



Mr. Norman Mailer
627 Commercial St.
Provincetown, MA 02657

Dear Norman,

The enclosed advertisement for Vidal's essay collection set me thinking again. The rave blurbs and the notion that the collection will be the big beach book for the summer touched--vicariously-- a competitive nerve. You are a better essayist than Vidal. Your range is greater and there is none of his special pleading (for the establishment of the homosexual kingdom). Sports, violence, theological thought are beyond him. True, he is good on Hollywood, the pretensions of the West Point-Wasp world and certain writers. Well, there is no use pressing the point. You know your own strengths. I see four kinds of collections that could ace his:

- 1) a career omnibus volume containing the best of your five miscellanies plus some of your best pieces since Pieces and Pontifications in 1982;
- 2) a new miscellany collecting the best of your work from 1982-93;
- 3) your literary essays, including "Quick and Expensive Comments on the Talent in the Room," "The Mind of an Outlaw," "Punching Papa," "Some Children of the Goddess," "Quick Comments of the Modern American Novel" (the MLA talk, perhaps your finest literary essay), the "Wild 90" essay, your review of Norman Podhoretz's book, "A Course in Film-Making," the intro to A Transit to Narcissus, preface to A Fiction Writer's Handbook, preface to Papa by Gregory Hemingway, "Our Man at Harvard," the D. H. Lawrence section from the Miller book, another from the same book on Miller and Hemingway, "Before the Literary Bar," "The Hazards and Sources and Writing," "Huckleberry Finn, Alive at 100," perhaps your intro to Aldridge's book Dwight Macdonald's, "The Writer's Imagination and the Imagination of the State," your review of American Psycho and of "JFK"--there are a lot more, I'm being cursory, leaving out the literary parts of The Prisoner of Sex, many of the prefaces and all of the interviews. Goddamned important book.

4) a collection of your biographical portraits.

From our conversation of a week or so back, I think perhaps you have forgotten how often you have written in this mode. Consider this list of names: Jack Kennedy, Jackie Kennedy (1962 and 1983), Gene McCarthy, LBJ, Hemingway, Bobby Kennedy, ~~LBJ~~, John Lindsay, Henry Miller, D.H. Lawrence, Goldwater, El Loco, Muhammad Ali, Gary Gilmore, Marilyn, Robert Lowell, Dwight Macdonald, Norman Podhoretz, Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey, Rockefeller, the astronauts, Abbie Hoffman, Cy Rembar, Malaquais, *Hal* "Red" in Of A Fire on the Moon, Joe Frazier, George McGovern, Conrad, Clint Eastwood, Warren Beatty, Mike Tyson, George and Barbara Bush, the Quayles and Picasso. Okay, a half dozen of these might not be sterling enough, but if you took half of the above you'd have a 250-page book of great range and insight. I've forgotten Floyd Patterson and Liston and others, I'm sure.

Before you dismiss any or all of this quartet, consider letting me send you the selections for one or more of them, which I will be happy to cull and calibrate. I predict that the biographical portraits will turn your head. (You had a chapter once called "Portraits and Powers.") Admit it, you don't always remember your past work with clarity. You may remember the emotions surrounding the effort of writing a piece, or its reception, but you may not recall its specific texture or valence. Also, seeing them arranged in a new constellation could give you a new sense of their merits. It would not be a big task for me to pull #4 together, for example. No one could do faster.

I know that there are probably overriding negatives--money, timing, etc. -- but if there is even a slight chance of Mailer's gallery of princes, princesses, prizefighters, and politicians finding their way back into print, I'm happy to do the assembling. One last note: I see no parallel with Some Honorable Men, which was, in my judgment, not put together the right way. It was either too long or too short.

Things are going well for me at Wilkes. The Board just approved a \$25 million bond issue which will enable us to start our first doctorate and build three new buildings. Most of my weeks are 70 hours long, but I feel as if I am gaining, not losing energy. Donna is both eager and anxious about starting her doctorate. The boys are coping and growing. Being back East agrees with us.

Please give our love to everyone, especially to Kate, the new bride. I'll call soon to see about an August visit. I hope your writing is going well. Flow words, flow.

All Best,

Mike
Mike

Enclosure



March 19, 1994

Mr. Andrew Wylie
Wylie, Aitken & Stone
250 West 57th Street
Suite 2114
New York, NY 10107

Dear Andrew:

Norman and I talked about the essay collection the evening of my meeting with you. He too is enthusiastic about it and would like it to be long rather than short. Like you, he feels the literary and biographical pieces could be combined. I will work along these lines, although I will also explore the possibility of an even larger collection, an omnibus similar to Vidal's.

We left it that I would submit a list of the pieces for Norman's veto or approval. He advised me not to do too much on the project until Random House accepts the book. He said that he thought my work, which would include an introduction, would be worth \$5,000, which is fine with me. As you predicted, he is willing to write a preface.

Andrew, it was a pleasure to meet you. I look forward to seeing you again. I should have something for both of you to look at in a month or six weeks.

Sincerely,

J. Michael Lennon
Vice President for Academic Affairs

cc: Norman Mailer



WILKES-BARRE • PENNSYLVANIA 18766 • 717/831-5000

15 April 1994

Mr. Norman Mailer
142 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

Dear Norman:

What follows is the result of a scan of all your books except the novels. My reading of these over the past month has confirmed my initial view that there was a fine collection to be mined and smelted from your previous books. The more recent, uncollected, essays are fat, rich nuggets--the Huck Finn essay for example--that will give the collection a greater luster and burnish your reputation as a literary critic. Even after discounting my large enthusiasm for writing by Norman Mailer, I find a wonderful book, bristling with marvels. It will be better than the Vidal omnibus, and far better than Updike's 1991 collection, Odd Jobs.

Here is an overview of the following pages:

Key: L = Literature, P = Portraiture
Number of selections: 122 (L = 53, P = 69)
Number of book pages: 1255 (L = 610, P = 645)
Number of uncollected pages: 186 (L = 95, P = 91)

Possible additions:

Interviews with Laura Adams, Robert Begiebing, Paul Attanasio; more selections from newspaper and magazine columns; an excerpt from Pablo and Fernand; an excerpt from your unpublished piece on the 1992 Democratic convention.

Possible deletions:

200-300 pages could be cut without serious difficulty. However, I could have easily inflated the total number of pages by the same amount. I was modestly discriminating in compiling my list.

4-15-94

Other issues:

I think topical grouping of the selections is required. A chronological approach is too relentless and gives away the possibility for some happy juxtapositions and surprising pairings.

The book could be divided into two books and issued a year apart, or kept together in the hardback edition and separated in the paperback editions, as with Pieces and Pontifications. Whatever is done, I think there should be two enclaves--literature and portraiture.

I'm very excited about the collection and am prepared to get to work as soon as you give the word. Donna is ready to pitch in. She was of enormous help on both Pieces and Pontifications (1982) and Conversations with Norman Mailer (1988). The task of duplicating the 122 selections will be time-consuming, not to mention the other editorial work. But we relish the opportunity and are grateful for it.

Norm, I know that you are in the home stretch on "Oswald's Ghost," and won't have much time for this project right now. But I also know that you might be interested in considering at some odd hour the attached list of essays, reviews, interviews, excerpts, prefaces, forwards and several other sub-genres. I also know that you may wish to promote the collection at Random House for tactical reasons. So I'm sending this package on to you now, although I understand you'll be humping it on the Oswald book until the end of April. Our love to Norris.

Best regards,



J. Michael Lennon

VPAA

717/831-4200 (O)

717/696-2374 (H)

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PROPOSAL FOR A COLLECTION
OF WRITINGS

NORMAN MAILER
Literature and Portraiture
1955-1993

edited by J. Michael Lennon
(122 selections, 1200+ pages)

This collection contains selections from 25 books by Norman Mailer from Advertisement For Myself (1959) to Conversations with Norman Mailer (1988), along with his finest uncollected work from the 1970s to the 1990s. The selections are equally divided between Mailer's literary criticism and a gallery of portraits of his contemporaries, including Marilyn Monroe, Ernest Hemingway, John F. Kennedy, Jacqueline Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Eugene McCarthy, Muhammad Ali, Warren Beatty, Mike Tyson, Robert Lowell, Ryan O'Neal and Clint Eastwood.

J. Michael Lennon
67 S. Pioneer Ave.
Shavertown, PA 18708-1328
717-696-2674 (H)
717-831-4200 (O)

TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
L The Homosexual Villain essay	One: The Homosexual Magazine 1955	Advertisements 1959	8
L A Public Notice by N. Mailer rev. of Waiting for Godot	Village Voice 1956	Advertisements 1959	6
L Hip, Hell and the Navigator interview with Stern & Lucid	Western Review 1959	Advertisements 1959	10
P The White Negro and replies essay	Dissent 1957	Advertisements 1959	38
P Buddies, or the Hole in the Summit dialogue, Eisenhower & Kruschew	Village Voice 1959	Advertisements 1959	11
L Quick & Expensive Comments on All the Talent in the Room critical comment on novelists	Big Table 1959	Advertisements 1959	10
L The Mind of an Outlaw (The Last Draft of the Deer Park) essay	Esquire 1959	Advertisements 1959	32
P An Eye on Picasso essay	Provincetown Journal 1959	Advertisements 1959	2
L Last Advertisement for Myself on the Way Out essay	N.A.	Advertisements 1959	4

TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
P Superman Comes to the Supermart J.F.K. and 1960 convention	Esquire 1960	Pres. Papers 1963	42
L The Blacks rev. of Genet play	Village Voice 1961	Pres. Papers 1963	11
P Open Letter to J.F.K. and Castro	Village Voice 1961	Pres. Papers 1963	9
L The First Day's Interview self-interview	Paris Review 1961	Cannibals 1966	12
P An Evening with Jackie Kennedy essay	Esquire 1962	Pres. Papers 1963	17
P The Big Bite Monroe & Hemingway column	Esquire 1962	Pres. Papers 1963	1
P The Big Bite Hemingway column	Esquire 1962	Pres. Papers 1963	1
P Punching Papa rev. of That Summer in Paris	N.Y.R.B. 1963	Cannibals 1966	4
P Ten Thousand Words a Minute report on Patterson-Liston fight	Esquire 1963	Pres. Papers 1963	53
L The Metaphysics of the Belly self-interview	N.A.	Pres. Papers 1963	23

Literature and Portraiture (proposal)

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TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
P The Leading Man rev. of J.F.K. bio by Victor Lasky	Book Week 1963	Cannibals 1963	6
L The Mary McCarthy Case rev. of The Group	N.Y.R.B. 1963	Cannibals 1966	7
L Some Children of the Goddess critical comment on novelists	Esquire 1963	Cannibals 1966	26
P A Television Show w/ Nelson Algren	Esquire 1963	Cannibals 1966	3
L Putting Culture onto Culture literary oddment	Esquire 1963	Errands 1972	2
P A Vote for Bobby K portrait	Village Voice 1964	Cannibals 1966	3
P Barry Goldwater portrait	Esquire 1964	Cannibals 1966	5
P The Best Man rev. of L.B.J.'s My Hope for Am.	Book Week 1964	Cannibals 1966	5
L Paris Review Interview w/Steven Marcus	Paris Review 1964	Cannibals 1966	23
L Modes & Mutations: Commentary Quick Comments on the Modern American Novel essay (MLA talk)	1966	Cannibals 1966	9
L Our Argument at Last Presented essay on metaphor	N.A.	Cannibals 1966	

TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
L The Political Economy of Time self-interview	N.A.	Cannibals 1966	63
P Henry Miller portrait	Roddy McDowell's Double Exposure 1967	Errands 1972	1
P The Crazy One portrait of bullfighter El Loco	Playboy 1967	The Bullfight 1967	18
L Preface to Short Fiction of N. M.	N.A.	reprinted in Errands 1972	4
L Mr. Mailer Passes Out the Cigars intro. to Deer Park: A Play	N.Y. Times 1967	Errands 1972	23
L Mr. Mailer Interviews Himself (on Why Are We In Vietnam?)	N.Y. Times 1967	Errands 1972	5
L Some Dirt in the Talk essay on Mailer's film Wild 90	Esquire 1967	Errands 1972	28
P Robert Lowell, Mitch Goodman & Dwight Macdonald portrait	Harper's 1968	Armies 1968	13
P The Marshall & the Nazi portrait	Harper's 1968	Armies 1968	7
P Grandma with Orange Hair portrait	Harper's 1968	Armies 1968	11

Literature and Portraiture (proposal)

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TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
L Up the Family Tree rev. of Podhoretz's Making It (1968)	Partisan Review 1968	Errands 1972	22
P Nelson Rockefeller portrait	Harper's 1968	Miami 1968	6
P Richard Nixon portrait	Harper's 1968	Miami 1968	10
P Eugene McCarthy portrait	Harper's 1968	Miami 1968	14
P WASPs portrait	Harper's 1968	Miami 1968	5
P Hubert Humphrey portrait	Harper's 1968	Miami 1968	7
P Intro to the End of Obscenity (1969) by Cy Rembar portrait	N.A.	reprinted in Errands 1972	4
L Nat. Book Award Acceptance Speech	Publisher's Weekly 1969	Errands 1972	1
P The Astronauts portrait	Life 1969	Fire 1971	26
P Red & Molly portrait	N.A.	Fire 1971	5
P Werner Von Braun portrait	N.A.	Fire 1971	15
P The Iron of Astronauts portrait	N.A.	Fire 1971	9

TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
L Letter to Whit Burnett on An American Dream, This is My Best, (1970)	N.A.	N.A.	1
P Ego portrait of M. Ali	Life 1971	King of the Hill 1971, reprinted in Errands 1972	28
L A Course in Film-Making essay	New American Review 1971	Errands 1972	38
L Introduction to Deaths for the Ladies	N.A.	reprinted in Errands 1972	6
P Preface to Sting Like a Bee by Jose Torres (1971) portrait	N.A.	N.A.	7
L D.H. Lawrence lit. criticism	Harper's 1971	Prisoner 1971	24
P George Wallace portrait	Life 1972	St. George 1972	3
P Hubert Humprey portrait	N.A.	St. George 1972	4
P George McGovern portrait	N.A.	St. George 1972	10
P Eugene McCarthy portrait	N.A.	St. George 1972	2
P V.P. Candidates portrait	N.A.	St. George 1972	4
P Sen. Eagleton portrait	N.A.	St. George 1972	

Literature and Portraiture (proposal)

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TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
P Henry Kissinger portrait	N.A.	St. George 1972	8
P Spiro Agnew portrait	N.A.	St. George 1972	4
P Richard Nixon portrait	N.Y.R.B. 1972	St. George 1972	4
L A Transit to Narcissus rev. of Last Tango in Paris	N.Y.R.B. 1973	P & P 1982	18
P The Capote Perplex account of Susskind TV show w/Capote	Rolling Stone 1973	N.A.	1
P Marilyn portrait	Ladies Home Journal 1973	Marilyn 1973	14
P Marilyn & DiMaggio portrait	N.Y.R.B. 1973	Marilyn 1973	17
P Marilyn & A. Miller portrait	Atlantic 1973	Marilyn 1973	12
P Marilyn & Lee Strasberg portrait	N.A.	Marilyn 1973	5
L Introduction to The Time of Her Time, Rust Hill's Writer's Choice (1973)	N.A.	N.A.	1
P Introduction to Jean Malaguais's The Joker portrait	Partisan Review 1974	P & P 1982	

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TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
L The Faith of Graffiti art criticism	separate book & Esquire 1974	reprinted in P & P 1982	24
P Gladiators: For Hemingway poem	New Republic 1974	N.A.	1
L Preface to A Fiction Writer's Handbook by Whit & Hallie Burnett (1974)	N.A.	N.A.	4
P Carnal Indifference portrait of M. Ali	Playboy 1975	The Fight 1975	15
P A Gang of Champs portrait of George Foreman	Playboy 1975	The Fight 1975	18
L Preface to Some Honorable Men	N.A.	Some Honorable Men 1976	6
L Foreword to St. Patrick's Day w/Mayor Daley by Gene Kennedy (1976)	N.A.	N.A.	4
L Preface to new ed. of Advertisements For Myself	N.A.	P & P 1982	3
P The Search for Carter portrait	N.Y. Times 1976	N.A.	18
P Preface to Papa by Gregory Hemingway portrait (1976)	N.A.	P & P 1982	3

Literature and Portraiture (proposal)

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TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
L Trial of the Warlock screenplay of Husymann's La-Bas	Playboy 1976	N.A.	17
P Mailer-Ehrlichman dialogue	Chic 1976	N.A.	10
P Two letters from Frank Crowther	Paris Review 1976	P & P 1982	4
P Our Man at Harvard 1977 lit. memoir	Esquire	P & P 1982	3
L Foreward to Genius & Lust	N.A.	Genius & Lust 1977	6
L Status, Genius & Lust	New American Review 1977	Genius & Lust 1977	8
L Genius, Genius & Lust	N.A.	Genius & Lust 1977	6
L Crazy Cock Genius & Lust	N.A.	Genius & Lust 1977	10
L Grease, Genius & Lust	N.A.	Genius & Lust 1977	9
L Preface to new ed. of Why Are We in Vietnam?	N.A.	P & P 1982	3
L Preface to A Transit to Narcissus	N.Y. Times 1977	Narcissus 1977	3
L Special Preface to new ed. of The Naked and the Dead	N.A.	Naked 1979	1
P The Bad News Bearers comic auto-obituary	Boston 1979	N.A.	

TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
P The Turkey Shoot, Ch. 38 of The Executioner's Song portrait	Playboy 1979	Song 1979	18
P Introduction to Abbie Hoffman's Soon to Be a Major Motion Picture portrait (1980)	N.A.	N.A.	3
reprinted in a slightly revised form as foreword to <u>The Best of Abbie Hoffman</u> (1989)			
P An Appeal to Lillian Hellman & Mary McCarthy portrait	N.Y. Times 1980	N.A.	2
L Before the Literary Bar self-interview on Women & Their Elegance	New York 1980	N.A.	21
L Three Interviews w/Michael Lennon	N.A.	P & P 1982	31
P Foreward to Hal Conrad's Dear Muffo portrait (1982)	N.A.	N.A.	3
P Dwight Macdonald portrait	Proceedings of the American Academy 1983	N.A.	3
P Clint Eastwood portrait	Parade 1983	N.A.	5
P The Prisoner of Celebrity: Jackie Kennedy portrait	Esquire 1983	N.A.	4
L Special message for Franklin ed. Tough Guys Don't Dance	N.A.	Tough Guys 1984	

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TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
L Huckleberry Finn, Alive at 100 essay	N.Y. Times 1984	N.A.	5
L Introduction to After the Lost Generation by John Aldridge (1984)	N.A.	N.A.	5
L The Hazards & Sources of Writing essay	Michigan Quarterly Review 1985	N.A.	12
L The Writer's Imagination & the Imagination of the State essay	N.Y.R.B. 1986	N.A.	3
P Fury, Fear and Philosophy portrait of Mike Tyson	Spin 1988	N.A.	6
L A Folly Repeated statement on Salman Rushdie	Writer's Digest 1989	N.A.	3
P Cosmic Ventures essay on God	Esquire 1989	N.A.	2
L Children of the Pied Piper rev. of Bret Easton's American Psycho	Vanity Fair 1991	N.A.	8
P The Warren Report portrait of Warren Beatty	Vanity Fair 1991	N.A.	12
P How the Wimp Won the War Essay on the Gulf War	Vanity Fair 1991	Same title Lord John Press 1992	12

TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	PERIODICAL	MAILER BOOK	LENGTH B/pgs.
L A Critic w/Balance response to John Simon's rev. of Harlot's Ghost	N.Y. Times 1992	N.A.	3
L Footfalls in the Crypt rev. of Oliver Stone's J.F.K.	Vanity Fair 1992	N.A.	6
P Earl and Lyndon: An Imaginary Conversation	Vanity Fair 1992	N.A.	4
P By Heaven Inspired portrait of G.O.P. family	New Republic 1992	N.A.	5
P The Best Lies Very Close to the Worst portrait of Ryan O'Neal & Sly Stallone	Esquire 1993	N.A.	6
P Like a Lady: Interview with Madonna	Esquire 1994	N.A.	23
P Black and White Justice (on O.J. Simpson)	New York 1995	N.A.	6
P Search for Deliverance (Buchanan Interview)	Esquire 1996	N.A.	25
P War of the Oxymorons (1992 conventions)	George 1996	N.A.	20
P How the Pharaoh Beat Boy George	George 1997	N.A.	14
L A Special Message for the First Edition [of David's Tale]	N.A., 1995	N.A.	2