

JILL TO AL JULY 18, 1942 (A)

Darling --

My god, it's hot as hell here too. Just an inkling of what you must be suffering. I do believe it's been a 100 outside today and it must be 110 in here. It's funny, but most of the time, like at work, I don't actually feel hot. I just show symptoms, like drowsiness and headache. About four I casually informed Lundy (whom I call Bern now) that I had a headache, so with all the authority of his 25 years he told me to go home. Which I did with great dispatch. I really must have felt terrible, because I fell asleep as soon as I got inside the door, which is unusual for me who has to read *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and take 10 grains of Nembutal before I usually can drop off. I woke up about 6:30 sick as hell, and weakly read the chapter in my first-aid book on heat stroke. It said to drink salt water, which I did. Then I went swimming alone until 8:30 when I had a long dentist appointment, in re which I composed the following lines:

The dentist is an awful bore

I'll never go there

Any more.

Then I sat in Tallman's lovely garden and ate ham sandwiches and drank several beers until now. I am staying up now (it's about 11) until the girl next door, who borrowed my iron, returns it. I think I must be slightly tight from the beer and heat, because I certainly am typing worse than usual.

Tomorrow I hope to go back to work but am pessimistic about it. I certainly can't get much accomplished in that hot little office, yet I guess everybody else has to go through the same thing. We have quite a lot of work now too, which makes life more tolerable even though I'm not getting it done very fast. I'm picking up all sorts of odd and useless bits of information, like what's with parity payments. And who's who in the Farm Bureau Federation.

Rose is coming in tomorrow to do my washing. I have a great

pile of dirty clothes that I'm obviously never going to get washed myself, so I figured it was worth a couple of dollars to rid myself of the haunting fear of MESSY CLOTHES, GAPOSIS and UNDERWEAR ODOR.

The water was right cold tonight, as a matter of fact, and I could hardly stay in more than a minute. I had a good time chaffing with a couple of boys about Vic's age or maybe younger. My, but little boys are a joy to have around, if they are not ruffians, as these boys weren't. Remind me to have a lot of them some day.

Last night I had dinner with Maxine in the patio at International House and who should show up but Rosable and Buss. However, they left right away because Buss had some psychotic fancy about hiring a convertible.

Then Maxine and I went down to the lake for a couple of hours and cooled off. Today I am full of bites, but as I said before, compared to you my plight is sheer honey and roses.

It doesn't seem as if the time is far off that we'll be together again. It's a comforting thought. I love you so very much, dear; the thought of that alone comforts me. And then, you know my habit of always making invidious comparisons between myself and other people. I just know that there aren't other people who are in love as much as we are, or in exactly the same way. I suppose other people have gotten married and have thought so, but then, they were the kind of people who wanted to get married anyway. The nice part about us is that we didn't want to get married for the sake of getting married, but we did.

I suppose I must go to sleep now. It's a dull thought.

All my love, Jill

JILL TO AL JULY 18, 1942 (B)

Sweetheart --

Our telephone conversation was certainly no bed of roses,

though it was fun talking to you. I bawled out the operator in North Carolina afterwards, and she said she would deduct two of the eight minutes we talked. I couldn't get her to do any more. She said, logically enough for a Southerner, that you should have told her of the difficulty from your end and she would have cleared the line.

I am in quite a snit tonight, to use Jane Tallman's expression. Rosable and Buss wanted to take me to the Panther Room to hear the Duke who is playing there, and to dine. But I declined politely. Buss is so impressed by the fact that I refuse to be nice and/or deferential to him that he would resort to such measures to win me over. He isn't drinking any more and Rosable thinks he may have snapped out of it. I doubt it, of course, but as long as she's happy with him, oh well.

Anyway, I couldn't find any girls to go to the movies with and I dislike the notion of staying home on a hot night like this. So I shall presently cycle out to Joan's and chat with her. It's really too bad that we can't ever see more of each other. We practically never do get together and make up for it with long conversations on the phone. Although I agree with you that Joan is rather bitchy, I have a great deal of respect for her and consider her the most intelligent and strong-minded of my friends, if not the sweetest. Furthermore, she lives a decent, well-directed kind of life, which is more than I can say for either the Tallman-Chapman menage, which houses a rather stupid and immoral lot of people, in beautiful surroundings, to be sure, and my Hyde Park gal friends -- Maxine and Marion -- who though wonderfully responsive, easy to get along with and bright enough, live the rather depressing lives of single women without men. As for Vera, I can't stand her any more; she surrounds herself with little stooges over whom she works her awful neurosis. Rosable I do like, for a time, but you know Rosable.

I didn't go to work this morning, although I woke up painfully early. I just couldn't face the prospect of dressing up and going down to that awful loop. Instead, I stayed in bed, unable to

sleep, and read Samuel Butler, who is wonderful. You must read *The Way of All Flesh* some time, if you haven't already. Told in the wicked iconoclastic phrases that only a 19th century Englishman can use effectively, it is a harrowing story of growing up in the Victorian mores. It is naturally, very anti-religious. While those sentiments may be outmoded today, he shows how parents wickedly use religious symbols to work out their own sense of insecurity on their children. The parents in this book subject their children to an amazing amount of senseless cruelty, never remembering that they themselves are unhappy just because their parents treated them that way.

I suppose I swore over the phone tonight because of that ever-present feeling of helplessness and frustration we both feel at being separated. I get even madder because I see so many people around here doing useless and even evil things in perfect freedom.

I fret about money, too, because I find we are no better off after all these months than if I weren't working at all. I don't particularly want to squander my funds away, yet I do feel I should have enough of a surplus to buy a few clothes against next year when I may not be able to get any. And I'd really like to buy as many bonds as I have a surplus over and above these other expenditures. After all, we can always buy them now and sell them if we need money later on. But somewhere the money goes; maybe I am paying too much rent. I really don't know, being constitutionally unable to devise a budget. Maybe by next payday I'll find myself suddenly rich and will maybe indulge in a 50 dollar bond. It would be nice. I guess I'm succumbing to all the propaganda.

The water was cold again today -- so cold that I could hardly stay in for more than a few minutes at a time. Wouldn't it be nice to be on the beach together. I tell you, our romance started on the water's edge and it will probably end that way -- with Al sinking rapidly with a cramp and Jill hanging on with a deathgrip, and with a vague notion that she is carrying out the principles of lifesaving, junior grade. I couldn't think of a nicer

end than that, although before I go, I really would like to have a few words with you on land, preferably in bed.

That's all for now, darling. Let me remind you that I love you more than anything in the world -- and just don't you forget it.

Oh, I forgot to tell you -- I have taken to wearing a corsage of defense stamps in my hair. As I told someone this morning who commented on it, I really should make my entries and exits in any given place in a buck and wing, singing "Any Bonds Today?" A reggilar lil petriot, that's me.

All my love (does that signature bore you?)

Jill

JILL TO AL JULY 19, 1942

Sweetheart --

I just finished a hearty hunt breakfast at the Windermere, courtesy of J. F. Brown. He is still very apologetic, and whom am I to sneer at a change from my usual Sunday fare of cold milk and plums. He says he wants to write you a letter of apology but I assured him it wasn't necessary. I think you would dislike to see him grovel, no matter how hostile you are and were to him. At least, I hope you do. He is still batty and completely egocentric, but so is Rosable, then, and at least he is sober.

I forgot to tell you in yesterday's letter that I shall be glad to call Merriam for an appointment and hurl my fair white body at his feet, in the manner of the cinema in the third decade of this century. No greater love hath no woman ... I don't know exactly what I will say to him, but I'll think of something. I can always memorize the instructions in your letter.

I bumped into Earl Johnson on the street the other day and he wanted to know how my quote boy friend was. I told him not to call you my boy friend, it sounded so illicit, which mildly amused him. He is either hostile to all women, just to this woman, or he

is vaguely jealous of me. I don't know which.

Also, while we are on the subject of bumping into people, who did I run into about a month ago at Charles A. Stevens but Marge Goldman and her mother. She apparently just was in for a short time and we had a nice and hurried chat and she said we simply must look them up when we are in Washington on your furlough. Funny coincidence department, don't you think.

I had a fine time at Joan's last night. It took only about 20 minutes to bike out there, and the two of us promptly polished off a half gallon. Then some Irish boys, friends of Tom's, from Oak Park dropped in and then le beau Kelly himself when the 3-to-11 shift was over. Tom has had his head shaved -- that's what you get from reading the Daily Worker in the barber chair, and looks simply gruesome, what with the bumps on his head showing up plainly and the black rings around his eyes from the coke in the pits. He makes bottoms, you know, which means he has to shovel fresh coke on the hot bases of the furnaces. I guess it takes a great deal of strength to do that in this weather -- the mercury hits monumental heights in the mill.

I biked back around 12:30 with a jar of baked beans Joan had given me. We little housefraus, you know. The cap to the jar kept on coming off every time I hit a bump and the consequence is that my bike looks as if somebody had whooped on it this morning. An awful lot of people whistled at me coming home, but actually, it is a lot safer than walking home late at night. I like the feeling of independence a bike gives me. If I feel like leaving a place I can just up and leave and I don't have to suck around waiting for a ride from some undesirable party. I never have to worry about parking, like you do with a car, or be dependent on gas stations -- with the exception of filling up twice a week on free air. Best of all, I can vent all my aggressions by riding wildly and there's not nearly as much chance of my incurring physical lesions as if I behaved the same way in a car. I fell off yesterday -- sort of sideslipped between the pavement and a grass plot, you know -- and have a big black and blue spot on my leg. It doesn't hurt much but

looks formidable.

I am writing you early today because I am going down to the beach soon and maybe will go to see *This Gun for Hire*, which I am very anxious to see. It has this alleged discovery Alan Ladd in it, and is supposed to be a fine murder movie. Johnny Wiggins said something about meeting me at the beach and maybe I can get him to take me to the movies. Darling you don't mind my seeing him once in a while, do you? He is lots of fun to be with and I figure that when a guy is as homely as that he presents no threat to the home in anybody's mind. I guess you must realize by now that I've searched the wide world over and can find no one as beautiful, bright, kind to animals and adept at the Australian crawl as you, darling. Nor nobody I could love so much, which naturally has nothing to do with the aforementioned qualities.

I had a nice dream about you last night. Something about you marching off with a regiment of men -- that wasn't so nice -- and me tagging after you showering you with kisses and tears. Now that wouldn't seem like a nice dream to you, but underneath my bright modern exterior I have a fine enjoyment of Victorian pathos.

Sometimes I wish I could write love letters. Rosable and I were talking about that this morning. I know I never really say anything to you that could possibly go down in the history of fiery epistles, and it must be disappointing to you sometimes. The most I ever get off is some bright little remark about missing and/or loving you, and that I never do in any particularly original way. You, on the other hand, could be very adept at love letter writing and are, frequently. I guess you know I love you by now, but you might possibly like to hear it in a different form, now and then. But how can I speak of romance when this goddam typewriter slides all over the place, for one thing? (I lost my pen.) And I guess I really don't much care for love letters, for some reason or other. I probably got the idea in my early adolescence that they were mushy, and never have gotten over that post-pubertal embarrassment at either receiving or sending

them. I don't like movies about love either, although I don't mind reading a good psychological novel about the subject. I guess it's because the ordinary brief expression of the love motif, as in movies or letters or most short stories, tends to be corny just because of the necessity of condensing the whole thing into a few black and white symbols.

But tell me you love me -- that I like to hear.

Shit on this typewriter!

Your loving wife,

Jill

[in red pencil]

Dearest,

Wed.

Neither pen nor pencil are about, ergo the red. It's a red letter day, however, in a sense. I was paid for the first time, the munificent pittance of \$74.45. After the first mixed shock of pleasure and surprise at the smallness of it, I began to figure it all out. Total earnings in the army to July 1 = approx. \$140.00. Of this, \$7 insurance for 5 months, yours and Dads dependency allotment for June, laundry and \$2.50 for 2 months' bond payment. So it is about what I should have expected. My travel money should be forthcoming soon, about \$30. Tomorrow, I'll send you a money order for \$50. Try to not spend it right away. If you can't afford it, you might move North in August. Dammit, the next time I see you I won't stop unless there is a hell of a good reason & you are going to be the judge of the reason. Because I might be blind to any reason. All I want to do is to show you how much I love you in 1,000,000n ways.

I received 3 letters today, from *[Harold]* Lasswell, Bill Steinbrecher, & Ed. Lasswell was encouraging in a way and quite kindly. I think he appreciates the workings of the human soul more than most people. Really, he is such a big shot that he doesn't have to answer all my letters. He wrote "If I see any way to concentrate the accumulated members of the intelligentsia (Military Intelligence) at vital central points, I shall

of course be glad to act. Don't hesitate to keep me informed about your situation, since, as you know, decisions are often very quickly made."

My B.C. found out for me that the School for M. G. is open only to Captains and above to Colonels. Which leaves me out for a good while. However, I'll learn more if Joe Harris replies to my letter. Isn't it silly how these narrow military men of no background will be entrusted with broad political & social policies?

Bill's letter was quite gossipy. Ed Dunton may go into the army - he may do it but he'll regret it. (He's the real driving type, dearest, not I, incidentally. Ask Bill. I really don't push if I can avoid it but Ed loves it.) Ed's letter was cute. Dean Smith reads the Reader's Digest, eh? I thought he read only Boys' Life. I underrated him.

Zolot is engaged to a Dakota girl with lots of land. Perhaps some day he'll have a rancho. What a son of the soil he has turned out to be.

I feel flush tonight with cigarette money in my jeans and enough for coke and a movie. Shades of my childhood, how humble my state!

You should have a great time at Glen Park. It's cool and quiet, just the thing for your jaded city nerves, as the ad goes. While you're there, follow the brook as I did once, it's very pretty & scenic for such a trickle.

Much, much love, darling, for a much too wonderful girl.

Al

AL TO JILL JULY 16, 1942

Dearest love,

Your letter of yesterday came today, an all-time velocity. And so you will get quickly my key to the house and this money order

for \$50. I haven't cashed either of the two checks you sent me and won't. So don't figure them as cutting into the bank account.

I couldn't quite make out whether you fell off your bike or not. I hope you don't have any scratches or bruises on your lovely body. It would break my heart.

I made another phonograph recording today at the Service Club with the compliments of Pepsi-Cola. You'll probably get it next week. It happened so fast that I don't remember what I said or whether it was only one big "ah, h,h".

This is the stiffest week of the course, academically speaking. Gun gunnery is just a maze of diagrams & calculations. We whirl our slide rules feverishly and plot all sorts of charts & diagrams.

I love you, I love you, I love you - excuse the outburst, but I want you to know that you are indispensable to my whole idea of life and also I can't help expressing a great burst of animal spirits which wells up in me. To be in a cool bed with you is a heavenly thought. To hold your hand indefinitely is just as heavenly. It scares me to think how much I love you sometimes when I can't demonstrate it. I'm liable to have an emotional fit of some kind. I hope (and believe) this next month will fly by so that you can shut your eyes and lo, I'll be there to kiss them open.

I can't think of anything to say or describe in short order, and it's late & my mind racing at a constant acceleration around the logarithmic scale. I might say, local news, the graduating West Point class visited the school today for a couple of days & Harvey said they fired the guns very badly. Ack Ack Artillery is given to only a few of the top men, they say, and of course when at school they don't get a chance to fire our 90 mm. or 3".

Here go the lights. Love, darling

Al

AL TO JILL JULY 19, 1942

Darling, there is really no way of expressing how much I would have loved to be holding the source of The Voice in my arms, or of revealing how heart-broken I am that we can't be together in body as well as soul. Only the real assurance that that will be accomplished soon keeps me from defying law, order, society and all the circles of purgatory & hell. That assurance is the realest and happiest part of my life. When I smile here and am not too sad, it is because I know we shall shortly be caressing each other and because you will be amused when I relate the source of the humour. I know that our love is too great to be sideswiped by any treatment the environment may deal us. I believe you are the best girl in the world and the only reasons our conversations will never be continuous repetitions of that thought is because you know I believe that at all times & everywhere, and because there is an infinite variety of modes of expression which seem not to repeat it - a mutual smile & glance, a symphony of understanding, an identity of interests and a physical attraction and passion which demonstrates our love without the need of expression in words.

The show last night was basically like many class B shows, Irene Dunn in Lady in a Jam. I've noticed an increasing amount of funny nonsense & fantasy amidst hackneyed plots. There seems to be a banal lunatic on the fringes of the Hollywood world who gets his touches in a number of otherwise vacuous movies. Afterwards, Harvey and I walked around for a good while, discussing things in general, I wondering the while whether you had found someone to visit or to go to the show with. The situation was anomalous to say the least, the Great Jill seeking companionship & not finding it. Tell me what you did finally. Did you commit a crime on the devil finds work principle, perhaps assassinate McCormick or Brooks or your landlady? Did you meet up with a mongrel pup? Or did you lift a volume of Tolstoi from the shelf and contemplate the vicissitudes of life? Or did you just go to sleep?

I wish I could have slept last night, the only time I ever get a chance. But damned if an air raid alarm wasn't sounded at 3:30

A.M. and the howling sirens sent us reeling from sleepiness into the outdoors and the outstretched hairy arms of the mosquitoes. I lurched about in the darkness, looking for an irregular ditch of some sort and finally, after stumbling over a few other forms and saying, "Oops, pardon me" to those who got in ditches first, settled on a piece of open ground to sleep until the "all clear" signal. That was not to be, however. The mosquitoes were much more in evidence than the hostile planes and their hum like that of a P-40. Some men had left their shirts behind but I had mine, fortunately. I had my gas mask, too, which goes everywhere with me, you know. The insects darted here & there like d'Artagnans in miniature, attacking everywhere, even through the cotton shirt and socks. I tried to grovel and cover from them, but it was pretty hopeless. I even put on my gas mask for a while but they got at my neck. After an hour of this under a million stars which looked on rather passively from their million of light years away, I pulled up my shirt over my head and buttoned it, doubling up with my hands in my pockets so that with my gas mask alongside of me, to the casual observer I looked like an unromantic imitation of the headless Horseman. About 5 o'clock, the signal came and I dived into my sheeted bed for a couple of hours before breakfast.

The test in gun gunnery wasn't as bad as I had expected & I think I did very well in it. But there is no such thing as confidence in this school. I don't want you to worry about my getting through because so far there is no cause for worry. I know even if I did come back without getting through, we would both shrug our shoulders and enjoy ourselves anyway. But they do relieve 30% of the men in each class and it is quite difficult to penetrate to the reasons behind the actions. Knowing how coincidental "success" or "failure" actually is, it is ironic to read letters like those from Bill Steinbrecher & Hank assuring me I'm a great leader and all the other boys think so too. It's no use telling them it's not a matter of leadership, that it's a matter of shining shoes and brass, of yelling out your lungs, of striking the right side of the right officer. Or rather it would be of use to them, but not to many others who know me less well and the army even less well.

Reflections on your job and associated financial problems - all to the tune of "What does it matter, Dear". Forget about worrying about your job. OK, so it's a well-paid position, OK, so it gives you something to do. But you're going to be with me very soon anyway. And I like to think that if you get fired soon enough, you would be able to relax and swim & eat hearty meals with the family in Glen Park. As far as money is concerned, you could live up North in August, though you needn't. Don't you remember that we have plenty of money to last you until Fall, and that in November, you'll get \$150 from the Army and that I can get money from Buzz at any time if needs be, since I still have a \$100 credit with him. So uncrease those brows, darling, & ponder how we can win the war sooner, the sooner to forget all this military nonsense. Nothing like great problems to take one's mind off little ones, they tell me.

How are Paul & Ann, have you heard? Let's plan on visiting them as soon as possible? When does she expect the infant?

This coming week, we spend on Directors, super-super calculating machines which tell the guns where to fire. The following week we have target practice with the 90 mms. and then we have Orientation, a subject which should fit me admirably as the navigator of your boats. With my technical knowledge & your physical dexterity and seamanship we should be able to do some fancy sailing.

It's almost time for Sunday dinner. Afterwards I'll study & read the newspapers. I doubt whether any mail will be coming in. I'll go down to the ocean and stumble thru the surf dreaming I'm holding you in hand, and cultivate the symptoms of shock.

Love to you, darling. Marrying you was a fortune than which none greater exists.

Your

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 21, 1942

My sweet snookums -

That probably nauseates you but I really don't mean it to. My calling you pet names is very spontaneous, and since I'm not the gushy type I guess I really mean it. I just got your letters and, like talking to you, they bring on a great surge of emotion. I was pleased, tho fortunately not stirred, by the \$50 check. Also the key. Maybe I shall buy a fountain pen with a small part of the check. I know you don't like typing and I don't like this pencil.

I bought a nifty slacks outfit - loosely-fit jacket & pants - at Field's today. Only \$11 reduced from 23. Color - aquamarine. Material - silk (i.e. rayon) gabardine. I don't have a dressy pair of slacks to wear (not that they're anything but a luxury) and thought how gay & nice they'd look when we went calling on people in Indian Summer - you in your striking Officer's uniform of grey and cocky (khaki?), a color combination I'll never be able to fathom.

Lasswell sounds encouraging and I think it's swell that he writes you. I am getting cold feet about seeing Merriam. Do you still want me to go? Does he like Buss? They're coming in this weekend.

Jeepers, I don't know what there is to write about. I swam yesterday aft. & the water was cold & I came home & ate with Rosable and read so that I am now finished with Butler and am sorry of it. I think I am going to see that movin' pitcher I was telling you about with J. Wiggins tonight.

I had an embarrassing discussion with Rubin today about negroes. I said that politically Jews did not view themselves as sharing common interests & problems with other minority groups, that they thought of themselves as a very special group named Jews and that therefore they did not support, as a political pressure group or individuals, liberal pro-minority legislation such as anti-lynching bills, or oppose such decisions as the one recently handed down by the Supr. Ct. in re Jehovah witnesses. I said I was grieved to hear Hyde Park mothers

express pleasure at the fact that there were no "niggers" in the schools their children went to. Rubin said, "Why, I'm glad my children never went to school with Negroes" and I gulped and turned away. There was tension thereafter. Why can't I keep my big progressive mouth shut?

I bet you can't read my writing no more. Love and love again.

Jill

This is nice paper, ain't it?

AL TO JILL JULY 20, 1942

Dear love,

You spake words veritable, darling. We do love each other more than other people love each other. It is the plainest fact, and thus some of our kind friends can't understand us, because they have no such feeling. I have no intention of doing so, but if I didn't see you in years I would still love you incorrigibly. I could walk in on you at your frowsiest, with Power's flounciest on one arm and a female Proust on the other, chuck both, and give you breakfast and bath (bed, too). It is for me a love beyond redemption - you can get fired, forget breakfast, wear unlovely pink underwear, and call me abusive names, and all I can do is snarl and jeer. But the bars are unbreakable.

I guess I did pretty well in Gun Gunnery but the subject this week is just as bad & the heat is killing. I enjoyed signing the August 1 payroll today. That means I'll get paid then. I also shall get my travel money, about \$23, tho my ration money, about \$25, will come later.

In this letter you will find the jewels of the sea, which I stubbed up yesterday swimming. I hope you like them, I'll send more later. Going down to swim is fun but the trip back just about negates the cooking effects of the water. There were 28 men in the back of the army truck, 10 of them Negroes, which of course didn't bother me, but that number gives more than a poor

imitation of a sardine can. I had a 200-lb sweating buck private on my knees & I was at best balanced precariously between a colored boy and the outside strap. Gosh, how the sweat poured down all around. That's the way it is every day here this summer - Un grande sweat.

Just to be different, I'll say that the Russians will finish the Germans this year with the help of a small second front. (I know that the news is supposed to be bad.)

I hope by now you have recovered from your heat wave. It sounded as if you were really heated. DArling, you don't have to prelude every little complaint with the remark "but you must be even worse." I can never lose an appreciation of the trials of a Chicago summer or of a loop job, or of dull work. Moreover, I've learned in the dulcet years of our love to enjoy your complaining almost as much as your squeals of joy.

Toujours l'amour,

Al

P.S. I wrote this so I might as well send it even now.

Dearest Jill,

Friday

Here it is night again and I again won't have time to write much. It's incredible that men can be kept so busy. We just run around like ants all day, doing all sorts of instructive things.

And how they've piled the academics on us this week. Gun gunnery is interesting as hell but it is as complicated as hell. There are so many factors to consider, wind, air density, the age of the gun, distance, height, azimuth (direction), projectile drift, fuze range, time of flight, speed of the target, < of target, etc. ad mania. Far be it for me to feel intellectually intimidated but you can't help the feeling. It's all so novel and there's so much of it. My trouble comes not from comprehension, but from computing. I make little slips here and there which make me sore as hell.

Don't worry about your job, dear. There are others to be had

and you always have a home on the North side, you know or in Washington or in Frisco, I suppose. You see, you are in great demand, being such a lovely thing to have around the household. There is always my duffle bag and allotment, too, dear. I don't want you ever to worry about such a silly thing. You know you don't have to persuade me to let you not be a career woman. Your brains are wasted on anything except procreation in the long run. Just think how sad it would be if Mom had never had her four sons.

I got a letter from Hank today. It was optimistic in a nice way - he warned me against bucking by traces, declared that he is in love with a nurse who visited him from N.Y. and evidently is thinking of us in a future political enterprise of some sort. He is a sergeant now, a swell thing. But he is a damn fine soldier and should be an officer. He is a lot more capable than most of the men here and can handle men much better.

I sure am looking forward to seeing him again soon.

I must stop.

Love, dearest.

Al

P.S. Hope you got the key, pin & money order.

JILL TO AL JULY 23, 1942

Sweetheart,

You at last have sufficient grounds for divorce -- if you want them. "Judge - not only did she refuse to get up to make my breakfast, not only did she insult me bitterly when I got up, but - but, Judge, she spent all my money".

Well I did - but I'm sure you won't mind. (Hah) Just remind me never to complain to you about money, a thing I do periodically I think, just for the hell of it. (Really, darling, I never actually worry about money. We've got lots - for us. But sometimes people

start owing me a lot, and I just get sore.)

Anyway, I just relaxed into a state of infantilism when I got your check. Maybe you'll feel better when you hear what I got. An itemized account is herewith forthcoming:

One bond for us both (I guess I'd better put that first)	18.75
One pair very high-heeled shoes (navy blue) from Joseph's (reduced from 8.95) for Al	4.95
One blue & white silk dress from Saks (reduced from 11)	5.95
One Saks bag for Mon (reduced from 5 or 6)	2.00
One for me (blue to match shoes) " "	2.00
One fountain pen for me	3.50
One pair play shoes (white) which are going back to Saks tomorrow	<u>4.00</u>
	41.15

I feel pretty good 'cause everything I got is pretty-pretty, which you like, and everything on sale, which deludes me into thinking myself a sharp trader. I shall look very spiffy for early September when you get home. Fortunately all these things are too dressy to wear to work.

Saks is open now on Wednesdays til 9 o'clock for, quote, war workers (that's a laugh) and career girls. That makes it convenient though. After I got thru I came up North & am writing this letter at your folks.

Is there anything you need or like? Incidentally, I raised my monthly bond deduction from \$2 to \$16, figuring that I really should give 10% as they say.

So, as you see, I'm feeling very opulent. Part of it is that I got a

\$90 dividend or rather, quarterly payment from home.

Jeepers - it's 10 o'clock already. Everybody sends love, most of all me. (Well, there wasn't anything else to write about except I love you, I love you, I love you). Bored?

Jill

JILL TO AL (UNDATED)

Dearest Gun Gunner--

I think that is the silliest phrase and laugh hysterically every time I see it in your letters. It doesn't take much to amuse me, drool, drool.

I am in receipt of a lot of shells and pebbles, most of which slid down my neck since I was lying down when I opened your letter. The ones I retrieved were very pretty, although some of the bigger ones got broken in the mail. I think the P. O. must put all the letters through a wringer. Nearly everything you have sent me so far has been bent if not broken. Some of the shells must have had live inhabitants when you sent them, because they smelled funny, in a nice sea way. I also got your Pepsi-Cola record, and I'm sure it will hit the spot the way that foul drink never did. I'll bring it up north when I go up Sunday to see Mir and Buss (who are coming in Sat.) and play it for the delectation of all. I don't know anybody with a record machine down here except Rosable, and I really couldn't take seeing her tonight.

I slept out on the back porch at your house on that old cot we used to have, and I really slept terribly. I am in one of my non-sleeping snits again, and am so tired now that I would burst into tears if anyone were to say boo. Fortunately, I have enough sense to stay away from any parties given to saying boo. Johnny Wiggins wanted me to go with him and a friend who is also an old school friend of J. Hess's -- they both were -- to hear Duke Ellington tonight at the Sherman, but I had enough sense to decline, using that old phrase that probably has only been used in full sincerity by me and a very few other anti-social dolls,

to wit, I'd rather stay home and read. The New Yorker is out today and I got Erewhon from the public library because I enjoyed The Way of All Flesh so much (same author) so who can blame me?

I didn't write you Tuesday night because I got started working out some scheme for promoting McKeough to the housewives of the state and all of a sudden it was 10 o'clock. The scheme was one of those cards for housewives to post in their kitchens giving the list of foods that are price-controlled -- it's been done by OCD but not very decoratively -- and also leaving a space for writing in the food bargains of the week which they could erase slate-like. However, Rubin put thumbs down on it for a reason that was good but that I can't remember now.

I'm working pretty hard these days for me. I've gotten up a leaflet instructing absentee voters and service men on how to vote, and also enjoining one and all to register. And also some letter forms that absentee voters can use to send in for their ballot applications. It was my idea -- the leaflet was -- but I notice that I don't get any credit for it since it all goes through Rubin's hands. I don't care much, since that's the way publicity and advertising offices, or any kind of office for that matter works, and I am past disillusionment. And besides it's nice having something else to do but maps. I still haven't finished the ward maps yet and Hodes is on my neck every day. But I do hope that when the time comes when Hodes say to Rubin, what the hell good is that girl for anyway, Rubin will assert my usefulness, paltry as it may be. They've worked up that story book business I did on Curly Brooks into a very cute little booklet -- a professional production man did the job and didn't change my copy too much and added a lot of humorous touches. We all hope it gets into print, since it is a very whimsical and new form of campaign propaganda. However, we do know that the professional politicians from the central committee aren't given to as much whimsy as our office.

Some foul ball in your neighborhood put a dog license application in your mail box, a subtle warning, I guess. Your

father says it isn't worth three dollars to keep that goddamn dog out of the pound, but I'll sneak into the license office tomorrow and get one. It's in the building, so at least it won't be any bother.

I had dinner at International House and it is full of corn-fed corps men talking meteorology. A bunch of them sat down at the table where I was eating and made a lot of noise, interfering with my perusal of the New Yorker and giving me indigestion. My god but those men are unsophisticated, or maybe I just can't tolerate midwestern (Iowa) and southern accents.

When you write Hank send him my regards. I haven't heard from Paul and Ann for a long while again, but then I don't write either. Knowing how averse I am to letter-writing these days, I don't blame them at all. It is a lot of trouble when you have so many other things to do. And it's sort of different, writing to your family or friends, and writing to your beloved.

Jeepers I'm sleepy. I guess I'll wash my unwashed hair and go to bed. I hope you are taking a lot of baths in the hot weather. Are you? I rather doubt it. Uncle Sam is that way, and he's a bachelor. Beware.

Hey you, I love you.

Jill

JILL TO AL JULY ?, 1942

Darling --

Sunday

I hope you didn't think I was over-reaching myself, trying to impress you with my epistolary ability. I refer to copy number two of that letter to the Sun which you are doubtless in receipt of. It was just that I took the letter home to mail in a plain envelope, putting inside the envelope I was sending you to keep it clean in transit. Naturally, I forgot to take it out before I mailed your letter, and so it was that you received an extra and doubtless unwanted sample of my timeless prose.

Incidentally, I showed it to Rubin and he told one of the politicians about it, so the order came back for me to write four more in the same vein, to be copied by various people around town and sent off. You can imagine that at first the opportunity to vituperate against Brooks (or against anybody, for that matter) was a pleasant one for me, though around the last one, I was getting a little watered out.

The same politico who wanted those letters written also got himself locked out of his office yesterday, with no keys in the whole damn building for this most sacred of inner sanctums. Fortunately for the Democratic Party, little Jill had showed up to work that day, and with characteristic resourcefulness and disregard for the ordinary rules of decorum, I climbed over the transom, jumped down on a filing case and thence to the floor, and let him in. He was reduced to a mild hysteria from the humor of the whole thing, and I almost to tears, because when I got up there I got scared practically out of my pants, but I figured that little things like that make you indispensable around an office, or that is what the books say. If you ask why he didn't do it, I can only point out that in a choice for hazardous work between an office full of dyspeptic men of fifty with bay window stomachs and a lean girl of 23 in perfect health, the gal will always be the sucker.

The dentist drilled right down to my toes Friday night, and in order to accomplish this silly venture, had to give me a needle. I was reduced to tears then, because there is something about the slow deliberate motion of a needle going into your jaw which, though not painful by objective standards of pain, I find very excruciating indeed. Great tears started to wash down my cheeks after it was over. At a time like that I would find you very handy indeed; I hate crying in public but I sure like to blubber all over you, a fact which you know too well. Oh well, that's the penalty you have to pay for setting up a primary relationship with a little charmer like me.

It's been very foggy these past three days. I swam a couple of hours yesterday afternoon, and again this morning about 11.

The latter time was lovely because the point was singularly uninhabited. Then I went to Maxine's at 12:30 for a lovely chicken dinner, and afterwards we went back to the lake. It was cold, though, so we left and ate ice cream cones. As soon as we got a block from the lake it was warm again, which is annoying. I left Maxine about five -- we just walked around til then, and am at present contemplating going back to the lake because it is so hot here.

The water was very cold, though. This morning a man who was fishing got his fly caught on a rock underneath the water and asked me to dive for it. (What the hell is this anyway? Do I look that healthy?) I did but couldn't get it cause my nose hurts so much when I get down under four or five feet of water. Finally, some smart little shaver of ten came along and jiggled the thing out of the jam.

Last night I went with Betty Chapman, Jane Tallman's roommate to see a couple of phoney flickers - Tortilla Flat and Moontide. The former was completely corny. The latter duplicated the mood of the French pictures, but made less sense because it was in English. At least, in the French ones you never notice the holes in the plot because you don't understand the language. Incidentally, Jean Gabin was in it, which was the whole point of this comparison with the French movies.

After the movie I had another cone (that makes five or maybe six in two days) and proceeded back to Chappie's house, where the usual bunch of drunks, homos, and Stud Ruml were congregated. Incidentally, Stud applied for and got a C.O. rating on religious grounds and I guess will be off to camp soon. I didn't speak to him about it, but somebody else told me. What a character! I find that very reprehensible, somehow. Stud certainly goes out of his way to be different.

I left after a half hour, not having anything to say, and came home and went to bed. I'm reading Mark Twain's Life on the Mississippi, which is interesting and amusing, a hackneyed comment, I realize.

Gosh, I hope you'll be home next Saturday. That certainly would be odd if you had to go back to Camp Tyson. I don't think they'd keep you very long there though, do you? Well, there isn't any use in our making plans until you know. I'm just going on from day to day without any thought of the future. There isn't any point in worrying or planning. But I am looking forward to Saturday (or two weeks from Saturday) bug-eyed with pleasure.

Well, baby, more tomorrow. And all my love to you today.

Jill

JILL TO AL JULY 23, 1942

Darling -

Sat. 1 PM

If you knew how much I loved you, you would by turn blush and faint with joy (simulating the condition of shock). I really do love you, passionately, paternally and brotherly.

That is by way of an aside. The real News of the Week is that I am sitting here eating a ham and cheese comb. of my own making, about to depart for the beach. Had a brief morning chez City Hall doing nottin' except reading a book Rubin wrote in 1920 entitled *Tar & Feathers*, a very corny novel in re Klan (in the book it is called the Trick Track Tribe). The book starts out "Nov. 1918 - a world gone mad" which should give you a good idea of the literary calibre of this opus. Irreverent, ain't it? I still think he's a good publicity writer, nevertheless.

Anyway, I was writing you last night before Ethel bounded in - Rubin has lunch with Sam Kramer occasionally & Sam tries to emit ideas in re building up civilian morale, and Sam is an awful dope anyway & of course a psychiatrist invading a promoter's field - rallies & radio broadcasts do require a non-psychiatric promotional talent - can sound like even more of a dope. So Rubin is very down on academicians in or on the periphery of the war-morale effort, although I got him to admit Lasswell is good. This really is a torch that should be more competently carried on by you -- I will admit on Rubin's side that he is right to

a large extent - multiply Buster Brown by 50 & I guess that's what those meetings are like.

I love you.

Mir & Buss [*Sebastian*] came in this morning which really is the big news only I got side-tracked. I'm biking up about 5 to see them. They had gone over to Sadie Carcoons (sic) this morning so I didn't get them in when I called. I'm awfully anxious to see them. It's exciting having a large & beautiful family.

ARE YOUR BROTHERS DOPES! I bought them a dog license yesterday and sent it out with the following letter, in substance, typed to look official.

(see next page. I am sick of writing).

I love you.

This is the letter I sent Victor, in whose name the license is. (Being the youngest, I am sensitive to the problems of getting deference the youngest child in the family has ..)

* * * * *

Sir:

Enclosed etc.

Be advised that the law relating to licensing and owning of dogs in the City of Chicago has been amended, to wit, Municipal Code of City of Chicago, Urbs in Horto, paragraph one, section 1109, line 55555555, to wit, therefore:

"Any person owning, or claiming to own, or even denying to claim to own, any such animal as shall commit a nuisance, that person shall be confined in prison not less than one day nor more than one year, and shall be deprived of his liberty, franchise, cokes, candy and cigarettes.

"Furthermore, to commit a nuisance is herewith defined, to wit: barking, biting, scratching, howling, carrying rubber mice and eating."

(signed) Wellington Oaf CITY SEALER

Well, Eddie called and said that he had gotten this letter and read it to me in all due seriousness. I said what do you think of it, and he said, he didn't know. I suggested it was strange and he said he and Vic thought so too. What they commented most on was Mr. Oaf's rather florid signature. I finally told them and they were surprised. That's youth for you. Innocent.

I walked around with Ethel last night looking for a place. Hers on 55th and Cornell is too noisy. Her husband sleeps during the day, being in "Eileen" at night.

Well, I must wash the cheese off my mouth and get a coke.

I love you.

I do,

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 22, 1942

Darling Jill,

From the morass of meshing machines, I emerge to reassert I love you, before flopping on my back for the night's rest (as it is euphemistically called). My health is good, my color undistinguishable from the burnt sod, my mood designedly fatalistic for the next weeks.

I just saw Prendergast for a few minutes. I guess he's doing OK. At least he knows enough algebra, whatever his knowledge of Brutus. I've learned a lot of math but have trouble on academic algebraic equations which go to great lengths to equate meaningless quantities.

Due to the large number of cases of heat prostration, Sat. afternoon inspections will now be held on Sat. morns. Probably Sat. Aft. off, I hope, to do a little pleasant reading of the New Yorker. Bill's battery had a dozen men faint last week on the

parade ground. A little jeep was kept busy scurrying about the ranks to collect them.

You're not correct about the Jews, honey, though Rubin is badly wrong. It isn't the majority that counts. It's the number of the significant minority that do feel the affinity and the Jews are outstanding in their contributions & interests in the problem of inter-group understanding. You should know that from your familiarity with statistical curves applied to social data.

Forget about Merriam, though you might tell Buzz what I had in mind. A letter, a business one, from Col. Harris said that only captains can be admitted but to watch for changes.

Give my love to Buzz & Mir when they arrive. Tell them we'll see them again soon in Washington for a wonderful reunion. They have a splendid room for lolling - and, baby, will I loll!

Mom says you're well-burnt to match your crispy temper, also that you aren't losing weight. Fine and dandy. You always looked beautiful, my pride and joy, in a burnt state with an ultramarine garb.

It would be silly for Buss Brown to write an apology. He can't cure himself by any pseudo-masochism, & I don't give a hoot, tho a letter about his work would be interesting. He can buy me a hunt breakfast, too, sometime, if he feels indebted financially to me.

I can see us now, but dare not describe the intimate scene.

My love to you, dearest.

Al

AL TO JILL JULY 23, 1942

Sweetheart,

No letter from you today. Maybe it was the night you went to the show or something or just the damn mail system. Oh, well.

This day was like every other one here, monstrously busy. I'm thankful for all the right kind of work I can get, from morning to night. When I can't have freedom, I want to be too busy to think of it.

Everyone is depressed this week. It is very tough academically, in addition to the usual pother about polishing and shining. More guys have flunked and they feel pretty low. Several have moved out of the barracks for reasons of academic ineptitude or "leadership". From [?] Powers, next to me, feels badly because he just got a letter from his mother assuming he would graduate & he has flunked gun gunnery. I hate the whole goddam setup so much that I have constantly to hold myself in check. It will be such a relief to get out of this hole. I guess all the well-educated men must get deferred because I've found few here; Harvey & Bill Prendergast are exceptions, of course. The ordinary conversation around the barracks is as dumb as any anywhere.

Well, it won't be long before I can pour out my soul to you and receive your comforting kisses. I do hope you'll go to the country with the family these two weekends. Maybe you & I can go to the woods alone on my leave. That would be fun, wouldn't it? I would, though, like to enjoy urban delights, too, for a change. I'm sure I could really warm up over a bottle of Chianti and deliver a resounding condemnation of the whole nasty world. The skies will be blue only when this mess is over and I don my tan gabardine or pin-stripe brown.

This is a shamefully inept letter, no order, no ideas, no news. Yet I'm bursting for lack of self-expression. There just isn't time now for full verbalization, and I get disgusted because I can't look into your blue eyes and tell you about everything. I'm hoping that my faith in the pen will recover by Saturday so that I can write a more honorable message to so wonderful a recipient.

All Love to you, Dearest,

Al

AL TO JILL JULY 26, 1942

Dearest Jill,

Bored? No, just the sick calf expression of a man in love. But how did you know?

Your little statement of charges was most interesting and exciting. What a gorgeous pea-hen you will be! I really get a lot of enjoyment out of your spending the money on yourself. I certainly couldn't think of anything better to do with it. You have a keen figure to drape the best about & I get a shiver of excitement from the very thought. There never has been anything to divert my attention and set my pulse pounding more than the conscious or unconscious movements of your body. Going without you for these many days is not exactly a balm to a savagely rising sensuality.

So sorry about the little oysters. I did send body and all along, ergo the smell. I couldn't very well pick out the little morsel and flush it down the terlet or could I? Beside I figured to let them lie with the roof of their shell cottage around them.

I saw Bill Prendergast last night. The poor guy was put back for two weeks of infantry drill with some other men in his battery. Two weeks can seem pretty long down here.

August will almost be here when you get this letter and that means a bare month until I see you again. I hope my luck holds out and I have the commission for the occasion, but really the only thought that gladdens me is to be with you, neither bars nor stripes mattering very much.

Even you wouldn't be so quick to bathe, if hot water were scarce and the showers always crowded. But for your information, I take at least two baths a week which is all I have time for. I'll never be a bachelor.

Your propagandistic enterprises seem to be flourishing. Jill, the advertising genius, the woman behind the ears of the man who gets the dough.

You're lucky you didn't go to hear the Duke with Johnny et amico. Get him on the subject & he would recite Down-Beat all evening. But since when does an exceptional refusal to go out in order to read at home constitute a behavior pattern on your part. No doubt you have that desire but I think generally your sociability gets the better of you. Now I hope this doesn't bring a torrent of recrimination down upon me for not realizing your "essentially" introverted character or your "dislike of parties."

How's your first-aid class coming along? It's a good idea if you go through with it. If you get real good, I'll let you practice on my hangovers when I get back.

It's Sunday morn. I had a breakfast of prunes, bad bacon, coffee, milk and French toast. Afterwards I studied algebra for a couple of hours. It's coming more easily now. Tomorrow's the exam. I don't think the results are of too great significance to get bothered about. But that's my attitude towards practically the whole of this school. It's my adjustment in a way. There's little use in losing sleep over a lot of insignificant things. If the officer thinks that tiny piece of lint the laundry left on my hat is unforgivable, so be it. My conscience isn't at all horror-stricken.

This letter is one of those designed to be done in pieces. It is now afternoon, and the orthodox Sunday dinner of fried chicken is consumed. I was talking with Jim Fisk, a New York Irishman from the political district between Lexington & the River around 50th St. He's a Republican, strangely enough in a district 9-1 Democratic. He claims he was on the original Willkie booster committee and likes a soap-box better than anything.

Each one of your letters excites an answer in my mind immediately, but frequently I can't answer right away. I recall, for example a distinct intention to comment on your attitude, past & present, on love letters. Adolescents generally have a dislike of sentimentality except in their own minds which are highly sentimental. It is distasteful when someone else thinks he is inspiring an emotionalism by his letters. The reaction as expressed and formulated is "Can't the fool see I'm just playing with him?", or "He is insulting me by trying to penetrate my

soul."

Later on, this feeling wears off slowly, and is replaced or added to by the feeling of embarrassment at putting oneself in a position where she inspires love. When actually in love, it becomes an eager treat to get a description of her love, but this passive reception is much easier to acquire than the active transmission of the repressed symbols. It is better to get than to give.

This all may in part explain, but the fact is that I've been able to externalize my love for you better than you because I can better perceive the rationality of it and the desirability of it from your standpoint. Now I don't mean that I consciously select words of love. They come forth nonintellectually; when I say you are the dearest thing on earth, I mean just that and my variety of expression is due principally to the desire to convince you that I don't say it offhand but only with the deepest feeling & blind conviction. You are the most wonderful girl on earth and my dearest lover. I do want to hold your body and feel you breathing close more than I want life itself. I get more genuine delight out of your behavior and words than out of all literature and art.

Conversely, I feel the depth of your love in your words since I know how they are extracted from a rather repressed soul, proud of its integrity. I have, contrary to your qualms on the matter, never thought your words or acts inadequate. Your letters do have thrilling sentences, conveying much of the meaning of love. No, I have no complaint.

Give my best to everyone. I must browse among logarithms. I love you darling. What's the old saying "Every day, in every way, it gets bigger & better."

Al

AL TO JILL JULY 27, 1942

My sweet love,

Two of your nougats came today, chocolate-coated, but filled with a certain pizen-quality towards psychiatrists, well-taken, I must say. I sure wish I could see Buzz & Mir, too, and rib her on her plumpness. Incidentally, Buzz is my alter ego on morale, etc. If Rubin wants to know anything about it or any of those psychiatrists, he is the man to consult.

Mad jazz is blowing forth in the crowded room tonight. Radio reception is good for a change. I walked home from class tonight to the tune of a gorgeous low, full moon - the genuine Carolina moon. Guess what I thought of instantly. Right, you. How are you, lover? You make everyone so sorry for me because I have your love but can't enjoy it firsthand. At least, I'm sure that thought must occur to all our mutual pals. If you were just another girl, they would just shrug their shoulders and exclaim "the lucky dog, getting adventure and avoiding his wife at the same time." As it is, even I am sorry for myself. Like Tantalus (was it he), there you are and all I can do is slaver from here. I'm beginning to fear that if our love keeps on mounting at this distance, proximity will make me bust wide open. I'll be giving pennies to babies, treating my kid brothers kindly and even laughing like hell at your jokes, thus destroying forever the semblance of the superior male.

This week we are firing the guns over the ocean at targets drawn by planes. It's tough to hit the damned things. Sea-coast artillery is pie compared to it. Our target speeds are ten times as fast and we have a third dimension to cope with. You can understand how elated we would be if a tank lumbered at us. We'd depress the 90 barrel and blow it to hell.

We swim every noontime. I think I'm on life guard duty tomorrow, duty consisting mainly of blowing a whistle so that each man can grab a buddy who will keep an eye on him.

Harvey, another looie & I had a long talk last night about morale & relative fighting effectiveness of German, Jap & U.S. troops.

Harvey is convinced of the all-importance of morale. Despite my predilection for problems of morale, I'm not at all so feeling on the subject. Mainly I define morale more broadly, and feel that there are things that compensate for a fanatical politicsm -- ingrained aggressiveness, physical self-confidence, etc.

The math exam wasn't bad. I think I got thru it this time, tho there may have been some mental tic working on all those logs I futzed around with.

Your letter to the boys was doggone funny. I'll still be laughing at them when I get back. Ed is essentially serious, you know, & Vic defers to his judgement. I remember Ed almost crying once as a child when Willie Rini asked him whether he had any money to pay for the gas when we all were entering Willie's car for a ride.

So, this is the last page of my writing table. I must get another one to continue the deposition of trash on your doorstep.

Good night, lover. Curses on every fool that can look at you, the lucky dogs. But I am content to wait this nonce out by ravaging your tender notes. I know now how that Nanny goat felt when I fed him a pink tablet many years ago, eager, waiting, interested & ravenous. That's me, the old goat.

Love to the family.

Most love to you, Al

JILL TO AL JULY 28, 1942 (A)

Darling -

More pebbles! On what fragile things is romance built. But I really do love them, dear, because I know what these little tokens mean. Like when I send you a picture of Gargantua --- I mean the same thing, I really do.

Mir and Buss came and went -- without me. They spent the weekend up north, and early this morning the whole family left

for Glen Park. The awful part is, though, that they're coming back Thursday because Buss has a lot of things to do out at school and I guess Mir's family is very insistent upon their pound of flesh. I know this weekend, they had to have both Saturday night and Sunday dinner with the Carlsons, which I think must be a very disagreeable thing to go through, especially by contrast with the DeGrazias. But we did have a good time yesterday though. We all got up very early -- about 8:30 since nobody liked the beds they were sleeping in, including me who slept on the porch -- and ate a huge breakfast (I made the bacon) and then Vic and I went to the beach and were joined there some two hours later by Mir and Buss and Ed and Margo and Parnell, or whatever her name is and her husband Otto. And then who should come down but Mom and Aunt Lillie and Bill. It was quite a gathering, accompanied by much girlish laughter as we pushed one another into the water, which was incidentally very warm. Cooney was the laughingstock of the rocks, to our humiliation. Every time anybody within a three-hundred yard radius jumped into the water, he would run up to them and bark furiously. You can imagine how busy he was kept, since after a while all the crude boys in Lincoln Park were jumping in and out of the water just to make Cooney bark. I don't know why he gets so excited when people go into the water, do you? Do you think he worries about them? We threw him in a couple of times but he climbed right out which is quite a feat for a small dog, since the bulkheads are high around there.

Then we came home about four and I slept til dinner, which was large and beautiful. Then I went home.

Saturday night Mir and Buss had to go to Carlsons, so the boys and that oaf Norman and I walked down to the lake and went swimming. It was lots of fun at night. And of course that afternoon out south I went swimming at the rocks at 66th with Johnny Wiggins and then we went over to Betz's and for a change did not swim there. Betz was sitting around the pool looking gorgeous as usual, making me feel like the water rat I am.

I guess that covers the events of the weekend. Today I had to come out south to the business school about noon because there is not a usable calculating machine in the whole f---ing city hall. I divided my brains out until four, working on that distribution of voting power in the state that Gosnell did for the Republicans but unfortunately not with 1940 election data. (I tried to palm his stuff off on Hodes as such but unfortunately it didn't work.) Anyway, there I was pounding away in that nasty attic, it raining like hell outside, and me wondering how rusty my bike was getting and also whether I would become a constipated statistician like Vera Miller if I kept this up much longer. Finally at four I was through with all 102 counties and it was still raining, and there I was expected back at the office circa two o'clock, I had told them. So I go to phone, not having any money and having to return to bum a nickel off a boy I shall never see again. I speak to Rubin, and ask, in the light of the circumstances, do I have to go down to the office, and he says, come right down, Hodes wants it right away, and I say it is raining and late, and she says come right down, and then grudgingly, do it at home. Well, the awful part is I can't do it, the map of my findings at home because I left all my mapmaking material at the office, yet I have to hand this stuff in neatly typed and mapped tomorrow. So I will have to do the typing tonight and get down at eight tomorrow and to the map, and altogether I think I am getting screwed both ways.

I got a card from Diana this morning, very hard to read, per usual, but from what I can make out she is in Tampa, Fla., where Ollie is in the Air Corps Intelligence and loving it, and that she owes me thirty dollars. I don't remember lending it to her at all; isn't that wonderful? I mean, that I have thirty dollars coming to me.

It was funny being back on campus today and rather disagreeable. Full of ugly people for one thing. And then, we always used to fight on campus, so it doesn't hold such excruciatingly pleasant memories of our love. It was better down at the rocks. I can't stand all those stuffy people around school. The men look as if they might smell of roquefort cheese, and

the women wear HIGH HEELS AND ANKLE SOCKS! Is there anything worse? I can't stand anybody right now, I guess.

Well, maybe you're an exception. I'd better stop now before I waive that.

I do love you dear, though in a snit.

Jill

[in upper margin] Swell about their shifting drill to Saturday morning instead of aft.

Oh, your Mom took pictures Sunday afternoon but my hair was sopping wet.

JILL TO AL JULY 28, 1942 (B)

Sweetheart--

No letter from you today. But then, I wasn't very good about writing you last week, so no very serious complaints are forthcoming.

Guess who called me last night at 11:30! Herr Lieutenant Hess! I was both excited and displeased since I had just dropped off to sleep dreaming that you and I were combating snakes in some seaside resort. I had lunch with him today, and comparing notes gleaned from your letters, I guess Officers Schools are hell wherever you go. (My friend Sylvia's man is at Monmouth at OTS and hates it too; although OM is probably somewhat easier than yours or armored forces, he is a less manly type to begin with.)

Johnny is going to some camp in New York on maneuvers and then overseas. He is pretty glad he is through with the grind, naturally, and the gold bars and the miniature tank on his cotton uniform look nice in a restrained way. Incidentally, I am awfully glad you got that peaked cap to go with your summer uniform. I think those cotton shirts and pants are the most becoming army uniforms there are, and their attractiveness is emphasized by

the dressier cap. Sartorial notes from Cousin Jill...

I guess we will get together some time before Monday before John goes with Mir and Buss, which should be fun.

I had quite a busy day today, getting down at 8:30 to do that work, and am quite tired. Right now I am waiting for the laundryman, who I don't think is going to show up. We play kind of a game. It takes about 15 phone calls for me to get my laundry from him, and then I usually end up by calling for it myself.

I have that damned first-aid class tomorrow night and have to study for it. I missed last week, too.

Oh, I forgot to tell you I played your record, first at Rosable's Friday night, and then over and over again at your family's. It was awfully nice, though your voice sounded about six octaves lower than usual, everybody said. I didn't notice it particularly.

I just finished a horrible meal of leftover rice and meat from last night, when Rosable came over. I was traumatized by some rotting potatoes I came across in the cupboard. Did you ever smell a rotten running potato? There is absolutely nothing worse in the whole world, I'm sure. I have to wash the dishes now and iron a dress I courageously washed last night. It's that pretty green and white one, and I was stymied as to how to get it clean after I got dirty. I was afraid it would shrink in the dry cleaners or fall apart at the laundry, and your mother shrank one rayon dress I had beyond recognition in her machine. So I figured I could do no worse. Maybe I shall gain enough confidence if the venture is successful to do all my clothes, thereby saving us a sizable hunk of dough, wherewith to rehabilitate you with a year in South America when you come back. Sharp, ain't I?

I got a mess of bank statements from the bank, but I'm damned if I know what to do with them. Some night when I am feeling morbid I shall analyze them craftily, such as folding them carefully once, and then again, cutting along the creases and seeing if the pieces add up to the total my surrealistically

annotated stubs show we have in the bank. Dear, is it all right if I buy bonds with what is my vague notion of surplus income? They are awfully pretty, not to mention patriotic, and they fit nicely into an old pair of saddle shoes I have.

I wrote my sister that I thought I ought to budget, and she wrote me back a budget, which showed that I could save something like thirty rocks a month plus all my income from the estate, adding up to some thousand or so a year. It's a laugh I thought, chewing her letter meditatively. She made no provision for buying bicycle accessories for me and the two brethren, not to mention other incidentals like dinner on the diner, risky whiskey, and war stamp corsages to which I am addicted to wearing in my hair. To hell with money, I'd rather have love. Do you think married women should have a career? Now that is a very interesting question, which I am interested in very much. Write a letter of one hundred words or less on what YOU think, and if your letter is adjudged a prize winner by a jury of ten competent stewbums you will in return get a swift kick in the pants.

Well, there really isn't much to write about tonight except the usual thing, i.e., I love you. For a change, do you love me? That's a dumb question, I know, but I just didn't want you to think I was beginning to Take You for Granted. DON'T look slatternly in the morning .. your wife may begin to take you for granted.

I have been reading too many Women's Pages, I guess.

Love to you,

Jill

Hey, won't you be as good as the guy in the enclosed clipping when you graduate.

Note other clipping. A shame, no?

JILL TO AL JULY 29, 1942

[Seal of the City of Chicago with arrow marked N.B.]

Dearest-

Wed.

Somebody borrowed my typewriter but I refuse to be discouraged from my daily task - & joy - of writing you, even on office time. Tonight is first-aid night and I won't have time when I get home.

Today has been one long fiscal failure for the research division. I took a long lunch and went up to Saks, exchanged those white play shoes for red (a whim), bought some stockings and a defense stamp corsage. Then I came back, with two dollars still rattling in my jeans, to be confronted by Joan, who was in the Loop on business. She took my two dollars, relieved me of my corsage & departed. Aha, I thought, there is still boss Rubin to borrow the price of a Daily News from.

Presently he walks in the office, somewhat ashen looking. He had just had lunch with the sub-committee on Ways & Means for the Morale Committee, & they had taken him for a 1:03 for lunch. Between us we had 13 cents, which I deeded over to him, since I have an I.C. ticket, I hope. Then we went in to Lundy to borrow a nickel for a coke from him, and all he had was an I.C. ticket. So I went out to the coke man, prepared to leave my virtue in pawn. Fortunately, he wasn't there for the moment, so I took two cokes and ran like hell.

I met Mrs. Greenhill & Juliet in Saks - quite a coincidence. They were looking very Saks Fifth Avenue, unlike me in my droopy ersatz rayon stockings. (I put them on for shopping - the rest of the time I go bare-legged.)

I brought a bouncing top down to the office & we play with it in slow periods. I'm getting pretty good, too.

So I have to leave early today to go to Rosable's to dun her for a couple of dollars. She just called & said Herb Blumer was getting married, to an unattractive but nice girl. He also stands a good chance of getting drafted, he says. Nor will he be able to

get a desk or teaching job, since physical educators are 10¢/doz. in the army & they have no use for social scientists, as you well know.

[second page - Seal of the City of Chicago with arrow "What did I tell you?"]

Hell, no, I won't be upset or disappointed if you don't get your commission. You know it won't make any difference. The only difference it would make objectively is the money, and of that we've always had & always will have enough. Besides, I don't mind working so much anymore. I'm rather enjoying myself these days, as you may gather from the tone of my letters. Politicians is the cwaziest people --- and I'm getting used to getting up in the morning. If I don't have disturbances in the course of the night's routine - washing, reading and going to sleep - and if nobody talks to me or bumps into me between the moment I get up until the moment I sit down at my desk, I don't feel much pain at all. I guess I'm getting to be a crotchety old maid - what with that and my still-present embarrassment in the presence of love letters.

My handwriting is stinking now, I know. I've been doing a lot of small work, printing figures on maps, & also drinking a lot of cokes, & it makes me lose muscular control, I guess.

It got pretty cool today, a very welcome change. I even wore my blue wool suit, it was so cool this morning.

The laundry man never did show up last night. When I called him for the 237 log 54 time this morning he said he had forgotten my address. Very feeble, I thought.

Well, pups, I must needs return to my work, such as it is.

Best love to you, as always,

Jill

[Drawing, with tree, water, flowers, captioned "The Idyll"]

Yellow cloud captioned "yellow cloud because white pencil

don't show up so hot"

Cat: "Truman ogling birds"

2 stick figures "You. Me. enjoying nature, only you're not enjoying it so much"

Dog: "Cooney ogling Truman"]

AL TO JILL JULY 28, 1942

Dearest love,

Tuesday night (28 July)

This day is about done, I love you infinitely, and I am thoroughly mad at the stupidity of this so-called officer's training school. I have a hell of a lot of work to do this week and perhaps won't get off such long letters. My math exam is Monday and the subject this week is quite difficult. The petty discipline goes on and most of the time I ignore it. Curses on the forces which make a man go through this to be an officer! The buck private is the only man that can look himself squarely in the eye in this goddamned army. If I obeyed my impulses I would be in the guardhouse half the time and a good fighting soldier the other half. All this nauseating concern over shiny shoes, conventions of courtesy, debasing rigmarole will never win the war, but sometimes I think that I am one of the few persons concerned with that little matter.

Dearest, you don't have to pick an odd-looking escort to bypass my suspicions. All I ask is that you observe some decorum in dating King Cong or Tyrone Power. Johnny is good company, tho he is a cheerful drip.

I agree with you about your girl friends & Joan. She is the best of them. Funny about Marge. Harold apparently from reports isn't doing too well vocationally. He is so hard to accommodate too, socially and at work. About girl friends, though, have you ever thought of seeing Gertie Goldsmith. She was always good company, wasn't she.

The temperature was up to 110? yesterday. Cool, what? Not so

bad today, though the crowding is excessively uncomfortable. Baby, I can't wait to sprawl with you somewhere in seclusion.

Can you send me a picture one of these days (or at least promise me one & keep me in joyful anticipation for the next month), a snapshot or something, that backyard picture, or the Cal photo.

Comes time to say I love you again.

Your Al

AL TO JILL JULY 29, 1942

Dearest Jill,

Wed.

I hope never in my life to miss a day in which I tell you how much I love you. I'll even go to such lengths as this scratching done pell-mell before falling out for a day of firing.

A bare thirty days to go. Wowee! 96 men flunked the course in Directors; I got thru OK. 300 took the course.

Would you believe it if I told you 100 of us men ride in the back of one truck in the morning to go to the firing point. We do, standing in a former cavalry truck, getting in the mood by whinnying with an occasional irrelevant "moo".

Love to Buzz & Mir. I hear that old hell ringing.

Guess what? You are the most lovely and wonderful wife in the world. Guess what? I'm the dumbest luckiest bastard in the world to be able to call you my love.

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 31, 1942

Darling -

Thursday nite

You are going to be irked with me because this letter, written at

10, isn't going to get to you when it should, but a strange train of events has been dogging my heels ever since I got home tonight. Well, first I got the curse this afternoon, which decreased my usual lack of efficiency a full 100%. Then I ate an inferior cut of meat for diner - I swear that everything I buy these days is sperled - and started out for my dentist appt. at 7:30. All of a sudden a tycoon, or rather, typhoon broke loose, so my bike & I hid in the doorway til that was over. It was really a hulluva storm, but magnificent in progress & aftermath. A perfect rainbow broke through in the east. The sky over the west had that pure silver-blue & white look that only comes after storms. The sun was blinding - and then the chapel bells started to ring - coincidentally, of course, because it was 7:30 and they always play at that time. But the coincidence of all these heavenly and man-made events looked like the birth of a new world - or at least the Darryl Zanuck version of same which has been watered down to me.

The dentist, up to his old tricks (like the laundryman) wasn't there, so I saunters across the street to the gas station, thinking to have me a chat with a member of that race of men I love so well - gas station attendants & bus drivers - and also to get a free tightening of the valves. The guy puts the air hose on my valve, and I turn my face to him, child-like and innocent, and say, do you think there is a slow leak. He is about to answer with some obscurantist statement, because as I discover later, he does not know his ass from a grease-pit, when pfft, the rear tire blows up in my face. You have put too much air in the tires, I say in an aggrieved tone of voice. But you said there was a slow leak, he comes right back at me - that must have been it. There was no use arguing with him that the tires had probably been losing air because of the loose valves which I had been beseeching him to make whole. And he was too busy to take off the tire & patch it. So I amble off with my tire flatter than an Int. House steak and finally wind up at 53rd & Lake Park where I espied a gas station man closely resembling Grant Adams. He took me in, & between the four of us - him, a colored man named Leroy, a setter dog and I - we have the inner tube patched within two hours. I guess it wasn't because of over-

inflation, since it was only a small rent. That inner tube isn't going to last very long, tho; it has one portion of it swollen out obscenely like a ruptured intestine. And they managed to rip off the rear brake pads in getting the tire back on (in the midst of swearing & fuming and advising me to walk & why didn't my mother buy me a car?) so I have only the front wheel brake now & my feet to save me from sudden death.

However, it was very educational and only cost me 50¢ (?). I do so love hanging around men working, anyway.

Your family just got back from Glen Park - I just spoke to your mother. They are all fine & had a good time. She says you have a letter from England at home - I told her to forward it, which will be done in the fullness of time. Buss & Mir are coming South tomorrow & I left them a key so they can rest & refresh here. This is all the paper there is. Lots of love (a mosquito just bit me & I have to stop & scratch anyway).

Jill

* * * * *

[Postcard signed Mir - dated 7/30/42]

Dear Babe:

Our three wonderful days at Glen Park end today. Last night we had beautiful steaks done to perfection by your father over the open coals, & under a full moon. Later sang around a big bonfire down at the famous spring. We missed you & Jill. Your records are a comfort to all of us. Send some more. Your mother is writing you. Love from all, Mir.

AL TO JILL JULY 30, 1942

Dearest Jill,

Thursday

I'll at least start this letter now & perhaps finish it tonight. "Now" is the noon hour at the Firing Point. I went swimming for about a half-hour and then ate - a good meal today, fried chicken. Now

my mess kit is washed out & put away and I have leisure to smoke a cigarette. It's really the best hour of the day except for the time I spend reading your letters.

The ocean was full of big crushing breakers today and the water was nicely cool - I must say that you are certainly doing a hell of a lot of swimming. And that reminds me to reproach you for comparing yourself unfavorably to any girl. I insist you are more attractive than anything you can scare up for comparison. If you're a water rat, I must be a wharf rat because I think you are the sweetest rodent ever.

Why can't you manage to get out to the country for a couple of days with the family? I suppose transportation is something of a problem. Are you going to take the apartment for another month?

Your letter about the bad food and Johnny and everything came today. I'm sure glad to hear about Johnny's bars. He can't possibly describe the unutterable but is no doubt more expressive than my letters. It irks me, unavoidably, that I have still these weeks to go and this damned uncertainty, wherein the slightest misstep may cause me to miss the boat. I'm so sure of my ability and yet there is no way of telling that therefore I can be confident. It's this that makes the situation so hateful. Oh, well, I promise to not spit in anyone's eye. I wish, though, that I could get together with Johnny to let down our hair. You would really get an earful then.

Shit, piss and corruption. To think another man can sit across the luncheon table from you, while I must glance into a lot of animal countenances across mine.

I'm sending you a picture from Tyson, taken by Curt Essers' father and sent to me. L to r, Curt, Johnny, Hank, me, and Dorn Gigliotti, a swell guy who happened to be around. Hope you like it.

Why did you have to send the picture of that ugly looie lording it over those poor draftees? It just makes me want to throw in my lot with the bucks.

You should be having quite a week with all the new arrivals and old pals. I do hope something for you that I know can't possibly happen for me, that is, that this time will fly by without groaning at it each day and hour.

You would love to see these guns go off. The firing point is a continuous bedlam. Our classrooms (we are in class drawing up and solving firing problems part of the time) are about 50 yards from the big guns, farther from the 37 mm, 40 mm, .50 and .30 cal machine guns. An aeroplane drags along a target sleeve continuously and everything that can shoot opens fire. The building shakes, we put figures in the wrong squares, & the graph squares look like ticker tape. I keep a wad of cotton in my left ear which is next to the window in order to keep it from ringing. We fired the 90's at a horizontal target today on the water. The blast from the guns whips back one's trousers and scares up a lot of sand. The splash can be seen on or near the target. It probably would interest you to know that in cases where tank armor has been too heavy to piece with the 90 shell going at 2700 ft per sec., the shell has ricocheted and the impact was so fierce that sufficient steel splinters are knocked off inside the tank to demolish the occupants.

Harper Library would seem like a morgue after this. After shells whizzing by, I'm sure I wouldn't even be diverted by the frosh girls in their short-skirted best.

The temperature is a cool century so I had better stop writing before the drippings of sweat blur it even more than my scandalous scrawl.

Love to my best and only girl.

Al

End of July 1942 letters

