



TO THE BAG

TILL, 'TIL, AND TYPOS

To the *Bag*:

A few weeks ago while in New York, we visited one of our favorite places, The Morgan Library. The Morgan had an exhibition, *Gatsby to Garp*, that displayed various notes, letters and manuscripts of celebrated authors. One item that caught my eye was a letter dated April 17, 1961, from J.D. Salinger to his publisher, asking to be sent the final proofs of a book being readied for publication. (Salinger did not mention the title, but from the date, it must have been *Franny and Zooey*.)

Salinger wrote: "I worry about typos. I'm no better at catching them than anybody else, but I like to stay in the hunt till the bitter end."

The letter resonated with me because I have been plagued by typos all my life and still am.

I also wondered if this very letter had a typo of sorts: "till"? should that be "'til"? A subsequent trip to Mother Google, however, made it clear that Salinger, and not Parker, knew what he was talking about. It appears that till came first, perhaps in the 12th century, and was later followed by until and eventually 'til. One source suggested that, while till is favored in Scotland, 'til is more common in the United States. That was some solace, but hardly grounds for rebuking Salinger.

I continue to struggle with typos and rely on unpaid editors to ferret them out. But I shall continue to write, fortified by the obser-

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vation of St. Augustine (some 1200 years before Descartes), “Fallor, ergo sum” (I err, therefore I am).

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