

June 10, 1981

Dear Pete,

It was good of you to call last night.

I guess I last saw Turple while you were in the hospital in — when was it? 1958, 1959?

And though I was never personally close to him, he was certainly one of the heroes of my adolescence.

I may have met him actually before I met you. Holly and he started lurking around our house within about two hours after you all moved into Webster Street.

As I recall he was also an acquaintance of Bill Rowley's.

Of course, besides Turple's obvious inherent virtues, people I was close to influenced my opinion of him — you, and Holly, and my late sister, who thought he was Apollo incarnate.

As I grew up out of the age of heroes, still never a close friend of Turple's, he retained for me a good bit of his stature as the embodiment of certain virtues that some of us, not surprisingly, admire in others — size, good looks, physical prowess, (I mean, strength), courage & imagination, decency, etc., etc. Most of all, I suppose, indestructibility.

Well, it is surprising, the extent to which one whom I knew rather little is responsible for so much of ~~the~~ my permanent mental baggage. They are like myths and litanies: you mentioned "banana milkshakes" and the Old Country Kitchen; I remembered immediately "Big or small, we climb them all. Fully equipped rescues by appointment. TURP, chief guide;" and

"I've been reading Mickey Spillane and now I am rough like a waffle." He was the first person I knew to eschew a skiing costume — boots and skis were all he needed. I remember his Austin-Healey; I remember him falling down at the Portland ice rink.

There was little chance that I would have ever seen him again. But he is sure a large and permanent landmark in my life, and it is a stronger jolt than I would have predicted to learn that he was not indestructible. Yet I suppose one of the points of this little exercise is to show how, for one person — and probably hundreds of others — who never expected to see him again, there will remain a sizeable chunk of the indestructible Purple.

(I don't care — I'll have a few beers, anyway.)

Gary