

Atwater

7861 South Shore Drive  
Chicago, Illinois

January 11, 1948

Miss Elizabeth R. Montgomery  
Seattle, Washington

My dear Miss Montgomery:

I am sorry to have been so long in answering you. I did get your questionnaire, but found it a little formidable. Indeed, I did not know how to answer a good deal of it. However, I can probably answer the questions in your letter - at least about Mr. Popper's Penguins.

My husband has been hopelessly paralyzed for the last fourteen years - but the facts about his career before then you could probably dig out of some old Who's Who's. When he was quite young he taught Greek at the University of Chicago (I was his student there, as a matter of fact) but he gave up the academic life for journalism. For a number of years he wrote a humorous column for the old Chicago Evening Post over the signature Rig. He used also to write articles for magazines.

As for the genesis of the penguin book, it grew out of our seeing the Byrd movies of an Antarctic expedition. We were so enchanted with the movies of the penguins that, like Mr. Popper, we sat through the movie twice. My husband began the book shortly after - probably with our own two daughters in mind for the audience.

He abandoned the manuscript, however, and I dug it out of his desk a couple of

years after his stroke, and decided to finish it. (I had previously done a few short pieces for magazines myself). The original manuscript was much more of a fantasy than its final form; it was all a sort of dream. I rewrote the first few chapters and supplied a practical domestic background. The humorous chapters which seem to entertain children, such as the one where the repairman is called to bore holes in the icebox for the penguin, I left untouched. The last few chapters I had to supply entirely.

Does this answer your questions? It is kind of you to be interested, and I am sorry to have been so slow in answering.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Atwater

(Mrs. Richard Atwater)