

DEAR MS. HOLLINGSWORTH

I apologize for the lateness of my reply.
Received your letter, crisp ink on stiff
paper. Thought you might like to know
where I've been:

skulking in bars, eating well, impulse
shopping. But then, you probably know
better than me where I've been.

Not in Chi-town, not last Monday—no money
for bus fare, playoff tickets. The opportunity
was brief: the Cubbies' limit, like mine, has been
met. It's no excuse, but the only wind we know blows in.

I saw it all on TV--the one you bought me

[Clear color surround
sound gray little
galaxy plugged firmly
in front]

so long ago, September 2nd.

I never paid you back. Do you
Really mind? You send me letters
and sums, and you're sailing
across an ocean of letters and sums.
Could a whipping wind end
your vessel's voyage, the figure-
head dashed against the edge
of your desk by an accountant?

What am I going on about? You
wrote me for business. You require
a reply... I can meet your needs
as well as you have mine,
and two months with no hellos
is an awfully long time.

Know, then, that I don't look down
my nose at your shiny bar-coded
world. It's fun. Know also,
my dear Ms. Hollingsworth,
that the check is in the mail.