
came ^{from} ~~from~~ that region. He was a real person and ^{what} ~~what~~ I wrote about him
was historically true. My story ^{deals} ~~deals~~ with Halifax, Nova Scotia, during
the Napoleonic Wars, when about one of every ten people living
around Halifax harbour was a French prisoner of war.

Please come and ~~see~~ me when you visit Nova Scotia. I am ~~crippled~~
and bent with arthritis, ^{spending} ~~spending~~ most of my time in an armchair,
so I enjoy visitors, especially one who has read and liked my
books !

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Please forgive the typewriter. My handwriting starts ~~well~~ but
soon ^{dwindles} ~~dwindles~~ to a mere squiggle!