

**AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 16, 1943**

Dear Sweetheart,

With faint regard to my pocket wealth which isn't as great as it used to be a month ago [*an asterisk with an arrow pointing to the margin*: Correction: By looking into my wallet (yes, the same battered old walled with all the old trash), I find I am still flush with money, more than I can spend. I cannot lie to you, my love, or even misstate fact.] I bought another pen & ink sketch yesterday from Gianfallo. It is a most exquisite drawing of olive trees with all sorts of shadows and an illusory source of light from the rear. I feel confident you'll like it as much as I do. It is framed, too, in a nice way. Another fellow, Leonardo, who is also doing some work for me, has a number of small zinc etchings which I am tempted to buy. They are a far cry from his usual work in the past which has been to paint huge murals on public buildings. They are, the whole gang of them, very poor and very good-natured. It is very affecting the way people carry a part of a loaf of bread in their pockets or in their briefcases to carry them through the day. They will say, "Oh, yes; I have something here for you to see", open their pockets or satchels, push aside the bread and find the object. No one ever refuses a cigarette. In fact, their tongues hang out when you pull a pack out. The Italian supplies are completely exhausted even on the black market. A few American cigarettes get into the mercato nero and reach the astounding price of 65 lire a package. We really don't get enough ourselves to give any away, though I must get rid of 20% of my allotment in that fashion. I manage to get several cigars a week, which take care of that many evenings, and help out generally. Yesterday for a long lunch, and last evening until late, I had the genuine pleasure of the company of T. V. Smith, Lt. Col. in charge of university education on the island at the moment. I invited him to our mess for lunch; he turned right about with an invitation for dinner at his mess, and we went to a cinema afterwards and then to my apartment where we drank cognac and vermouth mixes and talked for a long while. I had always had vague reserves about him from his classes at the round table & his political

utterances, but now I am completely sold on him. He is a very honest, really modest, and highly intelligent man, and is as excellent company as one can find anywhere. We talked about the ancient history of the island, trying to draw modern lessons on the psychology of the people. He has a very entertaining gift of story-telling, consisting in part of going all-out to please the listener, that is, setting for himself an absolute standard and holding to it whether the audience be one or millions. This is not to be confused with the trait of appearing always to orate, which others have. Invariably, we turned to the University. He had some recent news of note, namely that White & Hutchins were worried about the Pol. Sci. department, as well they might be and were offering Lasswell a professorship there, but that Lasswell would refuse anything except the chairmanship of the department which Hutchins was not willing to concede. A compromise offer was in the wind, according to which Lasswell would come back with an institute of his own to play around in, leaving Hutch a free hand in the department with the fertile minds of the younger students. Gosnell, as you know already, is out for good. No one there could give him the full professorship he wanted, or wanted to give it to him. Gosie lacked the poisonality [again, Brooklynesse] for the job. I agree with that but I hold him in a higher regard intellectually, I find, than the other people. I think I'm right, too. I told the philosopher & ignorant man that Gosnell tolerated and fostered originality, and understood it, too! That, Merriam or White could never tolerate or understand. His is an extremely wide mind encased in cold storage by a defeatist personality. I believe T. V. will try to make a political comeback after the war. I wish him all luck and if I'm ever in a position where I don't spend 24 hours a day making love to you, I'll try to help him.

The picture we saw was pretty crude, namely Hellsapoppin! (How do you spell it?) PWB has a reserved box in all theatres and I took him there. We found the door locked and when I knocked, several voices from within started growling threats. When I asked them to open up again, more threats came out from behind the locked door. (Apparently they had climbed in from the adjoining box.) Whereupon the philosopher & sage

reached in his pocket, pulled out a skeleton key & opened the door, to the great horror and consternation of the denizens. There was a rush of wind followed by an *[empty loneliness (?)]* before we could invite the rascals to stay there and finish seeing the show. Those three G.I.s probably count that their luckiest escape ever.

I haven't received any mail in about a week, I'd say, from you or anyone else. The only visible effect is to make me more joyfully anticipate each day because the chances get always better. Do you realize, you flat-heeled squirt, that despite distance and time, I love you beyond redemption, apology, or imagination?

Yours,

Al



A 'Stars and Stripes' cartoon laughing at the infinite distribution of bon-bons and chewing-gum.

**JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 17, 1943**

Darling --

Wednesday

And you are a darling, for sending me that scrumptious box of candy (both the box and the candy are scrumptious). I guess, not unreasonably, that said firm must have had agents in Algiers -- that makes it sound like international intrigue, doesn't it?

I haven't opened it yet, as I am still recovering from the chocolate-and-nut cookies I made Monday, but I don't think I'm permanently traumatized and will probably eat them all before

the baby comes, and to hell with my diet. Incidentally, I saw the doctor today and discovered I hadn't gained any weight -- it's 136 now, which isn't bad considering all the stuff inside me. I immediately came home and consumed two pork chops and a brace of bananas. I still insist that I need the food, having worked like a dog all day over the laundry. I made a brave attempt to wash the curtains myself and even bought a curtain stretcher to that end. The man who sold it to me told me that a six-year-old boy could put it together. I am still looking for a six-year-old boy. Fortunately the maid, who has the mentality of same, is coming in tomorrow, so perhaps I am saved.

That was why I didn't write to you last night. I was still under the illusion that what a six-year-old could do, I too might accomplish.

The amount of work one can do around a house, even though there's only one person and one dirty dog living in it, still amazes me. I suppose I'll get more efficient as time goes on. Even with a maid, I'm still kept busy an appalling amount of time. Of course, that one, Dotty, doesn't come in very often, and isn't very efficient when she does.

The Kerners dropped in yesterday, interrupting one of my chores. They irritate me so. They're always taking up my time with their long dull stories of apartment-hunting and, in this case, apartment-finding. If either of them had a sense of humor, it might not be so bad. As it is, Oliver is God's greenest bore, and Diana an ill-natured commentator on all he says. Furthermore, he is as presumptuous and snobbish a youth as one might meet in a thousand years. Furthermore, they are taking their blasted studio couch back, which is equitable enough except that at the present time it makes a lot of trouble for me, since I have to find another one before December 1st. We must definitely cross them off our list. My cold is much better. *Semper Fideles* is this old frame of mine.

The news from Italy is very discouraging. All the commentators say that the fighting around the Volturno is degenerating into trench warfare. I can't understand why our fortresses just don't

bomb the lousy Germans out. I guess it's some complicated matter of air bases, which I don't know about.

The weeks pass by very quickly now, although the sum total -- six, till the baby comes seems like eternity. I certainly hope that old baby will fulfill its chief function of speeding by the months until you return. It's getting so that I gnash my teeth at every civilian male I see. (I don't consider postmen, etc. as civilians -- what would I ever do without the postman on this block). But it seems a shame that some of you guys are having it so tough -- since your last letter had you bivouacked in a city, I didn't particularly mean you, though -- and it makes me chill to think of it -- you may be up at the front now. Mostly the stories come back that it's cold, and I can't think of anything worse than being cold and underfed all the time.

I've got to buzz out and mail this before ten. I hope and pray you're well, and that this damn thing will be over by spring.

I love you darling, very much.

Always -

Jill

P.S. I finally mailed those New Yorkers & a couple of New Republics off to you, after reading through all your mail the past 3 months (a pleasant chore!) to find the spot where you mentioned your desire for them. You won't forget to ask again, will you?

***JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 18, 1943***

My dearest darling --

Thursday

As we were taught to say in business English, I have on hand your letters of the inst. [?] October 26, 27 and 28, and beg to inform you that I adore you for each one of them, as well as for all the things you have said, been, done and eaten in your short but enchanted lifetime. God but what a goof I am to complain to you as much as I do, I mean, in re my domestic trauma, which

are really hardly that. Please don't ever be disturbed by anything I ever say in re house, dog, family (either side) or offspring (when it comes). I am an irritable old hag and love to talk about my complaints, especially if I can find a way to do it that amuses, as well as cathartizes (no such word, Op) me.

I do disagree with you that the last month will make me anxious. For I'm practically crowding the last month, and I'm not the least bit anxious. Or rather, no more anxious than usual, but over the same things as before: the quality of our maid's handiwork, which is very low; the tense interaction of the janitor and Cooney; the people I dislike, i.e., the Kerners, your mother's suggestions in re domestic trivia which I don't agree with, or my suggestions to her in re same which she doesn't agree with; the light that burned out in the kitchen a little while ago; the curtains which I washed and mangled in every sense of the word; the dog that runs away and bites little girls on 55th St. (he really did take a nip at an over-enthusiastic two-year-old today, whose mother applauded the act, drawlingly informing me that the child was too damn friendly with animals, anyway); the heat that is too hot; the friends that drop in on housecleaning day; the studio couch that goes; the studio couch that comes. But as for my attitude toward the actual birth process, I am as confident as FDR, as inanely fearless as the aforementioned two-year-old. (She learned.) I honestly don't see what all the excitement is all about, or rather, I'll be so happy to get that first kick in the pants after all these months of obesity, flatulence, and -- hell, I can't find a third complaint -- that I am practically looking forward to the less bright side of parenthood. Besides, as people often do, I think you mix up my irritability over minor matters with a tendency to long-run anxieties. Just as I never could (or wanted to) stay mad at you more than thirty minutes, I'm incapable of worrying over anything for longer than that. What could I ever get mad at you about, you pearl, you poet, you prince of pickles? Think of what fun we'll have when you come home, pretending to get mad at one another, but knowing we're incapable of it after all the time we've had to mull over each other's indisputable perfection.

Your letter from Naples (is it?) came before these three from Algiers. Isn't that odd? I'm glad you're saving my letters, though I really didn't think you would throw them away. I keep yours in order day by day. When the pile gets too high for the desk, I put them in one of the boxes. I haven't had time to re-read today's three, because I've had a hideously busy day with Dotty et al, and want to mail this and buy the News in one foul sweep to the corner.

Shall I describe you my day? It always makes you feel more fatigued than you really are to listen to all this crap, I'm sure, but I just want you to know my red corpuscles are batting out on all fours, and that unless terrible things happen ere you return, such as my getting lazy again, I'm good for at least twenty years of being the slavish partner in joy or in sorrow, in wind, rain, sleet, sand and slush. I woke at five and would have gone back to sleep with the aid of a pill, which I really don't use but just think about using, except that my darkie was coming (on all fours; she'll not much further above that level), and I wanted to be bright and early for her. So I got up, cleaned the john, ate and read the paper in toto, which I very rarely do. She came and hell broke loose. We tried to dope out the mysteries of the curtain stretcher together, with little success, then Syb Farreter showed up, and I tore out with her, having a ten o'clock appointment with one Marcia Meeker, whose couch I was interested in; I closed the deal with Marcia by buying the damn thing for what I considered a lot of money, but it is a pretty color and practically new (green and yellow) then tore over to Stineways for a refreshing cuppa with Syb. There we were traumatized by meeting with Johnny Wiggins, just in town for a day. Incidentally (and I feared to tell you this until you got six thousand miles away), the summer before last he borrowed your Lincoln; a Psycho-B. I don't know how I ever remembered he had it. Maybe he told me. Anyway, I complained to a friend of his, a neurotic jerk named Leo who is a friend of Stud's, about Johnny having this book, and his being away, and my not knowing his family to go up and get it. So the friend told Stud, and for reasons quite beyond this pinhead, Stud went and got the book for me for you, or vice versa. Anyway, then I bumped

into Stud this morning too (it was a warm day and the people came out of the woodwork) and he went up to his place and gave me the book. So now you have the book. Isn't that nice? Wasn't I dumb to lend it in the first place?

Then I came home, worked out the riddle of the curtain stretcher after tearing half of them, cleaned the house (because Dotty can only do one thing at a time, viz, iron, as she did this day), wretched when the Kerners came over to measure their lousy couch, reorganized the closets, went up to B's for tea because Westel and Helen were there. Westel got a Lt Jg in the navy and is leaving tomorrow night for Pittsburgh. He is very happy about it but sorry they will not give him sea duty on account of his health. He has ulcers. He asked for you as always. He is a swell guy. He said the Finchley suit did not hold up very well and it is just as well you went into the Army.

Then I came down, sweated out some more around and about the house and just now, seven-thirty, Dotty left and my labors are over temporarily. I always work harder when she is here, for some mysterious reason. The thing is, I am still in the stage of moving things around till I get the most rational distribution of our possessions. Then I will sit and let the dust gather. Oh yes, I have to paint half the house yet.

Irmie, my old nurse, sent us the most elaborate wedding gift, to wit: a large wooden tray, a cocktail shaker that looks like a rooster or a rooster that looks like a cocktail shaker, twelve big glasses, twelve little glasses, and a wooden salad bowl and fork and spoon encrusted with genuine sterling silver and the spoils of the Orient. It is truly embarrassing to get so much.

Did I write you that I sent Herz a fruitcake from Field's after one of the two I baked for you and him swelled beyond postal regulations. The one he'll get will undoubtedly taste a lot better than yours, but I figure you would appreciate the fact I tried. As a matter of fact, it was a lousy recipe. Now I have a good one from the Chicago Sun, but alas, it is past mailing time for you overseas, and unless you specifically ask me for a fruit cake, which is unlikely after your first experience of my handiwork, I

can't send it. I really am sorry it turned out so badly, but now I know more about those matters. You should steam them, I discovered by reading this article. Even your mother didn't know that. That's why yours will probably be so dry. I'm going to send one, when and if I get around to baking these things, to Day, one to Ann, give one to the Neugartens and one to Mom. I figure that it's a lot easier to spend a day in the kitchen than go downtown. It's awful now down there, and I get rather tired from shopping, though I'm little Gargantua herself around the house.

Gosh! I bumped into Ena Mohlman today. Bob just got commissioned from OCS at Lee, and apparently they're going to live here, because she asked me about furnished places. How odd to see her. Bob's little brother is at the university now and looks just like him.

Bill Steinbrecher is coming over for dinner tomorrow night, and bringing this Jerry Moritz, a fellow law student. B. will also come down and if we can abide the quality of Bill's bridge, we'll play. I changed my mind about bridge (with women, anyway). I had rather a good time that night I played. But I don't like to play with you. I would rather neck. Oh, I loved our card games on the bed, but then, we could always stop when we wanted to and you know what. We didn't have to depend on two other people to cross-ruff themselves out of the room.

Gosh, honey, I'm getting hungry, despite all the little horrors I've devoured today. Undoubtedly I love you more than anything else in the world, in fact, far exceeding it. And selfishly, I always pray for you to be safe -- not for you to be a hero, as per my childhood dreams. I do want you so.

All my love,

Jill

P.S. Sad Sack is a scream. I really laughed right out loud at times!

**AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 19, 1943**

Darling,

Bump, bump went my heart this morning when I noticed the date and thought of its close relationship to procreation. I think I shall seek out the Red Cross today and have them do the reporting job on the birth of the baby. They will look you up and telegraph the news immediately to my present location rather than to Africa or somewhere else. And if I move meanwhile they will be able to do a better and more conscientious job of tracing me, not to mention of applying medicinals when they find me bathed in sweat and smoking opium. Time and again during the intervening period I shall be thinking of you as you were, as you are, and as you will be, rejoicing in all of the three for being in love with you, regretting none of the pains of absence which were visited on us by the sins of our fathers, and reactivating continually the smoldering embers wherein lie our dreams of the future.

The winter clouds of the Mediterranean are already rushing swiftly past, holding in their transient, mobile, and dissolvable nature an augury for us that the winter will be short, the spring inevitable and long. The shrouded winter streets of Chicago serve only to point up the day of escape. When I come home, I shall wrap the spring airs about you like a blanket. We shall only plumb the depths of winter in order to gasp and shine in fire and light. We shall use our painful aloneness of these days as a catalyst in the dance of the future. When we stomp at the end of a rumba, we will stomp twice as hard. When we embrace each other, we will kiss twice as passionately. There will be no bottom of devotion we have not scraped, no secret of love we shall not have expressed between ourselves, no caress that will seem too long or too thrilling. Despite the skepticism that intrudes when one hears of love through the centuries, you are right and I am convinced as ever that ours is an extraordinary and good love. It is a rare happiness I feel, thinking that in all these ponderous world events there is yet the faintly carved but ineradicable track which is my way home.

There isn't anything else I really want to say today.

Your,

Al

***JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 20, 1943***

Darling,  
Saturday

I am writing on Bernice's machine, ergo the change in type. We just finished dinner and have embarked on the second greatest joy in life, or maybe it is the first -- writing to our husbands. The other one is, of course, eating, *faute de mieux*.

Are you lucky, for once, that you're in Italy and therefore unable to get tickets for *The Corn is Green*. We went to it this afternoon, and Ethel Barrymore was probably tight and certainly hammy, with the typical, and possibly legitimate, contempt that the great ones of the theater have for matinee audiences. The play has been marvelously spoken of all these years, and I really don't see why, unless it was that on her good days, she held the thing together. I am inclined to agree with you, though we disputed it in the past, that the movies are a much better entertainment medium despite their two great handicaps of Hays office censorship and their compulsion to turn out potboilers for financial reasons. But today there are certainly many more good adult movies than there are good adult plays. I read by the papers that the theater season in New York is going great guns with the poorest kind of plays and musicals, just because people have the dough to spend. So now what differentiates the theater in merit from the movies, since the former medium is now just as guilty of debasing itself in deference to the so-called popular taste as the latter? Furthermore, I object to the hazards and inconveniences of theater-going -- the rush for tickets, the crowds all at once. I'm beginning to think that all this reverence for the theater, of which I too was guilty, is pure intellectual snobbery. And another thing

I like about the movies is the impersonality, or the process of impersonalizing, the cast. When you get real close up to the people on the stage, you start thinking about their make-up and their private lives, like why aren't those young men in the Army. Somehow, despite the star system and the big publicity build-up of movie people, their very two-dimensionality makes them lose their identities in the parts they are playing, even when they are hammy. I don't know if I make myself very clear. Maybe you can do it for me.

Yesterday I did some extensive shopping on 55th St., even Christmas shopping. There's a little store across the street on 55th that has a lot of stuff for children, and so I cleaned up the various children of our acquaintance. I got identical and very cute sweaters for Joe and Paul, red for Joe and green for Paul, and some very auto-mechanic looking coveralls for Leslie. Earlier in the week I got a sissy-looking dress for Mary Edith. I also bought Mir a nice cigarette case, in plum colored calf, the kind you put a whole pack in. I think she'll like it because I like that kind of thing and our tastes are pretty much alike. Day has gotten presents for me to give to Unk and Irmie, and I'll buy Ann some good perfume and send them all fruit cakes, so in effect my shopping problems are nearly over. I really dreaded it this year, but think that neighborhood shopping is the answer. Actually, the stuff you can get around here is just as nice as that downtown. It just lacks the fancy department store labels. Oh yes, I'll give the boys a fin each. Mom even suggested that, because at first I wanted to get Ed some good pigskin gloves and she didn't think much of that idea. They are at the stage now where they are very much interested in clothes, but distinctly of the jitterbug variety. And since I am not exactly au courant with the bobby-sock set any more, I would probably select just the wrong thing for them. For their birthdays I'll give books. When you write suggesting that I am or should be a good influence on them or that Ed should stay with me if I'm lonely (which I'm not, except for one particular DeG whose name shall remain unmentioned), I have to smile a little. The boys have changed a lot since the days we used to take them to Int. House for dinner. They're no longer tender young vines to

be bent at will, but great hairy plants, probably of the Venus Flytrap variety, with very independent and interesting lives of their own. Not that I pass any judgement on this, one way or the other. They'll be just as good, if not better (though I really can't think of anyone being better than you -- it's just a manner of speaking) men than you and Buss. But I think the days of their being influenced by an older person, except for a very vigorous character such as you, are over. And even the latter is just a possibility.

Last night I made an enormously successful veal roast, which Bill and this Jerry Moritz and B. made great gashes in. After supper, which took about three hours, because though I know how to cook, I have not yet mastered the art of getting things on the table on schedule, we played bridge. Jerry and I drew each other as partners and won all three rubbers. The knowledge gleaned from a misspent youth is coming back to me, and I can hold my own fairly well with fairly good players. Bill, like you, did not misspend his youth, and so we walked all over him. Bernice is good, but what could she do. The weather has been so lovely the past three days that I've really done very little except make wide circles around 55th, bearing me up to 57th St., where I can always refresh myself with a cup of coffee and a few Stineway characters. I do love neighborhood shopping, especially in supermarkets. On the other hand, I was quite traumatized by having to put on stockings today and going downtown. Actually, I am up a blank creek so far as dressing up goes these days. You can't buy round garters, and besides if I did wear them they would give me varicose veins. On the other hand, I can't attach the stockings to a girdle or a garter belt, because none that I have fit me, and I'll be damned if I'll go out and buy one of these medieval maternity corsets just to keep my stockings up. Especially, when I am so full of pride at the one undebatably good effect of my misspent and unintellectual youth -- strong stomach muscles which don't make it necessary for me to truss myself up the way many enceinte women do. In other words, I still don't wear underwear. I guess I never told you this, but at Smith we used to pass the long winter evenings standing on one another's stomachs, just to see how strong we were. That

and bridge and Russian Bank comprised my undergraduate days.

Anyway, I want like mad to go to the Art Institute tomorrow, but won't, because of the horrid thought of tearing myself in two with a garter belt and stockings. I guess I'll just have to let my mind alone till after the baby comes.

I have a lot of feelings and wishes about the baby too. I too think he or she will have blue eyes, though I wish otherwise. In fact, I would like it to look and be colored exactly the way you are. I have a feeling it will be a large baby at birth, but not so big later on. Incidentally, I might as well arm you with a few facts now, so you'll know how to interpret the first bit of big news. All babies are born with blue eyes -- I guess you knew that. The average boy baby born today, now that doctors see merit in keeping their weight down, is about seven pounds (I think that's what Joe was); girls are somewhat less. I was a nine-pound baby; that's considered very large and uncomfortable now. One can usually nurse a baby at first; in a week or so one either starts giving out, or the baby gets damn hungry and has to be fed evaporated milk too, so very few girls ever nurse their babies in entirety. Naturally, I'll probably do both, just like all the others.

I also have a feeling, and also a strong wish, that it will be a boy. That's just because you are a boy, I guess, and also because I keep thinking you'd like a son, which is probably a quite inaccurate guess. I also have a premonition that it's going to be an exceptionally beautiful baby (and I vow there's no wish-fulfillment involved here), though again it may change when it gets older.

Boy-schmoy, beautiful-schmutiful, so long it's a baby.

Cooney is getting so footloose that not only does he run away at the slightest opportunity (he'll even jump through a half-opened window now), but I have gone out of the house alone and come upon him carrying on the rites of Venus blocks away. God knows I don't look for him, or the sight of it. But he is so

ubiquitous and so promiscuous that one can turn down almost any block in the neighborhood and thereupon find Cooney bugging some hapless beast. It is the warm weather, no doubt. Today a female came by for him that looked exactly like him. However, she wasn't in heat, so they just played together. The little boy upstairs, the precocious and neurotic child of some refugees, and I spent a couple of hours looking for her owner, so that I might make a marriage proposal when her particular season of Hymen came around. But we failed.

I ate some of your candy today and it was very good, though I would still rather chew your ear. What a beating you've taken our years together! And it probably will be worse when you come home. What with my own natural exuberance and my association with that monster of a dog, you'll do well to wear shinguards, a football helmet, and those false teeth boxers are all spitting out in Lana Turner movies. (Well, she was in one about boxers.) Of course, I don't know how lightly I'll come off. If I recall, you still owe me thirteen socks for leading you up the wrong road in the Hollywood hills. Well, I'll still be glad to see you, for which statement I should get some sort of prize, i.e. the lowest under-statement of the week.

Because I love you, darling, more than anyone could possibly love anyone else, I'm sure

Always -Jill

***AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 20, 1943***

Lovely one,

How do I know? I just looked at your picture. Do you know the first thing I tell pretty girls when I meet them? That I'm married and then I show them your picture. Does that discourage them? No. They like my foreign accent. Am I still a martinet with employees? Yes. I abuse them, especially the female ones when they occur. (ask Pat Johns). What am I - a soldier, capitalist, labor agitator, goldbrick, or Deep thinker? I

sometimes wonder. Is your work interesting? Always. There is always a new job waiting to be done when the old is finished and the chances of their being the same are about the same as the chances of getting home before my Christmas presents. Speaking of home, where is your home, Lieutenant? Ah, - wherever my Jill lies. Is it true that you plan to take a significant part in the reconstruction of these devastated countries? Sorry, chief, I got an appointment to mend baby carriages. At what times do you think of your wife? Apart from the millions of tiny things about this life which are flashbacks to the millions of little things I know about her, I generally think more forcefully of Jill when I take a drink of wine, lie in bed, notice a bird or a cloud, or mark the day. What makes you so in love despite time and distance? (Here the respondent was seen to sneer). Stick to things I can answer in a word, Bud. You see, we lived together for a long time, and then we lived apart, and then we lived together again: and the more we lived apart, the more we wanted to be together, and the more we lived together, the less we wanted to live apart. But that's only the graph of it. For the lights and the shadows, the depths and the substance, there is an infinite answer, and I can give it only to her, and she never asks me for it. One more question, sir. Is it true that there is a *bête noire* in your marital life? Yes, he is an alienator of affections, a six-lettered black-headed thing that sleeps in the same room with my wife. I am expecting my baby to do innocently what I can't do purposely - hit him over his receding forehead with a club. -- The interrogator left, shaking his head sadly and mumbling about how the soldiers overseas sure had scores to settle when they got home.

I thought I'd send you this transcript, darling, as a sort of letter for today. All my love.

Al

**AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 21, 1943**

*[the date typed in red]*

Dearest Jill,

It is not a red-letter day, but just a slip of the machine. In fact, the day is quite depressing, rainy, chilly, with drooping horses and bedraggled pedestrians, the same hors d'oeuvres and the same dull, dogmatic faces to be encountered. My favorite dinner companions are Hadfield and Hammond, the former a British civilian who was the London Times correspondent in Milan for a number of years, the latter who is a Captain in charge of the preservation of Italian culture who taught the classics at Harvard. The others are socially blind, and pretty embittered about their helplessness in the face of problems which are depressing to the most calloused of officials, whether they admit it or not. The general helplessness of a population in the wake of a war wears down the tolerance level of practically everyone. The needs of people become the grounds for hating them. And the more helpless and inefficient an official is, the greater his rage at the people who are indirectly and innocently exposing his futility. I feel it myself at times no matter how strongly I try to maintain my controls. The Italian, and especially, the Sicilian, has, like the kind of Jew which infuriated Pontius Pilate, most exasperating qualities of a sense of superiority and a meekness which bends him to the wind and keeps him alive. The Sicilians haven't found, and rather hate, any formula for group unity. They defame each other with utmost abandon, doublecross each other, and see to it generally that no one of their number succeeds in accomplishing outstanding feats. Vicious gossip is rampant about any man or woman. It need even have no basis in fact. The Sicilian unmarried girl is with almost no exceptions either a virgin or a prostitute. The latter category is of a flamboyant, domineering, passionate variety - women really in defiance of society. Adultery is common because with marriage founded on a non-conoscenti level, the number of unhappy wives is large. I don't know much about Ireland, but the British whose opinions in some cases are well-founded, suggest from time to time the Irish parallel. It seems

that the Sicilians, like the Irish, always want something, but want confusion even more. And the Sicilian politics have turned right back to the multi-party business of pre-Fascism. No leader deserves to be followed by too many, again the ancient Jew analogy. I don't know what will come of it all when a free machinery of state is actually instituted. But I have seen no signs of basic change in Sicilian attitudes. They seem to have missed one of the few contributions Fascism might have made, namely the sense of order. One of the most disheartening expressions to hear when any intelligent person attempts to advise or order social cohesion, whether of a crowd in an anteroom or a neglect to dispose of garbage by some individual, is the accusation of Fascism. It is so easy to call anyone a Fascist when he is trying to instill the slightest element of order or discipline. Part of this can be expected as the natural reaction to a regime based on orders and legal violence but I'm wondering if afterwards the Sicilians will lose again their liberty because they reacted too violently, as did the Germans in the post-war period. Not that I believe that the most loose social organization deserves to be converted into any sort of Fascism. But the pendulum has a tendency to keep swinging violently once it is precipitated violently, and I despair when I see men plunging into an abyss of dissolution, with a total absence of the restraint necessary to produce a truly free society. A truly free society is dependent on the individual's ordering of himself, and is based ultimately on a sound education, moral and intellectual, or on happy accidents of environment which give him the moral principles without him having to institutionalize them rationally. So far in history, the latter has been by far the most influential in creating societies which are decently balanced and might be called democratic.

But I shouldn't bore you with these lengthy pensieri. Someday I shall write a book and dedicate it to you. Meanwhile I am all for getting home and playing the part of pater familias. I hope you won't become so self-sufficient as mother and father that I shall become a bore and an intruder. That would make me very unhappy, to phrase my reaction dully. But maybe I can pick up enough uncouth habits to make myself an object of solicitude.

Won't it be a sight to see both Vic and myself rooting at the same table. You won't be able to have any of your nice friends over for some time. All you'll have is my love and lots of it. You won't have to worry about waking up to feed the baby at 6 A.M. because I will have awakened you before then.

Oh, happy thoughts has your

Al

**O**RDINARY people and the military talk a lot about the black market and the mafia and the crime wave. The story is making the rounds that the U.S. intelligence agencies had received help from the mafia before and during the military campaign. This may be balderdash, but many Americans and Italians believe it. And it certainly profits the mafiosi, whatever the truth, to claim that they had been anti-Fascist all along and collaborated with the liberators. He cannot hope to discover anything on this account from his friendlies, for they would be covering up any connivance with criminals. Even though he would be interested in hearing directly from the mafia "partisans" himself, this is not the purpose of his modest investigation. He is interested mainly in the structure of the overall problem; what should be the attitude of the liberators and new Italian government? His own position needs clarification.

Most people are more paranoid than not and therefore prone to believe in large, unseen, mysterious conspiracies governing the world, particularly if they live in closed societies or societies governed socially by hierarchical and authoritative religion. So he reasons, but has little knowledge, and wonders whether the mafia is truly organized or whether it is largely a word to cast over the whole body of largely dissociated criminality.

He goes to the police, examines their blotters, gathers some figures, talks to a few businessmen and informants, and arrives at the half-baked conclusion that the mafia so-called is a way of life but not a single organized criminal network. That there is a lot of crime is evident; there are big shots and punks; where crime is rampant, even

by the modest standards of those days when drugs and alcohol were absent from the picture, a pecking order is established; "you had better not get in the way of This *Pezzo Grosso*, he bosses a tough gang."

Thus, like an oligarchic market economy, crime organizes itself into behavior patterns, which, if you are not a particularly expert observer, you might see as a single monster organization; there is therefore no single head to decapitate; this is actually why the mafia or mafiosi or other gang systems cannot be hunted down for once and for all time. It is built into the social system, as every culture has its own typical criminal system or underworld built into it.

High unemployment, strong extended family organization and responsibility, widespread economic distress, a hierarchical and authoritarian ruling system, and a dissociation of local culture and morals from a centralized national police system all combine to foster the endemic high crime rates, especially associated with the West of Sicily, as well as with other parts of the world with similar conditions, or with situations like New Jersey or Chicago or Marseilles that constitute a benevolent reception system, like a biological laboratory soup in which the mafia phenomena can prosper. The mafia seem to be united, he feels, because they do know of one another, keep in touch benevolently or malevolently with one another, have the same characteristics socially and demographically and culturally, and kill each other when in conflict and under threat.

The mafia, therefore, is a difficult condition to eliminate. Crime is something to be fought piecemeal, and, at the other extreme, through reforms in the most general structure of the society.

His brief report circulates here and there among occupation officials and police of the occupying powers, the municipal police and the carabinieri. It has no discernible effect, much less a ripple effect; it is claimed that you cannot fight crime piecemeal because the petty crooks get off with the help of the bigger ones and the corrupt system of justice. As for the Reform of Society, it is impossible, as it has always been. Some people ask whether he is afraid of reprisals, but he has not named names nor given any indication of being party to secret information; getting after him would be a purely gratuitous act, to which the mafiosi are not inclined. In anticipation of his departure, he turns over his ideas and papers to Hubert Howard, incorruptible, brave, but as remote from J. Edgar Hoover as a dove from a gander.

***JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 22, 1943***

My darling --

Monday

Another day gone by, passed delightfully in frittering away the time. I think I ought to get a prize for being able to pass the time fastest with the greatest expenditure of energy for the least results. A sample day, as this was: I ate a big breakfast, read the paper very thoroughly, buzzed back and forth between Bernice's and my apartment, finally borrowed her electric vacuum cleaner, went shopping on 55th St. for food, forgot my wallet and had to come home and then go out again, came home and ate a big lunch, read the New Yorker which had just come, and finally, in a great burst of activity, vacuum-cleaned. Then I went out to mail some packages at Woodworth's and did some more shopping and stopped to talk to Ruth Shils, who thinks Ed may be coming home for a visit. That brings me up to six o'clock, right now. Oh yes, somewhere in there I wrapped a few Christmas presents. But it really is shameful for anybody to pass their time so unproductively with a war on. Except that this is a short-lived period of indulgence, as everybody assures me that one is kept busy as a fox with a baby. Furthermore, I still have to paint some furniture and make up that batch of fruit

cakes that will serve as the most virulent Christmas presents anybody ever gave anybody else in defiance of the Christmas spirit.

So you see, I haven't changed much for the better. As I recall when we lived at 5479, I used to prowl around the marts of trade and coke dispensaries, wasting time while you worked like a dog. We used to have fun then, didn't we? But it doesn't make me nostalgic because I know how much more fun we'll have again. Most people just grind away in their marriages or love affairs with frequent backward glances at the good old days, and not much hope for the future. But we have both, because of this separation and mostly because I really think our love is unique and tremendous.

Darling, could I give you a Christmas present in absentia? I saw this George Price cartoon book in Woodworth's; he in his way is just as funny as Perelman and as mad as Chas. Adams. So my I buy it and duly inscribe it to you from me as a yuletide giftee? When you come home you can read it and assert your exclusive title to it by batting me in the eye when I peek over your shoulder. Cooney was so full of the grime and foreign matter attendant upon leading a Bad Life that I finally broke down last night and gave him a bath, around ten o'clock, an unseemly hour for such strenuous activity but really quite logical, because then he doesn't go out and catch cold. The place looked like Berlin afterward, or at least, the way I hope Berlin looks. Every time I read about Germans being killed at the Russian front, or in their cities, I mentally subtract the number from the total number of Germans. Unfortunately, I don't know their birth rate, but it really would be nice if they all got killed after a while, if only on paper. There is a play currently running in Chicago -- it was in New York last winter, called Tomorrow the World, which is all about a little Nazi boy who comes to America, and acts perfectly dreadfully. Anyway, at the end, after he has committed numerous crimes against decency, he is reformed by the utter kindness of his hosts. From that, I presume, one is supposed to draw an analogy for the conduct of world affairs. Balls, I say. While I don't think it's ethical to line up people against a wall, I

figure as long as we are fighting them, we should try to kill as many as possible. In a sportsmanlike way, of course. I really don't see much point in saving the Germans from, or for, themselves. Maybe if I didn't feel that they were personally depriving me of my favorite man, I wouldn't be so violent about it. Certainly, I used to be much more humanitarian in my sentiments towards the Enemy, before you went away.

I am getting sort of hungry, dear. More of all this tomorrow.

All my love,

Jill

***AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 24, 1943***

Dearest Jill,

This morning is chilly like the rest, and my hands are as cold as your feet. I can hardly hold a pen. There is no heat because there is no coal, not that any of us suffer greatly from lack of it. The weather is great for working, sleeping and eating. It isn't so good for writing letters at night despite my constant desire to write you in the evening. Instead, I read one of your Christmas present stories. My labors have been increased the last day or so, explaining my failure to write for one and a half days running. We also had a couple of visiting firemen the night before last and we very foolishly decided to play a worthless game of luck called "baccarat". You may know it. I swear now that I shall never play anything but poker. Any fool can turn up the right card in baccarat, I claim, very sourly, my wealth in pocket down to a crumpled one lire note. Lee lost \$120, Alther \$80, the colonel \$80, and I \$50. I lost all mine on a single series of bets, \$5, 10, 20 and then \$40. Payday is right here anyway. And it's a credit to my integrity that I didn't reach into my other pocket to start playing on the organizational funds or sign my name on a slip of paper for an IOU. I know you won't like to hear of my losing even my trifling savings, but I had to tell you about it inasmuch as I told you when I won at poker. Moral

consistency, you know. But, what th'ell, nothing really matters a hoot except getting back to you. Even you, who know how much I love you, would be surprised to know how little anything can shake me here. It isn't that I'm not conscientious, humane or active, but a sort of Stoic pall hangs about life generally. I'm not particularly shocked if I find myself in a ditch or in a palace.

I haven't had any mail from you in about two weeks. Now that I'm out of the 8th Army area, I suppose it is all being sent there.

We're making big plans for Thanksgiving tomorrow. We purchased four turkeys on the hoof (or feet) and they share the Villa until tomorrow at dawn when they die. Valiant attempts will be made to create the right kind of pie and someone is grubbing about for potatoes. Lee is charged with making a suitable punch and great fun will be had by all. Whatever it is, it can't approach our fine Thanksgiving dinners of old at home. Thanksgiving dinner means Mom's cooking and no one else's. You can tell her that for me. And you and the boys and Dad are part of it. Incidentally, when is Father's Day? You may have guessed that the reason I want a child is so that I can get presents on some day during the year, my birthday not serving me very well. I wish I could be home for your birthday, too, so that I could take you shopping for your presents. Do the fall winds still blow up all the skirts on Michigan Avenue?

"Kathryn" is so hard to spell. What about "Catherine"? Oh, yes, and about baptism. Shall we have him baptized in the Catholic Church. I think he should be baptized. But here again, my feelings are not so strong that any opinion on your part shouldn't prevail. Let him be a little heathen, should you so desire. He can make his mind up later. Someone has dropped in to see me now, darling. Many kisses for your flushed face and elsewhere. My indescribable wish is to have you very, very close.

Your, Al

P.S. I wrote Buzz some time ago about Dad's brother dying a year or so ago and about his sister being well as ever. I was there only once but have had messages in the past.

**JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 26, 1943**

Darling --

Friday

Yesterday, i.e., I really had plenty to be thankful for -- two letters in the box from you then, and two today. They are dated, respectively, October 31, Nov. 1, 5, and 12. (Good time on the last one, don't you think?) Like you, I find there are great holes in our correspondence, because you refer to letters you've written and objects you've sent that I have not yet received. I did get one lovely silk scarf in a blue print about a month ago, but maybe that wasn't the two from Bari you mentioned.

I must explain to you further that letter of August 28th I sent you, with that apparently mystifying phrase, "I realize you don't necessarily agree with me." As I recall, it was about politics. Well, that stupido, Mr. Alinsky, I was working for at the time had told me a long garbled tale about writing Sid Hymen, who is in Africa or Italy about the Detroit race riots, The Truth about them, as he said with heavy emphasis on the upper-case letters, with the result that a couple of FBI men showed up at Alinsky's office some days later. He didn't go into the details of the inquiry, and as I think about it now, the whole thing sounds very fantastic and paranoid. Anyway, I still wasn't sure about whether my mail to you was censored, or whether anything I said, if it was, would reflect upon you. Naturally, I had no fears for myself, because I'm just a private citizen, and furthermore, a pregnant one, and you know what a defense that is. Ergo, the inclusion of that inane phrase, for your benefit. As I figure it out now, if there is any censorship of civilian mail going your way, it might only be in very rare instances like the race riots, which would have been terribly disturbing to a goodly portion of our troops overseas. However, I imagine nobody gives a damn about anyone's criticism of our diplomatic policies, since the State Department is, and has been for quite a while, fair bait for anyone who wants to take the trouble to carp at them. And I think I will clear up the mystery of just what this little hole looks like by an elaborate diagram (enclosed). At the moment, the bed is unmade, the place needs dusting, half your books are on the floor because I got the sudden and foolish urge to paint that old

bookcase I once bought at Goldblatt's (to match the two Mir and Buss had left us) buff, because I had some buff paint I wanted to use up. Actually, it looked better in its original paint job, which I had only applied about a month ago, namely ivory. But I can't bear half-used cans of paint around the house. I just bought a small box of crayons at the local dime store, to the end of portraying this little home in an adequate fashion to its chief source of motivation (for obviously if you had not one, assaulted me in such a particularly welcome fashion on that particular day, and two, provided my *modus vivendi* thereafter, I might be now cutting out paper dolls in a Wac guardhouse and not be so completely and happily the Lady of the House).

I haven't gotten any of the silk stockings yet, but I expect they'll come and they'll be very welcome when they do, although, as I wrote you last week, until the baby comes, I have no means of keeping stockings up, since one can no longer buy garters and a garter belt, due to my peculiar architecture of the moment, grips me firmly about the bladder, causing me to pay even more attention to the functions there involved than I do now, which is plenty. I'll share the loot with Mom, too.

Your quotes from Walter's letter sent me into a profound coma, from which I am only now awakening. What a bull-shitter. They just make connecting parts between fuselage & wing, about two inches long. I saw them.

Buss's letter I read with more interest. So far as I'm concerned, the whole thing is up to you. If Bussy needs the records, he can have them, as long as he at least gives lip service to the principle of splitting the cost with you. What made me particularly mad was that last spring he didn't, or wouldn't. I certainly don't have the time now to study, and probably will have even less after the baby comes. Sure he makes me mad, but everybody else does too, so I wouldn't get too upset over my constant statements of irascibility in re your family. The question of the C blanket was settled after I saw how nice it looked on Ed's bed (Ed now is using the front bedroom where I used to sleep as his study and sleeping room). I don't need it, either, since I have more warm blankets than I can use. But

hell's bells, if people would only tell me these things (like, Buss and the cost of the records, or Ed and the fact that you had given the blanket to him) so that I don't get my old paranoid feeling of being taken advantage of.

Oh yes, yesterday was Thanksgiving. I went up north about two after working up a fine appetite by walking Cooney down to the promontory and back again. Mom outdid herself on the dinner. Should I tell you, or will it be bad for your morale. Come to think of it, your descriptions of meals in Bari and at your present location are bad for my morale. Home was never like that. Here goes:

Half of grapefruit

Roast turkey with sage stuffing (turkey is 60 cents a pound this year, and to hell with your morale)

Brussel sprouts (ugh)

Carrots

Baked white potatoes taken out of their jackets and then put back in again (do you know what I mean?)

Candied sweet potatoes

Mixed green salad (by Alfred J. DeGrazia the Elder)

Mince pie

Apple pie

Coffee

Milk

Wine

Mixed pickles ..... Chocolates

I ate all of this, with the result that even today, I literally am crippled. I think the dinner is pressing on the baby which is pressing on my right leg, because I am ambulating with a slight, and very interesting limp.

Mom spent two days on it, and we put it away in 15 minutes. It was divine. And to think I was almost tempted to stay home! I am getting Pee-cooliar, the one aberration I've had since the baby started, namely, a decided dis-inclination to go anywhere. part of it is having to dress, the other part is an unreasonable fear of falling up or down stairs. I don't know. Anyway, I certainly am glad I went, because we had lots of fun. Dad had to go to work at six, but the boys and Mom and I played some rummy, according to Dad's rules (a species of gin rummy it was) until Tom Marsala dropped over and changed all the rules and got all our money away from us. Tom is a scream at cards: he has all the gestures of the shark, and probably for that matter, is one.

Then the boys went out, and Mom and I sat around and gassed and got the question of Xmas present settled. What few remaining one I have to get she's picking up for me. With all my fears of stairs, crowds, salesgirls and garter belts, it's very unlikely I'll be downtown again for many a moon to come, except to see the doctor. We had so much fun I left much later than I expected I would, about eleven, and took the subway. It really is marvelous. You get on at the Southport station, and every ten minutes there is another train going south. It ducks down into the ground at Armitage, I think. It only takes 15 minutes to get to Washington St. The whole trip, from the Southport station to my door, via the 51st-55th car, took 50 minutes. That's faster than the IC and bus, on holidays. The bus service in this city is getting progressively lousier, as ODT cracks down on the use of gasoline.

Do you really think parrots have any brains? The one you met sounded very sensible indeed. I still wouldn't want one around the house, though. I'm getting to the line of thought that a dog is one too many. Cooney has some mysterious ailment, the symptoms being poor appetite, restlessness, and over-indulgence in the ways of Venus. I would say he was just being a natural member of the family except for the poor appetite so I took him to the vet this morning, who gave me some mysterious pills and a lot of crappy advice, like to keep him on the leash.

One thing I know is wrong with him is that he has grown quite a heavy coat this winter from being out so much, and suffers from the heat indoors. Well, so do I, so as long as there are just the Two of Us, I can keep all the windows and doors open. Of course, nobody will come to visit me now, which is All Right. When you come home, I'll close a window, the supreme gesture of devotion from a love-addled wife.

I didn't get the pen and ink drawings either, which I would like very much. I hope passionately that they're not lost, even though your description of the usual output of the Italian artists is not encouraging. I'm the kid who likes Matisse and American primitives.

You be nice to that little girl. You may be the father of one yourself, perish forbid. (Really, I don't have such strong feelings on the subject, oh no). And I rather suspected that you maintained your abnormal level of financial solvency through poker. You know, darling, we ought to tour about the world afterwards, you taking them on in poker and me in gin rummy. I think I exaggerated the extent of Tom's winnings yesterday. I came out with some thirty cents to the good, which is good, since chips were four to the penny. (Your mom was so infuriated at losing and watching Vic lose that she made us cut it down from a penny a chip.) Ed and I, the winners until Tom came, agreed very graciously, I thought.

Did you hear about that big stink of General Patton slapping around an enlisted man in a hospital tent in Sicily? All the civilians and Congressmen are very sore about it here, including me. It seems this youth was weeping in a Sicilian hospital tent from shell shock -- he'd been at the front and had, as a matter of fact, insisted on staying there until they made him go back, and Patton came in, tight as a tick I suspect, and slapped him for crying and cursed him out. That was last August and they only made it public just now. He got off with a public apology and a reprimand from Eisenhower. I think it's disgusting. Who the hell do these generals think they are, or, more accurately, where? In the German army?

I'm getting awfully hungry again. Odd, I thought I'd never eat again after yesterday.

I love you most passionately, to the exclusion of all others, not even reserving a particle of it for that black bastard who takes up so much of my time and money.

Always yours,

Jill

P.S. Day said she hadn't heard from you since you left, or I guess it was Walter who wrote that. If you want to drop them a feelthy peecture, their new address is 829 Park Avenue, New York. They sent me my Christmas present today -- a beautiful pair of white furred bedroom slippers, which I shall save to seduce you in, kicking them off at the last minute and breaking a window, no doubt. OOOXXXOOOXXXOOOXXXOOO

*[Follows a color drawing of the apartment, with pithy remarks, listed below, without any attempt to reproduce the drawing]*

N.B. The bedroom furniture is a much prettier blue; the living room furniture is a much prettier blue-green.

Dotted lines: walls between rooms.

Linoleum bug on floor depicting many interesting scenes from our interesting history

Come in if you want, too. Not yet painted

Rug actually wine, but don't have that color crayon.

I tried hard to get this neat but failed. (signed) the Artist (before taking poison)

This is in very good scale (signed) The teacher

***AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 26, 1943***

My darling,

I admit to my shame and your horror, that I overindulged

yesterday as of yore, and one more noble American bird fell prey to wanton lust. As a result, I feel badly today and had to spend a few long minutes of last night sitting on the toilet and pondering my folly. And then today, again and again. I have the miserable G.I.'s. There isn't a man in any of our armies in this theatre who has never had diarrhea, seriously. It's our curse.

I had fine things to drink, too, yesterday, Manhattans, prepared in a slightly altered version, a smooth, delicious French Benedictine which came all the way across Africa with the 8th Army, and a bottle of whiskey which Warner produced from somewhere. All in all, the gluttonous part of Thanksgiving was there.

I'm getting tired of being chilly and want more sun - I guess I'm as fickle as you are. The locals have taken up a subscription for feeding the poor children at Xmas. I think the number is overwhelming.

I find myself being awakened at all hours of the night by crashing shutters, slamming doors, and weird creaks. The wind is strong but I think also that my house must be haunted.

Sunday I usually work, but I'm going to drive into the country this Sunday in a combination of work and pleasure, to investigate a report and enjoy some of the historical treasures with which the area is surfeited.

T. V. has moved on to other parts. I'll undoubtedly be seeing him again soon.

Life here is generally quiet, regular, and interesting enough. Sometimes I wonder if all those things & people around you which remind you of me aren't very harmful, a sort of continual frustration. Naturally, I love to be in your thoughts, but not if it makes you unhappy or time pass too slow. Another reason why my family might get on your nerves, or maybe they're sensible enough not to waste words on me.

I'll write you again before 24 hours are up. All love to you, my sweetheart. -- Al



Al with doves on his Naples rooftop.

***JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 27, 1943 V-MAIL***

Darling --

Saturday night

Another letter came from you today, dated November 7. It seems funny that you also took the time to make a pictorial representation of something we share, since yesterday I took the whole afternoon to draw you a diagram of our joint. I think yours was a much more successful, neat and cogent diagram than mine. It seems awful that we've had so little time together, approximately 19 months out of the 42 we've known and loved one another. And I'm not even counting the May of 1940 in which you passed me in the hall of the library and I told you, somewhat irrelevantly, you must have thought, that I got an A in my statistics mid-term; or the June of 1940 in which we walked together towards Int. House one afternoon and I told you, again with what must have been to you startling candor, that one has trouble getting a job if one is Jewish and that I was going to the coast to see my brother. Why didn't you come too? Or was it you that suggested that? It might just as well have been me, since I apparently never did have any maidenly reserve with you. I don't know if I ever told you this before, and doubt whether a V-mail letter is the place for it (but why should I be out of character all of a sudden, to be spoken with a rising intonation) but the night we double-dated with Janice and Dick Cook, I was fully prepared, and I mean fully prepared, to be

waylaid by you in a dark alley, and was sore as hell at you, and even sorer at Cook (I really never did get over my irritation with him) when the party broke up early and at Dietz's and my front door, instead of in the trackless wastes of Jackson Park. Well, if you've felt frustrated in your lifetime, and you're a mere male with no great inhibitions and Wages of Sin to cope with, you can imagine my feelings that night. Shameful as is my confession that it took me all afternoon to make one messy drawing for you, is my admission that I just now, at nine PM, finished cleaning the house. I know that this must seem like deplorable inefficiency to you, but I loath doing the house in the morning. The dog and I are both restless if it's a nice day, and I much prefer to shop, or to find a good excuse for getting out. This morning we arose late and went to Woodworths to mail a package and also to sell some books, the presence of which in this household traumatize me. I refer to such opuses as *An Introduction to the Study of Society* by my former Smith professor, Frank Hankins, *A First Course in Statistics*, which isn't even a first course in reading and writing and similar works of fiction and fantasy. Only one of them was yours, *Elementary Economics* by Fairchild, Furness and Buck (note the hastily corrected error of typing on the last word) but I figured you would forgive me when you learned that it was the text we used at Smith and caused another of the many trauma I apparently underwent in my younger days. I also returned to Harper Library, which will never recover from the shock, two works of extreme interest to no one at all, *Eugenical Sterilization* (I wrote my undergraduate honors thesis on this subject, so try to understand my point of view) and *Divorce*, a subject which interests me not at all, from any point of view. As it is we need new bookcases if all your books are to be accommodated, and I figured this minimum amount of pruning would not meet with any violent protest from you. I did not give away your Latin grammar, figuring it had value as a curio, if for no other reason.

Then I picked up the tickets for Oklahoma (the earliest date I could get was December 22 -- what a race with time) and Mr. Hoepfner, finally realizing I was your wife, asked for you. Then B. and I ate lunch at the Commons, where we saw no one of

interest. A new book of Goya etchings is coming out and I asked the bookstore to get it for us.

I returned home and have been working like a dog ever since. Usually it takes me very little time to clean the place, but packages and people kept coming all afternoon. I got this tres gai linoleum rug from Fields for the dining room which is a vast and ugly void anyway, and it took damn long to unroll and then wax it. Then the buggy came from San Francisco (it's a pre-war model, which means a lot in buggy-fancying circles), part of the baby's little basket, that it will spend the first month or two of life in if it can keep out of bars, came from Wards, and a very beautiful bed jacket, a Xmas present from nurse Irmie, and a housecoat, another X-mas present from Day and Walter, came from New York. I will be permanently bedridden now, since I have so many more pretty lounging and bedclothes, as well as magnificent sheets, blankets and comforters, than out-of-bed clothes. Mom got me a three-quarter length lounging robe which is also lovely. All these things are kind of quilted and white silk, with little flowers on them, a style which is very becoming to me since I don't look well in the white-ostrich-feather-and-velvet kind of intimate clothing.

Jean Mac and Jane Barry also came over for a little while this afternoon for a chat and a nibble at your candies.

I've gotten to be quite a plant addict and spend much of my time walking about with a glass of water, sprinkling the plants, the furniture, the dog and myself freely. That glass is really overworked, since the other half of the time I am gulping great draughts of bicarbonate of soda out of it. I have heartburn, a normal product of pregnancy and a peculiar feeling which can only be described as the feeling you get when you feel the way some people look if they are the type of people who always look as if they are smelling something bad. OK, go ahead and edit that if you can. Anyway, I have four different kinds of plants now and also a pot of chives in the kitchen window, in case I ever decide to eat cottage cheese and chives, an unlikely prospect since all I want to eat is candy and bicarbonate of soda. Two of the plants in the living room are the kind that grow in water, the

other one is a group of narcissus bulbs which only live about six weeks and I'll be glad when they're gone. The other is something called a pepperoni and I am anxiously expecting peppers. I am happy to relate I have no cactuses, considering them unattractive and dangerous objects. Gosh, is it the end of the page already. I love you [*passionately*] and forever. Match that if you can in your fealthy French novels!

000XXX0X Your Jill

***JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 28, 1943 V-MAIL***

Sweetheart darling --

Sunday night

Jeepers, what a day. I haven't even had a look at the Sunday papers yet. It all comes from sleeping too late, I suspect. Anyway, it seemed that no sooner had I eaten breakfast, bathed, made the bed and taken the dog for a walk than Marion Gerson arrived, all tricked out to help me paint the crib. We got one coat on, very sloppily, I must say, since Miss G. shyly confessed that she had never painted before. But her spirit is good, I give her credit for that. Then Maxine dropped over and we spent the rest of the afternoon conversing in a semi-comatose fashion. I have decided that Maxine at heart is very Hyde-Parky, a mode of description with which you may not be familiar, and she will never get the kind of man she wants, i.e., like David Saxe whom she lost to Adele, unless she gets less interested in clothes and night spots and more interested in men and dogs. I think one can only afford to have glamour girl tastes and still hope to get a reasonable facsimile of a man if one looks like a glamour girl, and by looking like a glamour girl I mean going to such extremes as being a Veronica Lake.

We finally had dinner and Marion just left, and so now I can fulfill my two chief desires of the moment (and the former is as of always) -- writing to you and reading the paper. And another thing, everybody and their dog always take to calling me on Sundays, which is another reason why I never get the papers read. When you come home, another function you'll have to fill

is that of a buffer between me and the telephone. One of these days I'm going to rip the damn thing out of the wall. While I dearly love the people who call me, I decidedly do not dearly love to sit in a hot little closet on a hard stool and mouth sweet nothings into an unsanitary and unsightly piece of bakelite. Furthermore, I am always doing something that interests me much more than answering the phone, such as going to the john.

It seems hard to believe that exactly a month from now we may be parents. Even though I'm surrounded with nearly all the props of parenthood now -- cribs, diapers and all that -- and even though I have a fair idea of why my stomach is big, I still can't quite imagine having a baby. It must be an even stranger sensation for you, who doesn't have to look at crib or stomach, for which you may thank God. And if the mail is lousy, you may get this after the fact of paternity, which gives me a funny feeling to be writing all this. I'm not as impatient as I was several weeks ago, although gosh knows it will be nice to eat uninhibitedly for a change (although once the baby is out I'll probably be exorcised of my strange passions for food). But I still have a lot of interior decorating to do yet, and furthermore, I wonder if I shan't miss wandering about the neighborhood, stopping and starting as my fancy wills.

Incidentally, that cold that caused me to complain so bitter in some of my letters last week or so ago left me, and I am as robust as ever. How are your eyes? You never wrote whether they were OK.

All my love and a lot of big kisses to my dear one. Jill

***JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 29, 1943***

Darling -

Monday noon

I just got your letter, written Nov. 12, in re Xmas presents. Christ no, I'm not angry at you, but only at myself for being so dull-witted about it all. In the first place, I was over-susceptible to

news stories advising and enjoining the public what to give. Secondly, I was smitten, or at least unduly impressed with one account you sent of living in the field in Sicily - of the teeth falling out of your comb. But the books I knew all along you'd like best - & that you'd be amused by the fruit cake, though you certainly won't be able to eat it. At least, I'd advise against it if you value your pretty molars.

I sent you the wallet last summer. It was a nice one, a billfold, in tan calf, really (this shape -- , not this ----) but I guess it's been lost. I'll send you the other one I got, which I had decided wasn't very attractive. The only reason I got it was that it was a trifle larger than ordinary.

You'll split when you get Day's present - It's Nescafe, in an excessive amount, I thought. And as for the pictures professionally taken, I thought I would rather have it done after the baby comes, so I can send you nice studies of mother & child, separately of course, since I never saw a picture of the two characters combined that didn't look like a parody on the Holy Family. But I confess, if I had had more sense & less vanity (for truthfully, while I'm healthy I don't look as well as usual - the un-curled hair, I suspect) I would have sent you some professional jobs before.

The whole thing makes me feel a little badly because it's such a poignant reminder of that distance that separates us - of the impossibility of our communicating adequately -- of the mutual needs we can't fulfill. And that I should have ever caused you a wry or bitter moment is unthinkably bad on my part. You're so damned far away and I love you so much that nothing I could do would be enough for you & everything I do do seems gauche and painfully inadequate.

In answer to your questions about newspapers & censorship, I think Dad and I have received all the papers you sent, including the one from Catanzaro. Only two of your letters have been bit into, one written on Transatlantic convoy and another describing your airplane ride from Naples to Algiers. It was the sentence in reference to some wounded men aboard plane which was cut.

One of the most frustrating things about your being away is the enormous lag between your writing and my answering a given letter, or vice versa. I just hate to think that what I say today will be virtually meaningless by the time you get it - or at least jumbled in with a lot of mail before & since. I am still painting the crib today. The second coat & a hellish job it is too. I just ran out of paint & I was on my way out to buy more when I found your letter in the box.

Darling, you know how much I love you, don't you? If it only weren't for this goddam war, I could show you!

Always -

Jill

***AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 29, 1943 V-MAIL***

Darling Jill,

I have no time today to write much except several words saying that I love you, miss you always with equal pain, and expect that our armies shall be in Rome by Christmas. I haven't had any of your literary gems for more days than I can recount. The only thing that came through in weeks was Alie's third page of what was apparently a four-page V-mail letter. Why all this great confusion, I don't know.

Anyhow, I can say that I am well and at present singularly untouched by the war. The day has dawned beautifully, my curly locks are brushed and my face clean, and the day looms as a very intense job of writing for a deadline. So to get an early start, I'll finish with a complete and frank avowal that for me you are the world. Al

***JILL TO AL NOVEMBER 30, 1943***

My only darling --

Tuesday

Not one but two letters from you today, dated the 15th and 16th.

Until the day comes when you couldn't slide a molecule between us, I hope we continue to be only two weeks apart. Somehow, a lapse of a week or two from the time you write until the time I get it (and I passionately hope it's vice versa) is more or less tolerable. Anything more than that seems like the grossest kind of injustice to lovers such as we.

Today I painted (aren't you getting tired of hearing that chanty) and then Oliver came over and we went to this lumber yard on 64th St. I bought four boards of about 6 and a half feet each, with which I plan to fashion bookcases for the dining room, with bricks as the uprights. I've seen it done in several other people's houses around here. It's Bohemian, to be sure, but effective, especially since I would have to have a bookcase especially built to accommodate your law books, which I think are abnormally tall and ugly. Besides, I'm not quite sure what *Le nouveau Larousse* which you say you sent consists of. It can either be one volume, a dictionary, or 50, which is a good round number for a set of encyclopedias encompassing all human language, and in French too, a language which I never thought notable for its terseness. My emotions towards this purchase of yours, which I truly hope arrives in good order, is somewhat the same as the one I experienced one day at Crerar Library. That was when I was working for SRA on their Louisiana textbook. I had ordered what I thought was a pamphlet on Louisiana fisheries, and I was suddenly aroused from my stupor on that little bench they have for expectant readers by the rumble of what seemed to be thousands of volumes being ejected by their little dumbwaiter and carted by groaning men into my lap. I had omitted to say what volume on fisheries I wanted, and they had sent the whole set up. Louisianans, which you might not have discovered in your own researches on the subject, are a people apparently proud of their natural resources, and they had been issuing annual reports on the state of their fisheries ever since the Louisiana Purchase, I think. I was terribly embarrassed, and will be so again, when the whole Illinois postal service arrives to cart in your encyclopedia, if that's what it is. But it will be fun to have, especially if there are pictures.

All I have to do is get the bricks now, and then start sanding away. The boards cost me about 2.50, which is cheap for lumber at this time. Most of it is completely unavailable to the public because of priorities. You'd think they'd at least have wood left, but no. Diana and Oliver have taken this apartment on Kimbark and 53rd, and are now in the unpleasant stage of house-setting up that I was in a month or so ago. These women with husbands don't know how lucky they are at times like these. Even Oliver, an abysmal fool, must be some help around the house, and I notice that Fritz Neugarten, who just returned from his trip yesterday, is a great hand at putting up things and taking them down. Don't think that these comments of mine imply any expectations of future behavior from you. When you come home, I shall treat you as if you were somewhat more precious than the Kohinoor diamond, and you can be just that ornamental if you choose to be. At any rate, I don't expect any guy who has gone through the greatest war in history to be a common slavey around the house. You just sit there and let me interrupt your reading occasionally with a kiss. Anyway, Fritz is very nice, but he's awfully particular around the house, a nationality trait I suppose, and not what I would want. I hope I keep this recently acquired attitude in re a woman's place; it ought to make life much pleasanter for us both.

Gosh, I hope those drawings come too. I guess the mails are slow now because of Christmas. Have you started getting Time yet? I sent them a check about two weeks ago, and you should be getting their overseas edition (which apparently differs from the domestic one in size only, I hope) pretty soon now. I also sent you some pajamas (the kind I like to wear with the crew neck and snug cuffs) and a box of sugar-coated nuts, or that is what they tasked like (they have some technical name which I forget), two months ago, and a month ago, respectively.

I am very tired of painting, but can't see any way out of it. It's all right to tell a person to take it easy, but one just can't live with messy stuff around, and unless you finish a piece of unfinished furniture it gets dirty and next to impossible to clean. The baby's crib was finished in maple when I bought it, but the color of

maple makes me sick, so there again I had no choice in the matter. It's a lot easier to spend two days painting something like that than two years at a psycho-analysis figuring out why maple makes me sick. As a matter of fact, I have somewhat the same relationship to my local paint dealer, a Mr. Harry Brown, as one would to a psycho-analyst, if you want to use such criteria of judgement as dependence, not to mention, transference and regularity of visits.

I was very interested in the local gossip, as purveyed to you by T. V. Smith. Here I live three blocks from the University and don't get nearly as much information. I was also interested in your analysis of Smith. I never knew him of course, but picked up a lot of derogatory information about him, mostly from the City Hall people, I think. He also wrote a rather fatuous series in a downstate farm paper on why he would support McKeough, which Rubin, God knows a lamebrain, re-wrote in part (and didn't improve). I guess T.V. regrets it now and was in a great hurry at the time.

Excuse me, I have to go to the john. It is always thus, these days.

You know, at first I had thought you had gone to Naples from North Africa. Now I think you're in Sicily. Well, you can't keep me from guessing. I just thought I was better at it than I am this time Tomorrow Wednesday, is always a day I loathe. I have to do the laundry in the morning -- it's the only day I can use the machine because the neighbors use it all the rest of the time -- and then the doctor in the afternoon. It's the only time he sees his obstetrical cases. He doesn't like them. I guess nobody would after delivering some ten thousand babies, all substantially alike. It isn't like love, where repeated acts and gestures of passion and affection never lose their individual charm.

Well, maybe some people find it otherwise. I am certain I never shall stop wanting to kiss you, hug you and sleep with you.

It's hard to believe we've know each other four years, come this June. I keep losing a year every time I figure it out, so it usually

comes to three years. I think it's because I have the idea, which is somewhat bizarre considering when the baby is due, that we were married last May. And another thing, four years make me feel so old. Do you know that you've taken the best years of my life? And very welcome you are and always will be to them. I guess I've taken yours, too. Poor Mom -- she'll never get over the fact that not one, but two of her boys married when they were 22. I think she's trying all sorts of counter-active (and mutually inconsistent) measures with the younger ones -- such as encouraging them to learn to dance and to go to dances because she figures the reason you were trapped so young was because you weren't a jitterbug. On the other hand, she wouldn't like the younger boys to get to know girls too well, because then again they might become embroiled. I like to think that her reasoning of the first part is entirely fallacious -- that you chose me in a moment, or year, of sober judgement, and no matter what you had done before, you would have taken me. As a matter of fact, I'm sure of it, and would have said so at first, except that it makes me out to be such a conceited ass. But then, having you, I have a right to be conceited.

Darling, I ought to mail this now. I finished Look Homeward Angel last night and didn't like it after all. But I still respect your judgement and love you terribly.

Always your -

Jill

***AL TO JILL NOVEMBER 30, 1943***

Dearest Love,

The end of one more fast month is here and comes the crucial December. I hope and believe that the remaining time apart will go just as fast and before you finish nursing the one, you'll have to start on the other, me. I just spoke with the Red Cross guy who has arranged for me to get news of your welfare & offspring as fast as the cables can bat it out. He has just received books

from America which I envy him no end, -- things like Lippman's book on the State Dept., Sheean's new book, *The Last Days of Sebastopol*, and a couple others including Laske's latest. Now that I have read every line of the books & mags you sent me and cherish every line of poetry which made me think so often of you in no unfond terms, I must resort to borrowing his little treasure trove. We're going to eat dinner together at his place tonight. He used to work for the Board of Economic Warfare and is anxious to seek answers from me to the depressing social situation.

I think so often, you know, of what I'd like to write, but the censorship (very hard on us Psychological Warfare Branch devils) and my conscience are insuperable odds to freedom of expression. I can't even say the smallest things because my knowledge of everything is considered first-hand. All the secret material impinges rudely on the non-secret incidents, with results which are disastrous for the devoted and confiding pen. If another guy were to write about a fist fight he saw, that wouldn't mean anything. If I wrote about it, it wouldn't be so hot, because I am presumed to know the complete social milieu which led up to the fist fight, and therefore am writing with my eyes open as to the consequences of the description.

As far as you're concerned, I can only claim credit for trying valiantly and often to write something to you which isn't a hash of "How are you's". On the other hand we have very little ways of knowing the trends of opinion at home although complete accounts of all news broadcasts are instantly available. I'd be happy with a copy of the *Nation* or *New Republic* every week, so that I could just keep up with the currently raging controversies. Not that they could ever get here in time. The best way (AGAIN, I SAY) is to get clippings of learned opinions. For Christ's sake, there isn't any effort involved for you in inserting the *Daily News* Editorial page in an envelope, is there?

Right now, I haven't had mail in so long that I have lost that old feeling of the mail call. I can't imagine what bastard is f-- up the detail this time in Africa. But in every new day lies fresh hope.

I am deeply sorry that I can't be with you during this next month, darling. I feel that my trepidations are all in vain, since by this time you must be too greatly concerned over your Christmas offensive to give a damn where or what I am. Let it be so. My day will come. The days are beautiful here now, only now and then some rain. I promise hereby that any time you want to see these lands I have fitfully described in my letters, you need only say so and I shall drop whatever work I will be doing and get out my Cook's tour cap. You deserve anything for being such a faithful and stimulating companion to my distant gadding-about.

Have you heard anything from Jerry Ross or Aunt Renee? I haven't heard from him or about him since leaving headquarters. PWB is a big organization, you know.

Not big enough to hold me, though. Only you can do that.

With Love,

Al

*End of November 1943 letters*

