The Hemingways arrived in Paris on December 22, 1921 and a few weeks later moved into their first apartment at 74 rue Cardinal Lemoine. It was a miserable apartment with no running water and a bathroom that was basically a closet with a slop bucket inside. Hemingway tried to minimize the primitiveness of the living quarters for his wife Hadley who had grown up in relative splendor, but despite the conditions she endured, carried away by her husband’s enthusiasm for living the bohemian lifestyle. Ironically, they could have afforded much better; with Hemingway’s job and Hadley’s trust fund their annual income was $3,000, a decent sum in the inflated economies of Europe at the time. Hemingway rented a room at 39 rue Descartes where he could do his writing in peace.

With a letter of introduction from Sherwood Anderson, Hemingway met some of Paris’ prominent writers and artists and forged quick friendships with them during his first few years. Counted among those friends were Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Beach, James Joyce, Max Eastman, Lincoln Steffens and Wyndham Lewis, and he was acquainted with the painters Miro and Picasso. These friendships would be instrumental in Hemingway’s development as a writer and artist.

Hemingway’s reporting during his first two years in Paris was extensive, covering the Geneva Conference in April of 1922, The Greco-Turkish War in October, the Lausanne Conference in November and the post war convention in the Ruhr Valley in early 1923. Along with the political pieces he wrote lifestyle pieces as well, covering fishing, bullfighting, social life in Europe, skiing, bobsledding and more.

Just as Hemingway was beginning to make a name for himself as a reporter and a fledgling fiction writer, and just as he and his wife were hitting their stride socially in Europe, the couple found out that Hadley was pregnant with their first child. Wanting the baby born in North America where the doctors and hospitals were better, the Hemingways left Paris in 1923 and moved to Toronto, where he wrote for the Toronto Daily Star and waited for their child to arrive.

John Hadley Nicanor Hemingway was born on October 10, 1923 and by January of 1924 the young family boarded a ship and headed back to Paris where Hemingway would finish making a name for himself.

With a recommendation from Ezra Pound, Ford Maddox Ford let Hemingway edit his fledgling literary magazine the Transatlantic Review. In recommending Hemingway to Ford, Pound said "...He's an experienced journalist. He writes very good verse and he's the finest prose stylist in the world."

Ford published some of Hemingway's early stories, including "Indian Camp" and "Cross Country Snow" and generally praised the younger writer.
The magazine lasted only a year and a half (until 1925), but allowed Hemingway to work out his own artistic theories and to see them in print in a respectable journal.

An unparalleled creative flurry...

From 1925 to 1929 Hemingway produced some of the most important works of 20th century fiction, including the landmark short story collection In Our Time (1925) which contained "The Big Two-Hearted River." In 1926 he came out with his first true novel, The Sun Also Rises (after publishing Torrents of Spring, a comic novel parodying Sherwood Anderson in 1925). He followed that book with Men Without Women in 1927; it was another book of stories which collected "The Killers," and "In Another Country." In 1929 he published A Farewell to Arms, arguably the finest novel to emerge from World War I. In four short years he went from being an unknown writer to being the most important writer of his generation, and perhaps the 20th century.

The first version of In Our Time (characterized by the lowercase letters in the title) was published by William Bird’s Three Mountain Press in 1924 and illustrated Hemingway’s new theories on literature. It contained only the vignettes that would later appear as interchapters in the American version published by Boni & Liveright in 1925. This small 32 page book, of which only 170 copies were printed, contained the essence of Hemingway’s aesthetic theory which stated that omitting the right thing from a story could actually strengthen it. Hemingway equated this theory with the structure of an iceberg where only 1/8 of the iceberg could be seen above water while the remaining 7/8 under the surface provided the iceberg’s dignity of motion and contributed to its momentum. Hemingway felt a story could be constructed the same way and this theory shows up even in these early vignettes. A year after the small printing of In Our Time came out, Boni & Liveright published the American version, which contains ten short stories along with the vignettes. The collection of stories is amazing, including the much anthologized "Soldier’s Home," as well as "Indian Camp," "A Very Short Story," "My Old Man" and the classic "Big Two-Hearted River" parts one and two. "Big Two Hearted River" was a eureka story for Hemingway, who realized that his theory of omission really could work in the story form.

Next came The Torrents of Spring, a short comic novel that satirized Hemingway’s early mentor Sherwood Anderson and allowed him to break his relationship with Boni & Liveright to move to Scribner’s. Scribner’s published Torrents (which Scott Fitzgerald called the finest comic novel ever written by an American) in 1925, then a year later published Hemingway’s second novel The Sun Also Rises, which the publisher had bought sight unseen.

The Sun Also Rises introduced the world to the "lost generation" and was a critical and commercial success. Set in Paris and Spain, the book was a story of unrequitable love against a backdrop of bars and bullfighting. In 1927 came Men Without Women and soon after he began working on A Farewell To Arms.

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While he could do no wrong with his writing career, his personal life had began to show signs of wear. He divorced his first wife Hadley in 1927 and married Pauline Pfeiffer, an occasional fashion reporter for the likes of Vanity Fair and Vogue, later that year. In 1928 Hemingway and Pauline left Paris for Key West, Florida in search of new surroundings to go with their new life together. They would live there for nearly twelve years, and Hemingway found it a wonderful place to work and to play, discovering the sport of big game fishing which would become a life-long passion and a source for much of his later writing. That same year Hemingway received word of his father’s death by suicide. Clarence Hemingway had begun to suffer from a number of physical ailments that would exacerbate an already fragile mental state. He had developed diabetes, endured painful angina and extreme headaches. On top of these physical problems he also suffered from a dismal financial situation after speculative real estate purchases in Florida never panned out. His problems seemingly insurmountable, Clarence Hemingway shot himself in the head. Ernest immediately traveled to Oak Park to arrange for his funeral.