

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 1, 1943 V-MAIL

My darling --

Monday

Still another letter came from you today, an old one, September 30, apparently from Bari. S'wonderful. All of them are. But enough of this extravagant praise. Let me tell you about my stomach instead. I just came home from a filet mignon at Morton's, which Oliver generously bought me. It was my first in ages, and really a memorable dinner. I get awfully sick of my own cooking. I might do better if I were submitting my culinary endeavors to your impartial criticism. Actually, you are notably easy to please in those matters, but that never did and never will diminish my efforts to please you. Oliver also helped me tear apart and put together again that come-apart night table that that schlemiel husband of Janice's had put together so ineffectually. And the baby's crib came today from Wards bargain room, in five pieces, which I got Diana to hold while I put the screws in. Diana is not very sympathetic to manual labor, and she was even less sympathetic when we got the thing together in the dining room and discovered it wouldn't get through the bedroom door. We had to take it all apart again and cart it in piece by piece and put it together again. I had been swearing like an A. J. DeGrazia all along, but when that crisis came up, I just laughed. It was just like in the funny papers. I loved your dry little comment "you needn't build all the furniture yourself, you know," but by gosh, it looks as if I've had to do just that. I know we have a transportation problem here, but it seems to me the stores could at least saw the tree into boards before they shipped the furniture to me. I have conveyed your sentiments to Cooney and he answers you with a great hurt expression in his liquid brown eyes (just like a DeGrazia). His name shall never pass this ribbon again.

I spoke to Mom and she said she got a letter from you today, dated the 18th, over which we was quite elated. She's waiting for Uncle Charlie, who is due to light from his wanderings tonight. He'll have a swell time in Chicago, what with Joe's place

being open and unlimited fraternal credit.

I did a great mess of housecleaning today and feel rather bushed as a result. It's kind of fun, though, to see everything shiny for the first five minutes after you've finished. Then the dog (whose name shall go unmentioned) drags his biscuits into the living room, people come in and flick ashes around and about, and I crawl into the newly made bed and unmake it. C'est le rat race ... I was thinking tonight how nice it would be to call you in Algiers, but then it occurred to me that even if it were possible, which it isn't, I guess, it would be an unbearably frustrating experience to hear your beloved voice and yet to know there wasn't a chance in the world I could see you for months to come. At least, when we made long distance calls to each other here, it was always with the knowledge that if the strain got too bad, I could hop a trainplanebus and come to you. Gosh, I love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 1, 1943

Dearest Jill,

This is the dinkiest portable I've ever seen, no fit vehicle for the tender expressions of emotion and ardor I must pour into it. Yet I am fully convinced that I find it easier to typewrite than to write, as you have been opinioned these many years. Especially is it true for me just now, recently arisen from a no longer groaning board, and impelled towards the apartment by the inevitable desire to write you a letter, but barely able to lift an arm to write a mano. The meals are simply superb and they are served in a fashion befitting the most fastidious tourist, cutlets, soups, salads, coffee, torts, etc., etc. Not even at Bari was our table so good and there we numbered among ourselves men of impeccable taste in Italian food. I remember the first dinner in Bari after coming out of the country of Calabria, desert, poverty-stricken, dull for long stretches across the instep of the boot. It

was like Baghdad from the sands of Arabia. We ate turkey that night in the dining room of the best hotel I've seen overseas. The dining room with its shiny linens lay just across the street from the Adriatic. Everywhere there was utter confusion, but, ah, what a dinner.

When the rumor first hit us in Calabria that troops had disembarked at Taranto, Heycock and I took off in a jeep across the foot, trusting to avoid German patrols in between. We wanted to get to Bari as soon as possible to prevent sabotage of the station and presses. The roads were hellish and all the bridges were destroyed. We tried one route through the mountains of Calabria but were stopped dead after a considerable run by a smashed bridge with mines all over the place. So then we took the coastal road. But when we got to Bari, we found that two of our people had flown from Africa to Taranto and another had hitch-hiked by boat to the same place, so that they beat us in. The laugh was on us after all the dirty work. The Allied force in the area consisted then of a platoon of airborne troops and ourselves. Some were on patrol duty north of the city and the rest were assigned the job of walking the streets in order to give the impression of great strength. Our major was receiving all sorts of communications from the Italian officials addressed to the Allied high command and they got to be a nuisance. Not only communications but people, and people of all kinds, Greeks, Serbs, escaped anti-Fascists, escaped British and American prisoners. Amidst the hubbub we stood ready to get out of town fast, expecting that the Germans would find out very soon how easy it would be to counterattack. We had a few choice prisoners like the German consul also packed and pronto. When the first platoon of tanks came rumbling in several days later, it was a great event, and they passed along a devious route through the city just to make sure that they were being seen by everybody. Bari then changed very quickly into a bustling center of military activity. The Italian army began to group itself from there. Some Italian troops had initially driven the German garrison out of Bari. An Italian general had led the attack on the Germans, and he liked to tell

the story of how he was shot in the arm. But overnight we had to find a *modus vivendi* with the Italians and there was a paucity of instructions on the subject. Their old and inefficient army bureaucracy taxed my patience but they were very helpfully inclined, and nobody particularly bothered about what the other fellow was doing. For a couple of weeks I demobilized my jeep and drove around in a swell little Fiat they requisitioned in our name. On the fine, flat roads of Puglie, it was a joy to drive. During all of that time there was a lot going on in the area - a ridiculous and unbelievable political and military madhouse.

Life is full of amazing things I find, tritely enough. Don't you like that sometime column in the *New Yorker* which describes all the strange acts of human beings during a certain period, like "A man in Buffalo the other day tore up 70 dollars in bills, put them in his soup, and ate them"? Remember the time we ate that jungle stew with those tramps near Kankakee? And today a cart and donkey were standing in a narrow passageway blocking our car; when the owner saw the difficulty, he simply lifted the cart out of the way without disturbing the donkey. Warner and I looked at each other incredulously and then burst out laughing. Again, do you remember the time when Americans were anxiously watching the invasion convoys to Sicily? Heycock and I made a wonderful discovery on our tank assault boat. The pointed prow which opens up before the drawbridge is let down doesn't close completely. A long slit runs right up the point of the prow. The watertight door is in back. Then there is a ladder which runs from the deck straight down the depth of the false prow: it is so much a part of the swinging door that it isn't noticeable and no one ever uses it. But we found that the craft ships several feet of water which turns around at the base of the prow. And so we used to have delicious salt water showers in the extreme forward, bottom hole of the ship. We could stand down there and look straight at the water line.

I still would have more fun slipping in my own bathtub at home, I think. We do have a bathtub, don't we? Not for anything would I give up my right to scrub you pink a couple times a week. I

think, too, that we must get a private pond or stream someday to play around in. You're such a water animal at heart, another reason why I think you're the most desirable woman in the world. Many underwater kisses.

Al

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 2, 1943

Darling -

Tuesday

Burns and Allen are competing with you for my attention, and pretty lousy competition they are. The only reason I have them on is that Jack Benny is due to appear any minute now.

As a matter of fact, I think the radio is a damn nuisance, but everybody tells me that Tuesday night is a good radio night, and so I turn it on, spinning the dial every half hour like that Greek in search of an honest man.

I am in a vile mood and it's all my fault. Diane and Oliver found a place they liked very much, but it isn't going to be vacated until November 15, so I suddenly found myself mumbling (not very loud) "Well, you can stay here until then." That's the kind of statement that should be uttered in tones undiscernible to the human ear, like those little dog whistles. They took me up on it, and now I am stuck with one garrulous, about-to-be-ex second lieutenant, with the social sensitivities of a marmoset, and one incompetent slightly pregnant woman in one bitch of a mood. I do have a way out -- hysterics (because of MY CONDITION) and I may try that if my grim dogged determination to adhere to the golden rule wears thin. It is true that they don't make much of a mess, and what they do make, I arbitrarily order them to clean up. I just don't like having people around. Nasty, aren't I?

I treated myself to an enormous, bright-yellow sweater today, to fend off the increasingly unkind Chicago winds. I shall probably give the appearance of an unshackled Connecticut barn (ask Jerry about them) moving slowly to the leeward when I don it.

You know what - I look pregnant. When I go downtown on the IC at a crowded hour and have to stand (which I don't mind in the least) there are always a half a dozen people who gesticulate at me frantically, motioning me to an empty seat. This never fails to bring a blush to these sallow cheeks. We must have a baby (another one) as soon as you arrive on this sacred soil, so that you can laugh at me. I probably ought to win some kind of a loving cup for women-who-don't-think-they-look-pregnant-when-they-are-very-much-so

But my vanity was given a minor boost today by receiving a letter from old-admirer-who-never-got-very-far Julian Behrstock. He's with the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service in London, with the title of Assistant and Acting Chief Field Correspondent, which, as he says, is the kind of title that could happen only in the government. It was kind of fun, receiving a letter from London. I must confess I wrote him first, one boring day when I was working at the social workers' office. And there are six boys of about seven or eight years (apiece) who live on the block and who think I am a great white goddess, mostly because I encourage the d-o-g (I won't say the nasty word) to play with them. They came around today with an enormously fat white puppy of about a month old, wanting to know if I wanted it. I asked them in and gave them some chocolate and let the puppy play around on the floor for a while, but, with great self-restraint, didn't accept their kind offer. In the first place, the janitor would really have a fit then. In the second place, the puppy didn't give promise of growing up to be a lean lithe creature, the only type of specimen, human or canine, that I can tolerate. In the third place, I'll be diapering a baby in another month and a half or so, and that seems enough by-products to have to clean up.

These children also must think I'm enormously old, because they asked me where my husband was, and I said he was a soldier. "Oh," one said, wide-eyed, "he must be young." You could practically hear the underlining.

The Matisse finally got framed, and it looks very nice above the bookcases. I got three of those three-shelved sectional

bookcases, which practically line one wall, and your books are bulging out of them. I have to get some more one of these days.

Gosh, I have so many letters to write and I never seem to get around to writing anyone but you and sister Day. I think I'll bend by thoughts to Liz Evers. She deserves one.

Does anybody ever get a leave to go home to the States in your area? I know you won't be home for Christmas now, and, as a matter of fact, if I had to make a choice, I'd much rather have you here in the spring, when we could have fun together. While it may be a be-yoo-tiful thing to have the old man hold your hand, and all that, when you're going under, for my part I'd rather have a nurse hold my hand and you hold some more vital part of me, later on. You've been away six months now. Maybe they make leaves practically mandatory after a year. I wonder if I could hold out for another six months - I mean, be away from you for so long without going into a mad froth on 55th Street. Maybe the next six months won't be so hard, either, because I'll have the baby to keep me worried and irritated, though I can't imagine any adequate substitute for you (using irritation in the broad sense of stimulation). I'd like to say breezily that the last six months have passed without my even noticing it, but such is not the case - while the time has passed because I've been busy, it seems like a century since I've seen you, and our life together seems painfully remote. And as time goes on, I miss you even more, if that is possible. Well, I still think it's fun to be in love, even though it's painful right now.

I'm enclosing a clipping about one of your old men. It's from the Chicago Sun Book Week.

All my love to my darling -

Jill

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 2, 1943

Jill, my love, -

Another quiet after-dinner period and the evening letter. This house is really a gem for one solitudinally inclined. There aren't any children and it is on a side street, apart from people and noises, a rare thing in the inhabited parts of Italy where people express themselves freely and too loudly from children on up, including donkeys. Now if you were here it would be a most romantic setting for a fall from virtue. I got all sorts of PX supplies tonight, cigarettes, razor blades, and soap. I know where Vermouth and brandy are to be found and we could have a fine time smoking, drinking and washing each other. As for the razor blades, they wouldn't be of use to you - yes, I did it. I have removed my mustache with my little razor, tonight, just before writing this letter.

It was fine and dandy for a change, especially with the British army where it was quite the thing to have. But I have such a handsome upper lip that it is a shame to conceal it for long. N'est-ce pas? I was surprised myself at how well I looked with it off. Now I must send you another picture right away in the nude. Meanwhile, my upper lip itches for the moment and I wish you were here to lick it with your soft tongue.

My work for the last couple of days has been mainly concerned with handling a little trouble in labor relations in the cinema industry here. Some very interesting personalities were involved and it was a good example of how a labor movement may grow through the personal frustration of an individual. You can be confident that unlike in most cases of this sort, the judgement was made without confusing the motives of the individual with the principles of the movement itself.

Tonight, it was announced that the noose around the Crimea has been drawn. Now the Russian bear will feast mightily and at leisure. The consequence of losing another quarter of a million troops will put Hitler's rug merchant in velvet. Judging from the parrot's devilish laughter in the mess tonight, he must have

heard the news too.

I bought a beautifully illustrated edition of Munchausen's tales in Italian today and will send it to you after I finish reading it. I'm sure you will find it highly entertaining. I am also reading on and off Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment* which is in difficult Italian, and Ludwig's *Goethe*, also in Italian.

I also received a letter from you today dated October 20 and assure you that the two weeks' gap is no fault of mine. I love you so much that to not write you is as terrible for me as it is for you. If it were possible I would tell you I love you in fourteen different ways (using the tenses, of course) in partial self-castigation.

Your.

Al

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 3, 1943 V-MAIL

Darling,

Wednesday noon - Page 1

I just got your very amusing reply to one of my frantic missives of late September or early October -- and so I hasten to reply in kind. Yours was V-mail, dated October 23, to keep our records straight, or rather, the evidence we are piling up for the Case of A. and J. DeGrazia vs. the United States Post Office. My letter must have been funny -- my sense of humor, incidentally, has long ago been restored, so you can send me as many feelthy French postcards as you can find, dear. I had one of THOSE mornings again today, incidentally, but apparently I'm better equipped by nature and experience to take it in my stride now. I dashed out of bed at an hour early for me (eight), painted a night table, ate, did an enormous laundry very inefficiently, for I have not yet mastered the technique de Maytag, oiled my bike in between (while the machine was whirring ominously) so that

the janitor could put it in the basement locker, mixed a meat loaf and ate. Now I have to go downtown to the doctor and do some shopping also. B. Neugarten is coming for supper tonight, and Diane and Oliver will be here, and then B and I are going to a movie for relaxation. Very funny. She's just sweating out the last stages of her doctor's dissertation and very frantic too. Fritz is away on one of his long semi-annual business trips. You know, he was 4-F because of rheumatic feet, and felt very badly about it. He's a wonderful guy; as B pointed out, the healthy type of German University fraternity boy, very unlike most of the refugees we're accustomed to meeting in this country. Somehow, you usually expect them to be frightfully intellectual, weak-musclcd and neurotic, and they usually are. But not Fritz. He's just an affable, intellectually receptive but not productive, Joe. Diane and Oliver are still here, but there are glimmerings of hope that they will leave before the 15th. Oh dear, this was interrupted by a Fuller Brush man, an ex-citizen of the Third Reich. I bought three toothbrushes from him on the strength of his accent, and now am sorry, because in retrospect I realized that neither the F.B. company nor its agents need charity these bustling days, and furthermore, he caused me to be slightly late to the doc's. That one, translating from the original French, found I had gained five pounds in two weeks, so now you'll have to hear me jeep about my diet for the next two weeks. prepare yourself! I did some mad shopping at Field's, and came home to find your straight-mail letter of Oct. 21st, as dear to me as all the others. But add horrors of war. You mention things in your letters that I said, or, as in this case, drew, in my letters, and I can't for the life of me remember them. But I acknowledge your kind praise with a demure bend of the head, a la Cooney (oh, I said the dirty word). Christ, since I read your letter, I've been madly cooking dinner and then eating it. My guests are still at the festive board. I excused myself to write this, because you still are the most important thing in my life, and always will be, no matter how many children, dogs or guests we are blessed, or, in the *[page two]* latter case, cursed with. I didn't want this to run over to another page, because there's always the chance

you'll get one sheet and never get another, on which point you made the most amusing observation of the year. (I'll remind you of it, in case your memory is as bad as mine for your own pearly phrases -- you said you carried about page two of one of these series for weeks, a seal, and so could view it with the eyes of a mystic as well as a lover. I'm always cutting out things from the paper for you, mentioning them in my letters, and then forgetting to enclose them. Tomorrow you'll find the clipping I promised yesterday if my memory and your luck holds out. You did that only once, with what I forget, which is a good record.

Bernice and I decided neither of us had the strength to trip to the Tivoli tonight, so we're going to play bridge with a Mrs. Well in the building instead. I haven't played since that one awful afternoon I spent with Jerry Stern's wife and two other horrid girls. I hope I enjoy myself more, this time. I really don't like cards very much, except those wonderful, ill-natured games we used to play with one another, or those brawling poker games en famille. But bridge is such a feminine game, requiring all the slyness, attention to detail and humorlessness attributed (and I think rightfully) to the female mind. Naturally, I don't think I have a female mind, or I wouldn't be saying these things.

I certainly do love you, and am running out of ways in which to express it. I guess that's because words will always be so damn inadequate as representations of the wondrous life we've had in retrospect, and my vision of our life together in the future. I really do have great fantasies about us, mostly dealing with horseplay and other kinds of play on the various beaches of the world. I don't know if you're relieved or chagrined that I'm not spending these private hours plotting out your career as boy financier, professor, journalist or just general homme du monde, on the strength of two thousand rocks from the pater's wig business.

And I certainly didn't mean that description (did I write one) of Julie Hess's domestic plant in the way of invidious comparisons, because I like this place of ours much better, and feel sorry for her that she has to live in a hotel. I'm doing and getting

everything I want, really, and if I don't, it's only because I want to wait till you come home so we can do it together.

Gosh, I'm a rude hostess. Goodnight, darling, I'll write more tomorrow.

All my love - Jill

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 5, 1943

Darling --

Friday

I don't know how coherent this letter will be, as Vesta is spending the night here and there are, needless to say, frequent interruptions. Joan had to go out to Oak Park and so I offered to spare her the trouble of dragging Vesta with her. Incidentally, I got rid of my other house guests, Diane and Oliver, yesterday, by the simple, but painful expedient of having an intime chat with them Wednesday night, in which I said that I didn't feel well enough to have people around me all the time. That's somewhat of an exaggeration. Actually, I just don't feel up to having neurotic people around me all the time.

Vesta is quite a good child, though not very attractive (braces will help at a later age) and inclined to be saucy at times. But she has learned to play nicely by herself, and not to interfere too much with the adult life around here. I don't believe she was so nice when we first knew her. She and Cooney are great pals, or as pally as Cooney will be with anybody, particularly a child, other than me. He is inclined to growl and mutter under his breath at children when he feels their attentions growing excessive. Right now, he has a hacking cough, and I am debating whether to take him to a vet, as it is a most annoying sound.

Oh God, and Diane and Oliver dropped back again a little while ago, for the liquor they left behind them (take it away!) and then they left, and now Bill Steinbrecher had dropped in. I am forcibly taking time off to write to you, but it probably won't be as long a

letter as I want to write, and probably somewhat constrained.

Enclosed is the clipping I promised in re Mann.

I got a letter from Renee yesterday, saying she's heard from Jerry about his meeting you, and quoting his estimate of you -- that you were a swell guy and very intelligent. Hell, I know it and so do you, so that last sentence will probably only drive you to slumberland.

Darling, I just asked Bill what seemed to him a very academic question, because I didn't cite personalities in particular, namely, is the title-holder of your insurance affected by the rest of your will, i.e., by the party to whom the will is made out. This always seems to be a frightfully morbid topic of conversation, but it's occurred to me on and off that your insurance is made out to your family, while the will is to me. I guess we had jointly decided that your family should be title-holder of the insurance as we weren't married at the time. Well, no matter what your will says about leaving stuff to me, the insurance still goes to them unless you specifically change the title-holder, which you can do at any time. I just wanted you to be informed of these matters, so you can do anything you want to do about it. I hope I don't sound like a grasping, grafting female in the preceding lines, but I imagine you see my point, with bambino et al. And you're quite right, that my personality hasn't changed much in the course of pregnancy. I'm not the least bit bovine or contented aside from the contentment of knowing that I'm terribly in love, and still curse frightfully. I did get awfully neat, but will probably abandon it all when the baby comes and I have more to do. My cooking is still at the same level it was before, imaginative and uneven in quality. I have a violent desire to make beautiful pictures, but haven't so much as gotten around to buying a colored pencil. Someday I really would like to take lessons, or just fool around by myself, as I know I haven't a spark of talent, and can't even draw what I see. My sociology teacher at Smith (the only bright one) told me about a friend of hers who was a secretary and got analyzed, and turned into a bang-up sculptor, but I think in my case the medicine would be worse than the cure. Besides, I

don't need analysis, except for this dubious one-chance-out-of-a-million possibility that, after six years, I might be able to draw a horse that didn't look like Cooney.

I bought the Barnaby book today -- I sent you that funny ad for it several weeks ago, and Bill is now amusing himself with it. I haven't had a chance to look at it today yet. I cleaned the whole joint again today and sewed up a bedspread, a very expensive one, I had gotten from Field's but which was too big for the cot in the baby's room. Yesterday I sorted out all the baby clothes Mom had gotten for me, and that I had purchased in N.Y. under Day's guidance. They really are cute; it's hard to imagine anything being so small, but I'll be damned yet if I know which end they all go on.

Gosh, honey, I want to say a lot more but I guess it's rude to write non-stop letters, which mine usually are, when there are guests around. I hope by tomorrow the plague will be over. Joan's coming for Vesta then.

And until tomorrow I'll just say I love you terribly, painfully and excitingly. Maybe tomorrow I'll have some more convincing way of saying it.

Always,

Jill

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 5, 1943

Dearest Jillins,

This evening, by mischance which I don't know whether to applaud or regret, I picked up an old novel called Madame X which I have just now finished. It's a funny old thing which came out before the first war and I seem to recall was a hit. It's full of deep but slushing sentimentalism of those days and written in ever so trite language. Yet it has a certain novelty which is attractive, perhaps because it plays so hard on the old tune of

an errant wife, an unforgiving husband and the general tragedy for all which ensues. The novelty of it lies in its more or less sociological treatment of the problem (tho in Victorian language) and its advocacy of the position of the wife. If you have nothing better to do some day you might course through it to see what I mean. No loss if you don't.

The book certainly came with the furnishings of this place. Such plush Victorianism. It all goes very well with a fancy-cut glass of Vermouth, which, I hasten to add, I am drinking. There wasn't much else to do tonight save to read a little & write a letter. And this stuffy old place is so nice & peaceful. I don't feel particularly like being convivial at the Villa & it's raining out to boot. Since the mess is only two doors away, it is always the easy way to a source of comfort to return to the apartment. Dabinett was still confessing admiration of you at the table tonight. He hasn't been as lucky as I in getting around and is generally restless about doing things exciting. He has a good-natured soul beneath his wildness & corniness.

I got letters from you today dated August 28 and Oct. 24, plus one from Walter or the Anchor Metal Parts Co., I don't know which. I don't know what happened with that August one. At any rate, it proved to be quite interesting and instructive, though I have to thumb through my grimy file of your letters to extract the phrase which you recanted four letters later about "I realize you don't necessarily agree with me". It seems that I was only an imaginary partner in what was really your soliloquy. Without scarcely a word of my own, you tell me a farfetched theory, assume my opposition, argue it out in absentia, berate me for taking your statements too lightly, say I "damn well agree with you" and, I hope, finally kiss me and make for a trysting spot. It all leaves me slightly dazed and confused. But I'm willing to be the straw man if only the kiss & tryst were to materialize.

For another thing, your August letter filled in another stone in my very rickety reconstruction of your life. If your confusion of moving puzzled you, just think what it looks like if it comes out of some letters badly mixed. I have a vague notion of a place

with six cots, white walls, new varnish, a dog (always a dog, damn his black effeminate soul!) a dining place, though I haven't heard anything about kitchen facilities, and loose girls, or, rather, girls strung loosely about the cots. Sounds like a frustrated soldier's dream. I wonder that the U.S. will look like when the mob of howling wolves from abroad descends upon it. How the beer & whiskey will flow! How the soda-jerks will slave away! How the dance-halls will teem! Every soldier lets himself dream of it only once in the while, as a Sunday treat: Homecoming! You would think they were all happy as kings until the fatal step up the gangplank.

Tomorrow, by the grace of God and the local string situation, I'm going to send you ten pairs of silk stockings. I don't know whether you'll like them & doubt whether you'll wear them, for only dark shades are available at all, and then only by searching inquiry of the black market channels. Perhaps by now you have the four pairs I send from Naples & therefore know what to expect. Mom would like a share in the loot, don't you think. I paid two dollars a pair for them, and the purchase doesn't deprive the locals of a vital need. All they want is enough bread and that problem takes everyone's attention.

Ah, yes, darling, Walter's letter. I remember discussing him with Jerry Ross walking up to the Casbah one afternoon, Jerry does a fine, word-for-word imitation of him. Apparently, he gives that "brother, if you need a helping hand, here I yam" speech to all his male relatives. We had some good laughs at his expense, though both of us admitted he was probably good-hearted. Anyhow, I gather from his letter that I'm being followed in my bellicose meanderings by a halo of anchor-built planes, viz: "You have probably seen many troop carrying gliders (CGr-4A). Those are ours & there are plenty in your neighborhood - if you heard about the first glider to be towed all the way to England, that was ours - we are now making a larger amphibian glider and a larger version of the troop-carrying glider with twin motors which are dismountable at will - you should see some of these in several months." I should suck my thumb that long! I believe

in the principle expounded by a mythical German prisoner "British plane come, German ducks; German plane come, British duck; American planes come, everybody ducks": so much for recognition of the anchor trademark. I wish him well, though. The family wouldn't be the same without him.

Tomorrow, I shall write you again. If only I would write you a book to read during the approaching December days, I would be happy. But the peace & calm of the war zone is disturbed every once in the while by stirring advertisements in the infrequent home magazines which make us want to win the war in order to stop their guff. Never mind, though, darling, for when next I see you, I shall tell you volumes. With a kiss for each period and an "I love you" for each paragraph.

Love Al

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 6?, 1943

Darling --

Saturday night, about 8

Alone at last! I almost feel the way I used to when we, surfeited with company, would suddenly find ourselves alone and free to give vent to our love. Well, letter-writing is a pretty ersatz vent, but the only one I have now.

As a matter of fact, the past 24 hours with Vesta, who just left with Joan about five minutes ago, were quite enjoyable, due to the peculiar circumstance of our being asleep and not knowing it almost half of the time. Last night after Bill left, I climbed into bed for a good night's etc., and was sadly awakened at what I thought was two by Cooney's coughing. I tried to stop him as best I could, which wasn't very good, having only the recourse of massaging his chest which apparently is ineffectual with any kind of chest disorder. Unable to get black to sleep, I took one of Greenhill's little pills, which he had given me for such occasions (and which I really don't and won't use unless I have

the kind of insomnia which routs me out of bed at three or four in the morning -- just not the ordinary kind where you can't sleep at bedtime). I woke up about eight, kind of sore at the pills which I figured should have at least kept me in bed until ten, and made breakfast for us both. In the middle of same, Joan breezed in and said where's lunch. It was just high noon. Apparently Bulova is not the old reliable timepiece it's cracked up to be.

Cooney, your ancient enemy, was still hacking away and leaving little spots of whatever one coughs up when one coughs around the place, and being very pathetic and shame-faced about the whole thing, though I tried to make him understand that I wasn't mad at him for it. So I looked through the classified book for the nearest vet, and Vesta and I went over with him. The vet said he had bronchitis, from being out in this cold wet weather too much. That was a perfectly reasonable explanation, as he had run away while I was doing the laundry Wednesday and stayed away for a couple of hours. I guess dogs are just as prone to colds and stuff as human beings, especially if they have to live in steam heated, and therefore erratically heated apartments. He gave me some syrup and pills to give him -- the former Cooney can very effectively get on the floor before it gets down him, though he's not so good with the pills. The whole works costs 2.75, in case you're curious about the current fees of vets.

We had early supper -- I made baked beans and they came out very well, though somewhat burned -- everything burns in this house -- between all the various electrical appliances and the stove, there's enough heat to fire the whole U.S. Merchant Marine. I know you don't like baked beans, but they really are loads of fun to make, and Joan and I like to eat them. You came off very badly in one encounter with them at the Kelley's house. So did the Kelley's, as I recall.

Then we sat around and talked till just a little while ago. They are certainly a lot better company than my previous guests -- even Vesta asks less stupid questions than Oliver. In re-reading

your last letter or so, I noticed a note of optimism about the war's end with which, for almost the first time, I concur, and not view as just a little joy-juice for the old lady and her imminent brood. In the first place, we're all pretty exuberant about the outcome of the Moscow conference here. I'm sending you one angle on it -- Roosevelt and same -- in a column of Grafton's. Secondly, every time I look at the map and see how close the Russians are to the Polish and Rumanian borders, I jump for joy. I wonder how we'll ever be able to pay our debt to the Russians, in a moral sense. And I guess the Anglo-American air force are hotter than pistols, though I'm not a devotee of the V. through A.P. school of thought.

Mom just called and I spent a full half hour talking to her, thereby successfully removing this butterfly brain from the subject of military strategy. Matter of fact, I'm trying a little strategy on her, of what you might call a military nature, i.e., trying to remove your C blanket from her premises without alienating her affections. I opened up the subject tonight. She was unwilling. I made offers, to wit, your army blankets and a yellow and white bedspread which mysteriously appeared among my household fauna. She bridled. I grew firm. She said oh well, this is what everybody does to me, but with a note of resignation. I pushed the point home with a Babe-would-want-me-to-have-it. If she accepts the Army blankets and we want them for camping when you come home, there'll always be you to put your size ten foot down and get them back. Meanwhile, I must make offers. As I said before, Mom things that if people use her house for a storeroom, they must make certain sacrifices of goods and chattel. I don't agree to this theory. If I were less tactful, I would say that had we known it, we would have used a professional storehouse. As it is, I just compromise because it's nice to have her good will and I'm genuinely fond of her. I really think you're the only person in the world who can lay down the law to her, and you're probably less confident of your ability than I am. She even has your father in secret terror of her anger, which is of the non-cooperative, Gandhiesque variety. Now that you mention it, I can understand one of the reasons

why you preferred to make your own life at an early age. Underneath their (her) Sicilian jollity and adaptability to the various conditions of life, both your mother and father have an inflexibility which is truly maddening to two infants such as you and I, who popped out bawling in rage at a world they never made. I think I'm very much like you in that respect, though it's not so apparent because I don't have your direction, creative intelligence and, as a rule, courage to carry out my will. But will I have, and it makes me sore as hell to find disagreement with it. I think that similarity is the reason why we've stayed in love so long, fought so much -- and will continue to stay in love for eternity, though in my present moist mood, I can't ever imagine doing anything but weeping for joy at the sight and presence of you. My favorite fantasy of the moment -- in fact, the only one I've had in years since I found out what Life Was All About, is what we'll do when you get back. Those first few moments, hours and days, I mean. I have visions of flying to New York with Pete/Kathy if he/she is old enough, leaving it in Day's spare room with an infant nurse, and spending a week going gaga with you in Fifth Avenue buses, steak emporiums (to satisfy your lusts of the palate) and French boites (to satisfy mine). We might go to nice bars for pre-dinner cocktails, and good plays afterwards. We could get up late and have breakfast in bed (all this at a fancy hotel), then amble down Fifth Avenue on the park and look at the aquatic boids [birds, in Brooklynese], or the Picassos at the Museum of Modern Art. If it's spring we can have the wonderful lunches they serve in the backyard of the Museum. We can do everything we want to do, completely alone, yet you can always rush back to your status of paternity, painlessly, by brushing off the paid attendants and jouncing the little guy around by yourself. Frankly, I won't be the least bit interested in my role as a mother -- I'll be so busy trying to be the perfect wife. And I can't think of a better place than New York to go to be everything to each other, and nothing to anyone else. Chicago, as I've always claimed and it's the reason why I settled here, is a swell place for being domesticated and social, but it's no place for lovers, unless it's

the summertime and they can hide in the secret places and anonymity of the lake front. Does it sound good to you? It would be wonderful to have one perfectly civilized stretch of time, and then rush back to the familial brawl at Addison St., the parental brawl of crib and diaper, or the intellectual brawl of the Midway.

Jesus, if that day would only come soon! Of course, I've got a prior period of time to wish away first -- the time between now and the birth. While for some reason I'm more comfortable today than I've been all week -- I think one puts on weight very fast and then gets used to it -- I'm naturally pretty anxious to have the little one and get on with the business of learning what new life is all about, to paraphrase a previous sentence. I have quite a few dreams involving the day of birth, usually frustrating ones like the old running-one-where-your-legs-can't-move, in which I wait for the first twinges so I can get to the hospital, and not a damn thing happens. And there's a tendency now -- a rather unfortunate one -- of minimizing the time one has to wait. Like, if anyone asks me when I'm going to have the baby I say Oh, next month, as if I only had four weeks to wait, when actually I have seven or eight. Part of this tendency is the result of base vanity -- one always wants to seem small for the stage one's in -- part, most, in fact, is a genuine wish for it to be only four more weeks.

How many times have I thanked God and you for the fact we're going to have a baby! It would have been awful if we hadn't -- if I hadn't been too lazy that day to get the works out of the suitcase. For the first time I feel as if I'm really able to give you something for your money, so to speak, something for all the love and time and security you've given me. I guess I must have had great guilt feelings about my fulfillment of the wife-role before -- it occurred to me a number of times that all I ever gave you, on the positive side, were a lot of happy moments in bed, which I shared, of course, and a vast amount of wise remarks which you might not have always thought as killingly funny as I did. Anyway, from purely selfish reasons I'm glad we're having the kid because for the first time I feel I'm doing something I've

got a chance of being really good at.

Gosh, that's too much introspection for one letter or one babe. You'll be needing the pills pretty soon if these letters keep up, not Coon and me. But the weather is hideous and rainy and there's not much going on outside the skin, not even a good movie because I certainly don't have the resistance to wind and water that a duck has, and only a duck could effect a rapport with Humphrey Bogart this month.

Do you know I never even heard of Sahara? Maybe I should go to Africa to see the new movies. How's Jerry, by the way?

You know, as an extension on the thoughts I had yesterday (which I dutifully relayed to you) on the subject of insurance and wills and such, I decided I would make a will too. There's no point in my being childish about property any more, now that I'm in imminent danger of acquiring some, viz. my previous attitude of "Oh give it all to the city of New York." I guess I'll get around to it the next month or so. You can have all my money. I'm leaving the brown ration stamps (for meat, you poor old non-cognoscenti) to Cooney.

The weather continues to grow more ghastly. yet I must brave it to mail this before ten. Cooney can't come with me though, as the doctor advised that he be kept indoors and quiet for the next few days. Jesus!

Why must I always end with some allusion to your hated rival? It must certainly spoil the effect of any closing expressions of affection. Such as, I love you Al more than Cooney, more than the inner man, more than the police dog I had when I was 4-13, more than anything else in the world past present or future.

Always yours - Jill

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 7, 1943 V-MAIL

My darling --

Sunday PM

Another lazy Sunday, lazy in the sense that I abstain from housework, anyway. I did a little painting (of furniture) and went up to Bernice's after breakfast. She's just finishing up her thesis so I volunteered to edit same. And that's how I spent the afternoon, along with much eating. Right now I'm trying to persuade her to see *Action in the North Atlantic* (Bogart) with me after I finish with my business downstairs of writing you.

I found the most exciting -- for me -- story in yesterday's Daily News, or the magazine section of same, about your friend Captain (is it Major now) Charlton and the Eighth Army News. I was very proud to see the work of you and your comrades recognized. I'm enclosing it in another envelope, along with the announcement of the Peck baby, and a please from the APSA for due. If you'll note, they're asking for 5.84 from you. I was going to send it off anyway, but after your very amusing and withering comments on the current P.S. literature, I'm not so sure you just won't be annoyed to have your mails cluttered up. So let me know. And stupid me -- I didn't know till yesterday that Time has an overseas -- I believe baby-size edition. Joan told me and I made haste to send them a check for your subscription. She said she'd heard the men overseas in more or less permanent places like Africa, Australia and the Aleutians got them five or six days after the regular Time came out. However, I don't think such idyllic conditions would be operative in a battle zone, and right now I'm staggering around under the growing burden of suspecting you've returned to the Naples region. That (Time) and the pajamas and the baby should constitute enough birthday presents for this year -- next year when you're home the sky's the limit. I have your picture on the desk now, I'm getting into the habit of carting it around whenever I move from one position to another for a reasonable length of time. I took it to Joan's when I stayed there last week. It's just that little Billings one, you know, but it looks very nice in the red leather frame, completely adequate for me.

Cooney coughed a lot last night and I had to get up and give him the cough medicine, which should get me in shape for all the minor malaises and inconveniences of babyhood. I'm sure a baby would be a lot easier to get medicine down than him. Actually you need two people to medicate a dog with liquids - one to hold his jaws and the other to hold the spoon. It's easier with pills. Bernice's thesis is about the effect of class structure on children's attitudes towards themselves and others. It's rather interesting and readable. She got her case material from a study her department did on class and caste in Morris, Illinois. Of course, I think theses are the blank, anyway -- the way they belabor a point would put an ad writer for morning radio commercials to shame.

I still haven't heard from Buss and Mir as to the disposition of your property after they moved. Damn, I get sore as hell but it doesn't do any good to communicate it to you, as there's nothing you can do. I mean, at the general attitude of the family that we are, or should be, philanthropic. Frankly, I don't feel the least bit philanthropic about anybody these days. I figure the three (or four, in case of twins) of us have a right to live as nicely as we can afford to do, and resent very much the leveling tendencies rife in these parts. I had a talk with your mother over the phone this morning, which is probably why I'm thinking of all this, and if I had any sense, I'd just wait and cool off. It started yesterday by my asking her for the C blanket, with a heartrending voice, and today she suggested I get Ivy a gift for Christmas because Ivy has driven me around twice. Well, I was going to get her something, but Mom suggested some ridiculously expensive dolls (from the Ward catalog) and I got sore about it. Of course, Mom thinks I'm just being cheap, and it makes me mad when you can't argue somebody out of an idea. Anyway, I said that maybe if I wore the air of genteel and self-pitying poverty that cloaks the Carlson family, people wouldn't expect so much of us. Hell's bells, can't you make them understand that just because we're not down to our last dime, it's no reason why we have to act the part of the Julius Rosenwalds of the family? Nobody expects it of Mir and Buss,

who certainly have a larger income than us, but for some reason, and it's probably just that I am and act the daughter of the upper boorswawsee or however Leadbelly so marvelously pronounces it, it's expected of us. Your mother would get sore as hell at me for writing this to you, so there's not much you can write to her, though if you were here and you felt like it, you could bend her ear with a few well-chosen phrases. (That's another thing I get mad and abstruse, and she never understands exactly what I mean when I think I've made a brave touché). You might say that I've sent you our bank statements and you don't see where we're so damn rich, or something. Oh the hell with it. I guess if you hadn't taken my last weird cry of complaint in such an amusing way -- I really did love your letter of reply and found it very husbandly and comforting, in a distinctly unpitying way -- I wouldn't write you this. Actually, there's nothing to this at all except my own hyper-sensitivity to what people think of me -- I think I'm a great gal and feel, at the moment, sorely misjudged.

The baby did a complete tailspin, I think, last night, and today I am practically sylph-like. It's the damndest thing, the way these changes of Mother Nature, all upper-case letters, take place. And if your mother ever filled you with the old oil about carrying you under her heart, and you sneered in derision, take that sneer back. It really happens that way; anyway, around this time apparently the kid starts kicking upwards in the direction of the old pump. Fortunately, this old pump is working very well and can take the limited amount of footballing around that the heir feels necessary for his well-being. It's all very much fun, and not nearly so uncomfortable as it sounds. In fact, it's not uncomfortable at all, when you compare it to hangovers, dentist drills, hitting one's funnybones, and the other ills to which our flesh is heir.

Darling, a million kisses to you and all my love.

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 7, 1943

Dear love,

Sunday

Writing you is difficult of a Sunday morn, mainly because I try to imagine my victim and in your case that means addressing a slumbering, clamped-lidded, flush-skinned, determined snoozer. I had to lift both eyebrows the other day when you wrote that one morning you rose at six to take a walk in the drizzling rain. There was a time when nothing could wake you up that early save persistent calloused necking. Now I know what you mean when you say you miss me. You have no one you are determined to stay in bed and sleeping against. You have no one to defy getting you up, to berate you, to beat you across the tender portions with a wet towel. In short, you are left to ignominiously get up. As for me I get up because I get up, it's a dull process, facilitated only by the prospect of a good breakfast.

Breakfast this morning had a Twistian element about it. I was sitting with an air corps captain who is in charge of the conservation of art treasures in Sicily, dining away on white cloths with bacon, potatoes, fruit juice, toast, jam, butter, and coffee, when a little apparition scuttled across the room, seized three small crusts of bread, and scampered out as fast as his short legs could carry him. He must have been about seven years old, clad in rags, with bare feet and an old man's cap, and a face smudged with dirt. We just looked at each other, hopelessly, and recommenced our conversation. The word pane isn't as long as the word liberation but it signifies the whole alphabet here.

Yesterday, I received back from the censor several copies of French North African newspapers which I had mailed you for your interest because they violated some regulation. That reminds me that I sent you a number of our papers from Siracusa, Catania, Catanzaro, and perhaps Naples and Bari. Have you received (or Dad) any in the past besides one or two? And generally, are my letters showing signs of censorship?

Last night I dreamt of you, pleasantly enough. First we had a pleasant walk, then we ate dinner, then we lay in bed and talked, and then we walked again. The only untoward incident was a swoon you executed towards the final scene; I felt of you, found you were just swooning for causes unknown, and when last seen, I had picked you up and was carrying you off with no particular intention in mind. I woke up, took a drink, opened the balcony door, took several deep breaths, and went back to sleep.

This morning, I undertook the melancholy task of thinking about how little time we have had together since that bright day in June, several years ago, when we met. To see the picture more clearly, I drew the chart below and there it all is. I know you'll agree, darling, that from the first meeting the time should be counted as ours for good, a remarkable beginning to a remarkable record of constant love amidst frustration. *[chart]*

I think I have indicated even the times when we met for hours only. I found it hard that we passed the greater part of 1941 together, but I realize when I think of it that that was a year of a great reservoir of memories, of teaching at Indiana, of research at Chicago and Research Associates, of Esquire, of rendezvous in California, of living at 5508 and 5479, of movies, sodas, home-cooking and lazy Sundays.

I realize, too, that when we were together, My God but we were Really together.

I'm optimistic about starting in on the black soon and not going off it again. In all seriousness, there is the proof that I love you and you love me in black and white, and I am very proud of it.

With many kisses and all my love,

Al

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 8, 1943

Darling --

Monday

This is one of those days I feel like biting dogs. It is so chilly and unpleasant out that I couldn't even get to 57th St. today to pick up some stuff at the dressmakers. I dislike practically everybody I know and am sure the feeling is mutual. I burn food (well I do that every day) and, going a step further, myself. The tips of my fingers look like Father Damien's from accidentally picking up a hot dish from the stove. I find your presence urgent and indispensable, and can't have it. Mr. Anthony, the question for tonight is: do I just act the brave little woman and say nothing about it, or act like Jill, and bend Al's ear with my troubles? Being Jill, I am taking the latter course.

Oh yes, and I got up much too late this morning, with the concomitant headache, because Bernice Neugarten and I made the vast mistake of trotting out about nine last night to see an unspeakable opus called Mr. Lucky at the Piccadilly, with Cary Grant and a female called Laraine Day (if she was born with that name, I'll eat her). And speaking of food, Miss Day's face looks exactly like the interior of an overripe mush melon. The accompanying feature, for there always is one, was Walt Disney's and Major de Seversky's *Victory Through Air Power*, which was a beautiful job of color production and animation, even though I don't agree with their thesis particularly and would like to see bombers big enough to make a round-trip flight from Alaska to Tokyo. They talk as if it's a cinch.

On my way back from shopping this morning I bumped into Dorothy Briggs, who lives in the building next to this one on Kenwood. I visited with her for a short time. She's living with Julie again, and they have quite a menage. There is Dorothy's wonderful son Andy (aged three), and Julie's new four-month-old son Tony, and a miscellaneous colored child of about eight months who is living with them for the time being but actually belongs to an acquaintance of their maids'. It is one of these old apartments and looked like a storm had struck it this morning.

Somehow Bohemianism isn't very gay or attractive when there are children around. Yet Dorothy must have something there because Andy really is a charming, generous and even rather gentle child, and Julie's baby is infinitely more quiet and patient than some of the more bourgeois children of my acquaintance. I wouldn't care to generalize on all this, and certainly plan to go ahead with my intentions of surrounding ours with a maximum of cleanliness and comfort. Julie asked for you, of course. Her husband is a naval officer in the Pacific area.

I spent the afternoon in the kitchen, burning things and painting others. I find the kitchen table a very convenient workbench for painting small articles of furniture. Right now I am painting one of those things that hold plants on the wall in the corner a poisonous shade of green. It was a piece of junk I fished out of your Mother's basement, and, in the best artsy-and-craftsy tradition, I patched it up with glue and plastic wood and will eventually restore it to the dubious usefulness of holding the leprous little plants I have acquired from the local Kresge's.

There seems to be no end to the amount of decorating one can do in a place like this. In the first place, about once a week I or some other slob breaks the back off the desk chair, which means I must make like one or all of Macbeth's witches and brew up this mysterious glue (you buy it in powder form) which is supposed to hold Flying Fortresses together. God help our Air Force if that's the case. Fortunately, the janitor forgot to get his clamps -- he was the first one to essay a repair job on it -- so I'm getting practically professional about the whole thing. And now I've decided that I want to paint all the walls -- they're a sickening buff color now -- the standard paint for cheap apartments because apparently it's the cheapest kind of paint. I was going to paint over the wall paper in the baby's room, with Janice's dubious help -- but now my spiritual adviser, Mr. Brown of Brown's Paint and Varnish Store tells me that unless the wallpaper is of a good grade, you can't do that. Inasmuch as it's peeling off in great hunks, I rather suspect that that lovable old couple, Glatt and Price, was skimping on decorating when they

put it up three score and ten years ago.

And so it goes, toujours gai. While I vowed never to make invidious comparisons between your position and mine, and at heart don't see any necessity for it, right now I would gladly borrow your carbine and go forth among the enemy, stomach and all. However, that doesn't imply or demand a swap. You can just go to a first-class hotel and read a book in the bathtub.

Anyway, it's fun to write you all this. Semper cathartic be your name. Oh, to paraphrase that noisome song popularized by our own Frank Sinatra, you'd be so-oo-o nice to leave home for.

I'm going to brave the terrors of the Loop tomorrow and try to get tickets for Oklahoma, which is finally here, and how sorry I am we couldn't get to see it together in New York because it's supposed to be fully the best musical ever. And also tickets for Ethel Barrymore in The Corn is Green, an old one but still good. Mac and I want to see the former, Bernice the latter.

Incidentally, the latter girl is really a swell one -- I'm awfully glad I finally got to know her fairly well and that she's in the building. She's both very bright and sympatico. Well, Fritz, whom you know better, is so nice one could assume that she would be too.

Although that doesn't always work -- like you're so wonderful and I'm such an old sourball. Furthermore, as you peer at me from the red-leather frame, you're very comely, despite the faint traces of a Herbert Hoover collar girdling your civilian neck. I, burnt by malignant pots and bitten by unwilling canine recipients of pills, spotted with green paint and heavy-lidded from excessive slumber, am nothing of the sort.

But I hope you love me, for I certainly am batty over you.

Always your -

Jill

I didn't get a chance to see Earl. However, I did run into Eric Rosenthal, whom you may remember. He is still disorganized, apparently 4-F, and still looking for a job. Those poor damn

refugees. I wonder if men like him were as disorganized in Germany as they are here -- pre-Hitler Germany, I mean. I also bumped into Karl Hess in the downtown I.C. station, coming home. He looks overworked, which he undoubtedly is, but is the same self-less Karl, worrying mostly about Julie and John. John, he says, has had a lousy break down there, having a major who hates him and has blocked all promotions. The work is dull, too. All he has is Jane, which is something. Tony Maidment is a captain in some Tank Corps outfit - he graduated a class before John - and is company commander. So you can't blame John for being a bit sour about it all. I do feel sorry for him because it's so much a matter of breaks, and so little a matter of a man's inherent worth in a case like that.

Lorraine is here with her little girl, who is no longer very little. She's quite an aggressive type (pronounced teep).

Mom got a letter from Miriam today, which said, in part, that Jojo was eating spaghetti and meatballs, although the doctor has proscribed sauce, so far. She also said that Buss has heard, not from you but from a military source, that your outfit was supposed to follow the fighting units and not to go in with them, and therefore Mom was not to worry. The terrible fighting around Salerno has depressed us all, and I can't help being terribly selfishly grateful that you're not with the Fifth Army.

Darling, do you like the name Peter Joseph, instead of Paul Joseph, Paul Michael, Paul Stephen, or Michael Victor. It's my latest choice. I sort of like that name Peter, as it sounds nice either as Peter or Pete.

I ran into Bill Steinbrecher yesterday on Addison and he had just passed his bar exams and had been sworn in as a lawyer in Springfield. You'll probably hear from him about the same time you get this letter, as he called up today, Mom said, to get your address and to ask me to the movies tomorrow night. It's amazing how one bumps into people all the time, by accident. I do like Bill's sense of humor; it's just his quality of bull-headedness and his devotion to the Adler-Hutch school that

sets me against him at times. But generally speaking, he's good company, and gosh knows I've had a lot of bad, i.e., dull company in my day.

Sweetheart, I itch and must take a bath. Oh yes, I conquered the plague of bedbugs by spraying around the bed every night for a week. Now I just itch from the woolen underwear. I love the way you think that now that the weather is getting more typically windy-city-ish, your presence would be needed. Do you think I'm incapable of standing up against the blasts? If anything, I'd be good ballast for you now. But of course, your presence would be needed for other things, always.

All my love to you, dearest, forever.

Jill

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 9, 1943 V-MAIL

Darling,

Tuesday

A perfectly strong man just asked me, by means of wireless, if I suffered from distressing cold symptoms. However did he guess? My symptoms are not only distressing, they are positively mortifying. I haven't even the strength to lift the typewrite out of the case, ergo you have the first glimpse of my fine hand in many a letter.

Bernice has a cold too. It's either the unseasonable snow or Cooney. I've practically had to crawl inside him to get his pills down, so anything can happen.

This morning I trotted over to the Bursar's & got tickets for Oklahoma and The Corn is Green. I don't know why, in the 4 years I've lived in this locale, I never did that before. It certainly makes theater-going easy. Of course, we couldn't get anything for Oklahoma till December 11 - I hope the little one realizes the investment Mom has in it, & keeps his shirt on till after that.

I slept all afternoon & plan to return to bed any minute now. I

wish you were here to keep me company. I remember once before I had a cold - it was the first month or so we knew each other and you were so sweet about nursing me through it. You & Paulette Goddard should get together (she's in a picture now about nurses). You'd revolutionize the techniques of the profession ... That Barnaby book is adorable - I'm glad I bought it since I think you'll like it when you come home. I also bought the Modern Library giant of Jane Austin - all her works - I think she's a wonderful pre-natal influence.

Damn this paper.

I love you. 000XXX J.

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 9 1943

Dearest Jill:

Evening before last, a batch of letters from you, the family, and private Maroon, which had traveled about Italy and Africa, caught up with me. It filled up the remaining gaps in the month of September very well, though you can see that I too have gone through periods when no letters arrived. I had quite a festa in private over them and even yet have not finished digesting the contents. I think that the fact that all those letters were missing and yet I was always getting some sort of thing from you proves the merits of faithful writing on the false supposition that the mails go in order. A sort of monthly bonus. One thing stands out as the smoke clears from the Chicago scene. The moving South was executed in good order and with a remarkable degree of efficiency. Every new letter points up some new bit of organizing genius on your part. And consequently I feel my critical remarks were based on a false assumption that the amount of bitching that ensued from the labor was in any way correlated with the amount of disorganization. Like the GI, you complain no matter how things are actually going.

Day before last, I wrote that I had purchased some silk stockings which I was going to send you. But since then I have been having acute aesthetic pangs, and can't make up my mind. It's all founded on your sensitive taste which I fully respect and try to adhere to. I can't decide whether your sympathy for the guy who sends the gift will compensate your outraged eyes for the outlandish colors of the stockings. But now I remember a certain shocking pair of red things you once got and thought you'd wear, and I think I'll send them after all. Besides what can I do with the stockings now? I'm sure that some people over there must wear funny shades. -- Last night I played my first poker game since coming overseas and won the magnificent sum of 400 lire, four dollars to the nonconoscenti. There were about seven people in the game and we played for match sticks and the game finally broke up when the colonel got tight and started to burn up all the matches. I was driven back to the apartment late and was greeted as if I had arisen from the dead by the silly maids who conducted me to another apartment of an American major where Kamenetzi and our radio news commentator were being grilled for disorderly conduct, attempting to break down doors, and inciting the local population to rebellion. Nobody seemed to understand anyone else. As I finally made it out, Kamenetzki came in around eleven and got no response from the doorbell. He could not get in because I had the only key. He called the maids and they tumbled out of bed and said that I must be still in there because I hadn't left the key with them, they were sure I hadn't gone out (I'm as quiet as a mouse), and furthermore - and here they began to get really agitated - I looked as if I were badly sick when I went upstairs. I was wearing a patch over my right eye from which a cyst had been removed that afternoon. Everyone began to agitate everyone else. As they beat upon the door, the commentator began to say "He must be dead!" and in a frenzy of woe they began to burst in through the door. Meanwhile, the officers downstairs were gnashing their teeth at all the noise, and finally the major pulled out his gun and started upstairs. In the darkness, everybody shouted at everyone else, people were

put under arrest - but no one seemed to think that involved any compulsion - and Kam and the other guy were brought downstairs for the inquisition. That's when I came in, beaming with the dew of anisette in my eyes and four dollars in my jeans, with a cheery Buona Sera for everyone. Then came the light, the peace, and innocent sleep.

About the eyes, in case you're wondering, they are now completely cured. I had a somewhat painful excision in each eye, and wore a patch on each for a day, but the trouble itself was little enough, merely a clogged eyelid gland which hardened and had to be cut open and cleaned out. Very interesting operation, from the little I could see, though I still think the most excruciating torture for men to undergo is to have their eyelids cut off so they must see everything and always. There's nothing like seeing the world with closed eyes, n'est-ce pas [nes pah] - phonetic French, just between pals).

The rainy season is here, cold and shivery. Every day more rain, with a beautiful sky breaking through occasionally. The civilian population dresses exactly as we do for the most part, save that the men's clothing is a little sharp, on our lines of several years ago, broad-brimmed hats and padded coats, etc. Most of the girls wear very short dresses, partly the material shortage, I believe. A considerable number of the poverty-stricken and laboring classes wear old Italian army uniforms which are scarcely recognizable as such. To buy a used gunny sack takes 30 lire for a class which theoretically earns only 60 lire a day, bambini included. I forgot to add that one of the main troubles with the cutting weather is that all the buildings lack a lot of their glass panes which are impossible to obtain now. There hasn't been the time even by now to repair the damage of the air raids. Partially destroyed buildings still totter about. The other day, I was sitting in my room when a great crash shook me to my heels. A building just in back of ours had collapsed under the weight of a scattering of rain drops.

Really, darling, the war news and political news are so good today that we ought to start our postwar planning any day now. I

admit my thoughts are very vague on the subject, my impression being that I shall merely sit and look at you for days on end. So why plan? And my conceits change, too. One moment I would like to dash madly through the great cities and another moment I would like to lie flat on my back with only sky and land about me. I don't know whether I want the Maine or the California campagna, The Canadian or the New Orleans red wines, the squalor and smells of the East Side or the clean sweep of beach in Michigan, or whether I just want a dull, dark room where I can just look out the window into a dull rain falling listlessly on a windless late afternoon. And then, while I'm thinking, my mind will inevitably turn to you and I shall ask you if I may find out whether your kiss is as soft as the rain. There are plans, I believe, formless, but as effective as a rushing cloud.

All love to you.

Al

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 10, 1943

Darling Wednesday morning

Just a line to tell you I love you - though this is rather an outré hour for writing - I usually reserve my hour of loving you up by pen & paper for the respectable after-dinner hour. But Mac & Maxine (what a combination) are coming to dinner, Mac to stay the night, and I probably won't have the time.

I just got a nice long letter from Juni - Bill was 1-A, then & now 3-A but subject to re-classification. I hope he doesn't go. I think the present subsidies to draftee's families are brutally low, don't you? If they want a good Army of healthy young men why the hell don't they make up their minds to pay for it? A woman with very young children & no family doesn't have a chance in our individualized society. Maybe in Russia, where they have adequate socialized child care it's OK to go out & make guns. Here it's disastrous, viz. the delinquency rates.

I didn't mean to get started on that - Juni said Bob is here at the U, taking Chinese! Bill & Wah are very busy on training films and also a documentary on polio. Leslie is showing a marked aptitude for drawing & pacifism. He told the other kids (you may recall them) on the block to play at being people for a change, not war all the time. The little girl is walking & is very pretty, Juni says. I do think she has an extraordinarily attractive pair of kids, don't you. M. E. for her sweetness, Leslie for his good looks & complexness of character?

In other times this might have bored us both to the ground - but I hope you're as interested in children now as I am - of course it could hardly be an all-absorbing interest for you, considering the Calling God has chosen to give you.

Drat your Calling (and draft bd. number 71). Come home and play with me! Cooney & I still have horrid colds. I'm gaining on him, however. At least he can breathe. I haven't for 24 hours now. But I'll live. And l'enfant is so surrounded by protoplasm & one thing or another than a good case of harakiri wouldn't even touch it. Little lessons in embryology ...

All my love and a trillion kisses to you darling, wherever you are. Keep out of Neapolitan basements - I would be very embarrassed if you came home minus curly hair (mine isn't any more so I need you for a surrogate) & eyelashes. My Dad got his blown off in our basement at 88th St. in N.Y. & there weren't even any Germans about except for a surly cook. It was the boiler.

Salvemini has a good article on Italy in this weeks U. R. I'll try to send it to you. I think it states clearly the position of liberals here, only with facts.

Didn't I start to sign off before? I love you, I do. Jill

[follows a drawing. Jill in bed with a bulbous nose and a box of

kleenex, Cooney in another smaller bed also with a box of kleenex]

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 11, 1943

Darling - Thursday afternoon

I'm sending you a feature by Maurer, who I think is very sound for a journalist, in re the Italian question. Again, like the Salvemini piece in the New Republic, which I'll try to get off to you tomorrow along with the New Yorkers, it's probably representative of liberal thought on the situation. However, there has been very little - I haven't seen any - editorializing on the subject in any of the Chicago papers. But then, I don't always get a chance to look at both the Sun and the News in one day.

Right now I don't give a farthing for politics or anything else. All I want to do is go to bed, and I can't. The maid is here & the decorator is liable to come any minute, to re-paper the bedroom. I've stood the red & blue plaid of the previous tenants long enough, & figured the baby deserved better, or at least cleaner, even if I have to pay Chicago union prices. Besides, the old paper is full of yellow spots, & somehow I'd rather have our own male child make yellow spots on the wall than somebody else's.

Mac stayed here last night. We didn't stay up late, but between Cooney & me hacking & groaning & her having to listen to it, we all had a rather rough night. I'd sleep on the couch except B is on it - the decorators are in her apartment & she has a cold too. Woe Woe.

I haven't heard from you in about 10 days now. I'm not worried but just assume you're back in Italy. Your next letter will be all the more treat for the waiting.

More tomorrow dearest. The sandman is clogging up this letter.

All my love, Jill

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 11, 1943

Darling Jill,

Today I'm feeling very exhilarated, almost at home, as a matter of fact. It may be partly due to the weather which is bright and snapping. It is largely due to my finding a couple of little gifts which I think you will like. I still haven't sent the stockings, because the box I found for them is too big for stockings alone. I bought this morning five little handkerchiefs, worked very carefully and well on the borders and with little people and animals in one corner, also finely sewn. I think they're cute; the Italian word would be more descriptive: they're "carine", which means literally "little dears". I also put in the box that swell edition of Munchausen, which, if you go for masterful editions of entertaining books, you will be happy to get. And finally, after searching for several days, I bought from a Sicilian painter who has a very good background and, as you shall plainly see, is no corny pastoralist, six pen and ink sketches, which look almost like etchings and which might go very well in the bedroom or anteroom. They are quite authentic, e.g. the one with the four cedars in a straight line in a range of barren mountains, and you need only ask Dad for a confirmation of their detail. Very fine workmanship & design in my humble estimation, considering they are low-priced art and not meant to move the art world. So I really take delight in sending you the box this afternoon, and hope it gets to you in order. I'm still looking for another nice picture for the living room and have in mind an impressionistic, modern, strong-colored nude, not very large. But whatever strikes my eye I shall get and send you. If I may improvise on the theme "You're so nice to come home to", I'd say "You're so nice to send things home to".

I got a letter from Buzz yesterday. I think I'll enclose it & you can see what I meant when I used to say that Buzz is touchy, can be hit under his guard, and deserves to be discounted for his formidable manner. However, if you still want the records, either write him or let me write him. I have a better idea. Why don't we buy the Russian linguaphone set and learn Russian? You can

start on it now and I'll commence later. We can have a lot of fun with it and it will be of much more help in understanding the world. You won't have to rely on the Tribune for your news of inside Russia. Then I also can sing to you in authentic Russian when you dance the Kazodska, and when you fall panting & exhausted into my arms, I can win you with my vodka breath, my grizzly beard, and a deep, mournful Linguaphone Russian "Ah, my sweet, little Bradislava."

Nov. 12, Morning. - Last night before dinner, we spent two hours at the villa drinking anisette and eggnogs and playing a game called "What would you eat if you could have anything you wanted" not to be confused with "What would your ideal restaurant be?" which followed later by "What would your ideal dinner companion be like?" which was the final game. Every man in turn went into raptures describing his ideals of food, surroundings, and companions. No bit of etiquette, cuisine or unpolished silver was left untouched. It was great fun, an exciting exercise of unused taste muscles. The saliva flowed in pools when we heard Warner of Time & Fortune describe his steak. Cosgrove's salad had definite orgiastic qualities. So did Altherr's roast duck. Then we turned to restaurants where for my part I described something that looked like Berchtesgaden and Dick Lee, for Example, described a very ideal steak & chop house that ought to be in New York. Long wrangles about where the waiter should stand, how old he should be, what sort of accent he should have, and whether he should be allowed to suggest any item of food. Finally, each took two minutes to describe his ideal companion -- Dick wanting a sexy blonde, Cosgrove a male tanker of the open-throat beer school, and I got the unanimous approval of all by the very difficult process of describing you incognito. Somehow I hit on the way of explaining it and everyone was admiring and affirmative just with the pure theory of a dinner companion who somehow resolves the conflict between sex and sociability without eliminating either in a manner harmful to the peace of mind that must go with the ideal dinner. If you had any small doubt that I appreciate your most subtle points (beyond your own

consciousness sometimes) you should have heard my disguised words last evening.

After dinner, I participated in the censorship of a series of three short films -- two artistic commentaries on Michelangelo and Puccini, the other a propaganda geography lesson on Europe put out by the Fascists. All three were possessed of a high degree of technical perfection, most especially the one of Michelangelo, a magnificent tribute to an artist the comprehension of whom leads one to the abyss of aesthetic emotions, and exhausts this vocabulary of adjectives. The one on Puccini had lovely Italian landscapes and most beautiful selections from his music.

I hope you're still very well, darling, and wish I could send the two above films to you for your confinement. Is the expected child really big or are you just feeling that it is? It had better not hurt you or I won't like it.

As always, all my love.

Al

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 12, 1943

Darling Jill,

Friday, I think

I got off a letter and that fine package for you this morning and feel at peace with the world. I mentioned inserting a letter from Buzz with it and forgot to do so. I'll stick it in this envelope if I don't forget. I think you'll like the contents of the package, a Christmas gift, no less - God, how I wish I could give it to you in person. I stuffed in an old copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Italian just to fill space in the box. Everything must fit the container here, you know; the shoe is on the other foot. I also recalled with sadness today that I had bought two nice silk kerchiefs for you in Bari and can't recall having heard that you got them. I must have lost them in the shuffle, curses. Or else they may have been in the glove compartment of the car that

was stolen from me there once. That's where I lost my swimming trunks, I know. Car-stealing is almost a sport amongst the troops over here. It's essential to have a chauffeur sitting inside all the time to raise an alarm. Or else a chain roughly the size of a destroyer anchor chain will do. My car was recovered later, it so happens, but sans contents, by one of the Italian soldiers who was driving Commander Martelli (RN) down the street & spotted it. Martelli took the helm and the soldier speeded away in the other car, just in time, because just then two Royal Navy officers came out to drive off in it. They gesticulated wildly with dismay & disgust, and Martelli got a bang out of it because he is RN and the RN is never to be confused with the RN Reserve of what the British call the "Wavy Navy" for wearing curly stripes instead of straight ones.

The fellow who drew the pen & ink sketches I sent you is a little, red-headed cripple, the kind of guy women make a big fuss over because he is cute and funny, something like Felix of the tiger paintings. His ordinary job is drafting for the Municipio, but he is also doing a side job for me in the way of propaganda. I like him a lot. From his work & the work of a couple of others around here, I find that their talent is a lot better than the stuff their talent produces -- the old story of commercial necessity & baroque & rococo survivals. This one man I visited this evening had a gaudy, well-executed but meaningless 18th century ballroom scene next to a gigantic, somber painting of a farmer and plow. He showed me also his originals for the cinema settings of Benvenuto Cellini, a film which I seem to recall being exhibited in America. Very nice job, too; you could almost feel the cold sweat pouring from the stone walls of the prison, even in the pencil sketch.

I drove home in a driving rain after arranging a date with the painter's niece, a lovely girl who completely captivated me by her serious and charming chatter and her amazing mannerisms, not to mention her shining eyes. I shall take her to the concert Sunday at the colossal opera house. We shall make a handsome couple, though I am a bit tall for her, since she is

only six years old ("going on seven"). Other social notes: Lt. DeGrazia took assorted members of the PWB villa for circa \$14 the other night at poker, dime limit. Flash! New additions to PWB mess, Hubert Howard son of Leslie, and Capt. Hammond of Classics faculty at Harvard and Rome. Lt. DeGrazia confesses, on heels of poker game, that he would rather kiss girl named Jill than win at poker, that he has morning sickness because he can't find her when he wakes up. [Note in margin: Not so. Son of Lord Housed]

My love to you, darling. Al



Hubert Howard at Palazzo Caracciullo, Naples.

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 14, 1943

Darling --

Sunday

I bow my head in shame. I haven't written you since Thursday, which is a perfectly revolting display of negligence. But colds, I discover, have a peculiar effect, cutting one off from one's environment psychologically as well as physiologically. Furthermore, people have been dodging in and out of this place like it was a Berlin air raid shelter. It started Thursday with the schmaper-hanger, as that individual called himself -- the first word is apparently his interpretation of his dual function, scraping and papering. He and his friend, the painter, were a rare couple, bringing much joy and light into the lives of Bernice, who had them first, and me, though not much therapy. Jewish building trade workers are a race unto themselves. I don't know if you've had much experience with them. In New York, house

painters are all Jewish. They are excessively voluble, humorous, philosophical and often very progressive politically. In the case of these men, they were also ex-doughboys of 1918, and Thursday, being Armistice Day, stirred many violent and tender memories from beneath their painted and plastered exteriors. They were vociferous in their denunciation of the Legion, and enthusiastic about the VFW. The painter strongly recommended that you join the VFW when you come back. And because you are overseas, he cleaned some woodwork for me, for nothing. Although it was really quite a concession, since you're not in the infantry.

The baby's room is now immaculately done in an uninteresting cream-colored shade of paper. I really need a good picture or two of some suitable subject for the walls. See if you can pick up an American primitive when you hit Paris. They're still too expensive over here. Or a Picasso in his brief romantic interlude. I'm sure somebody could persuade Herr Goering to give up some of his fabled collection at the price, say, of his fathead. Friday was notable only because I received a letter from you, dated November 3, from a city which was certainly no longer Algiers. My last one preceding it was dated October 23, so there was either a lapse in the postal service, or an understandable one in your writing, since you must have done some mighty travelling in that time. I'm glad you agree with me about your moustache. So is your Dad, whom I spoke to today over the phone. It will be wonderful to have all the books you're getting over there -- some European books are really beautifully set up. But most of all, I'd like to have another picture of you. I'll bet you're in Naples. I can't think of another city on the way big enough to have a moving picture industry.

Friday and Saturday I spent leaping in and out of bed. I get so bored and also hungry I can't seem to stay in bed long enough to derive any benefits therefrom. B and I have been eating together since we decided we both ate better that way. Fritz is still away on business. I really do feel better today. And guess what! Paul and Ann called me this morning, just to see how I

was. It was exciting as all get [?], especially when little Paul piped hello through the mouthpiece. He sounded just like a parrot. I think that's clever for 14 months, don't you? I wish we could all be together, with our baby big enough to socialize with Paul. I don't think ours would develop a younger brother complex so much with the little Oppenheim, because I suspect he's not as aggressive or overpowering a child as Jo-Jo. That's just a guess on my part, derived more from the knowledge of the parents' personalities than from the children's.

Everybody is convinced we'll have a boy, which still doesn't make me very confident. My sister wrote that, and so did Juni King. I hope so too, if only because it's nice to have an older brother if you're a girl. I expect we'll have a lot more chances at girls, don't you? I really would like to have a good assortment. If only one didn't have to wait so long! We have six more weeks to go, and while I'm not the least bit uncomfortable, except for an expected inability to sleep flat on my stomach, it seems like forever, somehow. I wish I could call you when the event takes place. Julie was able to call John soon afterwards. If we were in New York, PM would come around and take a picture of mother and child, to send you by V-mail. They do that for babies whose fathers are overseas.

And if things work out the way they're expected to, everything will be disgustingly easy for me afterwards. I'll have the baby nurse for a month, I hope, unless she finds greener pastures, and the colored gal Dottie whom I have now and who really isn't so bad, just fearfully dumb, will come and clean once a week, and they have a diaper and infants wash service where they pick up the stuff and deliver it to you regularly. I'll be frightfully spoiled and my character will be as weak as ever. I'm expecting Mom and Dad to arrive at any minute now. They're paying me a Sunday afternoon call. Dad's never seen the place, and I'm glad they're coming. With the new subway, according to Bill Steinbrecher anyway, transportation is relatively quick by El down here. The El takes a nose dive into the ground at Armitage and comes up again at Roosevelt Road, I think.

So maybe I'd better stop writing so I won't be interrupted, and continue with a much longer and prompter letter tomorrow.

All my love to you darling.

Your

Jill

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 14, 1943

Dearest love,

As is unfortunately too frequent, my mind is brimming over with things I want to say to someone and yet that someone can only be you; so here I sit all alone fumbling with a futile sheet of paper with thoughts about everything racing so fast, that undoubtedly none will emerge in writing. It's pretty cold here, too, despite the fact that the windows are shut and a faint heat emanates from a small electric heater which has three speeds but short-circuits on all except the weakest. The cold and a large dinner of two hours ago, plus the general loneliness make me want to crawl into my blanketed pouch but that damned mind that goes skipping and jouncing about! Just ordinarily, life is interesting enough but tonight three big Christmas packages arrived from home with their contents, and the meaning of their contents, and the meaning of the meaning of their contents.

I glanced hurriedly through everything at the mess this evening as soon as I got them. The source of greatest interest and amusement to the intrigued onlookers and of mixed emotions compounded of sadness, laughter, irony and embarrassment, for me, was the can of meat. Do you know what the army lives on overseas, though my present situation is an exception? - canned meat! Spam and related nauseating things. Haven't I written you about the eternal dullness of bully beef, canned? Maybe I have, and Mom thought that a change to nice canned ham was just what I needed. How wrong. I hate the sight of a label on a tin of meat. Fortunately, the can didn't arrive when I

was suffering acutely from bully-beef phobia; otherwise I would have broken down completely. I hate the sight of any canned, condensed, evaporated, surrogate, specially treated, over-cooked, desiccated, processed nourishment with a label -- "two teaspoonful to a half cup of 80o water" when you have a huge rusty spoon, a battered enamel cup the size of a small bucket and water which is always 20o from the desideratum; "goes well as a garnish for steaks", "a delicious substitute for coffee which can be prepared in 28 seconds", "just the thing for a picnic lunch." And I feel a little sad because Mom must have sacrificed points to buy the meat. As for the soap, the toothbrush, the toothpaste, etc., I had no need for them. I still have some toothpowder I got from British Naafi [the British PX] three months ago with an extra reserve purchased since then. And the shirts I won't be able to wear until next spring because everything is OD now, and where is the wallet I need? I never chew gum & I don't expect or like to have stuff travel for several thousand miles as offerings to the local population. Besides I have some gum purchased here. I don't know, in short, to which seer you went for advice on the dressing & feeding of a soldier. The cigarettes were very welcome and the books and magazines a real treasure for which I shall love and revere you forever. What is the meaning of this meanness and bitterness, you all may ask, with the well-intentioned and hurt air of the lady who stooped over the dog injured by the wheels of a car and got only a dumb look when she kept asking "Are you badly hurt, little doggie?" It is this. I don't need anyone else to do my simple scrounging. I don't like the evidences gifts may show that the donors have no accurate knowledge of what a soldier's life demands. I dislike to receive bulky packages which have no relative value at all compared to a letter. I don't think much of sending a can of toothpowder when there are a number of photographers capable of taking decent pictures which could be sent over here. It really shouldn't make you morose to know that the only things I care to make the long trip from you to me are things that are about you or things that are an intellectual or emotional stimulus such as books, magazines and papers. I

straightened out the crumpled pieces of newspaper that were used to wrap up the articles and am looking forward to reading the pieces.

I suppose I've expressed myself badly and you and Mom will have angry moments against me for my ingratitude. But again, I say most seriously that I love you very dearly and that my "ingratitude" for "thoughtful little objects" is really a measure of a love that is too all-devouring to be assuaged by dentifrices and foods. Maybe the ordinary fellow would love the stuff. But I want only you, and nothing else matters enough to get excited about, even Christmas presents. Remember how I forsook home and Mom's wonderful cooking to live on hash in Gothic walls several years before we met?

Well, back to the beginning and to the written word. My mind has been leaping all over those books and magazines you sent, licking up the tables of contents, pawing joyously through their glorious pages, and trembling and thrilling in anticipation of their caresses. Unlike the objects that form part of my distasteful life, they bring in the other world and break contact with this one.

In fact, I can't repress the desire any longer and send you many kisses and all my love before I start to read.

Your,

Al

JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 15, 1943 V-MAIL

My sweetheart --

Monday

My gosh this is a triple-gloomy day, enough to throw Polyanna into a deep bog of depression. I tried fighting it off by making chocolate-chip-and-nut squares, as they are called on the box of chocolate chips. It was tres gai making them, but I left them in the oven too long (well, every time I felt them they were soft) and as a result they would break even Cooney's teeth and I am

depressed all over again. However, I'm going to practice on this little item of cookery often before you come home, because I think they are the kind of thing you'd like. Besides, you've got good teeth. I also made some cranberry sauce, God knows why.

Your mother and dad visited me yesterday evening -- they came around six and left around 8:30. They had a little whiskey and then some coffee. However, they didn't eat because they just had before leaving. It was a very nice visit. Mom pointed out to me that I had hung the curtains and drapes upside down, so now I either have to get a pair of sticky shoes or re-hang them. There's more to having an apartment than meets the eye, apparently. I just leaned back on the chair and it broke for the eighth time, leading me to make the classic observation, I really ought to get a new chair. Cooney has discovered that he can jump out of the window, if it is open. That is more of a discovery than is immediately apparent, since jumping out of the window in this house consist of jumping up three feet to the sill (which requires some foresight if you are a dog, since the window may not always be open, with the result that you are hurled down to the floor with a nasty crack on the snoot), then dropping down about eight inches to the ground. It is very sweet to watch him do it, but I don't want the janitor to see him, and furthermore, he is in the habit of staying out four or five hours once he gets outside. Since he still has a cold, that would never do. I don't know where he goes on those tours. I met him near 56th and Kenwood yesterday, after he had been away for four hours. Maybe Stineway's, for a coke. I am still laboring through Thomas Wolfe and think there is something wrong with me, because I don't feel about him the way everybody else does. I just think he's a lot of work and bother for the few gems that are forthcoming, and would much prefer to read a novel with some form and structure to it. It's not that he's tough reading -- after all, I'm the kid who loves Thomas Mann -- there's just too much of him. And this, *Look Homeward Angel*, is supposed to be his best book. Alas, we have one point of difference to rend us apart.

I am trying to be very systematic and keep track of what I spend for food and for household stuff, but if it's like my previous efforts in that direction, I fear the worse. In the first place, I had all the supermart receipts of the past week tacked to a little board, and then it fell behind the icebox, irrevocably. What 's a girl to do?

I love you, I love you, I love you. Always -- Jill

AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 15, 1943

Dearest Jill,

I hope you get later letters with the one I wrote yesterday, because I was very ungrateful in it for several articles in my Christmas packages. The only parts of it of which I am proud are those in which I affirmed in very emphatic fashion that I love you very much. Half the love letters I dream up are never written. I never can write one which really satisfies me. The physical conditions are never present at the right time. Last night, for example, while lying in bed before falling asleep, I thought of the most beautiful prose to express my feelings towards you. They were full of mystical allusions, razor-sharp logic, and sensual stimulation, but their natural course wafted me off to sleep rather than into the cold studio to write them down. It may be some consolation to you to know I do think of you much more than I can possibly write, and, in fact, am prevented by a distaste for sentiment, from sometimes bursting all emotional bounds in an attempt to fix you more exactly in words to your meaning to me in actuality.

Christmas isn't far away, is it? It won't be this one, I guess; but next one or whenever the baby can make it, we're going to go to a great cabin in a snowy wood, to sit by a fireplace and drink hot strong drinks, and play all our favorite recordings, and never get chilled and frosted except when we want to do so in order to appreciate more the fireplace and the hot drinks, and the games. We'll have snowball fights with each other too.

I've got to get down to work now, darling. Believe me when I say there is only one thing in the world that can make me happy and that is to be with you. Many kisses.

Your

Al

End of November (first of two parts) 1943 letters

