

**JILL TO AL APRIL 2, 1944**

Sweetheart,

Sunday

Again I note with chagrin that several days have passed without my writing you. And again friends and baby have been the interferences. Letters came from you, the 15th and 16th of March. I wish you could send me a picture of you with a beard. You probably look like the kind of man who could have swiped a king's mistress in an earlier decade. (I'm not sure of my history, anyway, the history of fashion, to say which de-?- It always amazes me to think I married such a one as you, for when I first fell in love with you, I was more overwhelmed with your spirit, for lack of a better word, than anything else. I guess it works that way with women, and the other way with men. First the legs and then the soul, if such exists, is the usual order of things with the menfolks I guess. But enough of these bouquets, which I never know will but (?) embarrass, dismay or annoy you. Back to my life, which I always feel compelled to review for you, much as it bores me. (I'd much rather talk about you, me or the baby). Friday was busy, getting ready all day to leave me some time at night to go over to Kerners, for a little gathering they had. I was still slaving away at ten PM, getting Kathy ready for bed. By that time I was in no mood for parties, but I had my stockings on (which she had spit on by that time) so Virginia came down for an hour and I ran over there. I stayed thirty minutes and ran right back. Very dull. Corb Adams, Grant's wife, was there with Stud. She is a frightful brat, full of Grant's silly mannerisms and a lot of GI jive. I can't bear girls who flaunt what they consider the esoterica of army life. Grant is still down at San Antonio, where most of the Hanley set has passed through at one time

or another. Irv Askow, to cite just one. George Steinie was there too, at one time, as you already know. Anyway, I came home and sat up with Virginia to all hours talking. Yesterday I was tired all day and Bill came down for dinner and I kept wishing he would go, which he eventually did around eleven. Today I arose tired and went over to Joan's. It was the last chance I had to get to see her in comparative peace and quiet, because she is getting a housekeeper next week, an Army wife with a 17-month old baby. Poor Joan. She made her bed or something.

That all sounds very simple, doesn't it, visiting I mean. Actually, getting ready to take Kathy anywhere is a job comparable to raising the Normandie off the river bottom. I really sweated. The streetcar ride itself, with its numerous transfers, was done relatively easily. She enjoys swinging and swaying on the Cottage Grove car. But every time I want her fed rapidly she stalls and cries, and when she got there she cried, after a while anyway. We had a good dinner and the two infants were mildly interested in one another. It is hard to believe, or at least it must be hard for you to believe, how different babies are. In the first place Mike looks somewhat like Tom, very Irish, pale-skinned and rather red-headed in a transparent way, with pointed ears. On a baby it doesn't look so good. He must weigh about a pound less than Kathy, although he was born some five ounces heavier. Their personalities are very different. I once read a Freudian-slanted book, by the Aldriches, on babies, in which they referred to a type of child which they roughly termed a "sparkler". Well, Kathy is that kind of kid - full of responses - looking, laughing and crying, all with great gusto. It's funny, although Mike cried a lot the first month or so and bothered Joan a lot, actually now he cries less than Kathy. He just lies around, smiling feebly on occasion and taking his food with great docility and attention to detail. Kathy on the other hand not only smiles but laughs and shouts when she is in a good mood. But when she is hungry, or more frequently, when she is bored and wants attention, she yells like hell. Her favorite time for yelling is in the middle of a feeding when she decides it's all too much trouble and she'd rather play. She is very easily distracted

from her feeding and it's a lot of work to make her take a bottle. Right now she has decided she doesn't like the spoon at all so I have to strain the cereal and put it in a bottle. With envy I watched Joan feed Mike. She just shoved the cereal down his mouth and he swallowed it, like a beaten dog. When I got home tonight, I thought, what the hell, that kid of yours has too much free will, so I tried shoving the spoon of cereal down her. She yelled and protested and I kept shoving, and then she spit it up. Rather, she wooped. If there is any doubt in your mind about who she takes after, that ought to settle it. She is a self-willed kid, pleasant in her good moods but hard as hell to handle in a bad one. So Momma gives in - I put it back in the bottle and she fed with smug satisfaction. The divergence in their development and behavior patterns ought to prove something and I wish you'd set your fertile mind to the solution. That's why I'm giving you all these tiresome details, because I really wish you would comment if you feel I've given you enough information to warrant it. These two kids had very much the same starts in life. They were both very healthy babies at birth, have had no diseases or big feeding difficulties since birth, and come from parents of about equally sound physical constitutions. I'd say the four of us are unusually healthy strong people - Joan had complains but basically she's an extremely strong girl. Yet I would characterize the two infants as follows: Mike is sweet, almost subdued at the present moment, appearing almost pathetically grateful for small favors though in his early days he was a crying dissatisfied baby. Kathy is boisterous, responds in a flash to any attention paid her and demands more. She has a greater variety of sound effects - of the benign variety - than Mike. Mike plays with his face and sucks his thumbs and pulls covers over his head. Kathy grabs at objects away from her, like things hanging from the side of the crib, my fingers, and rattles. She looks at her hands and uses them on the bottle now, but rather infrequently eats them or puts them in her mouth. If she has covers on, she kicks them down to her feet, but never think that fact about her is due to the breast-and-bottle routine of the first two months. It made the feedings varied and well-nigh interminable affairs. Anyway, it didn't give her a business-like

approach to feeding, so that now, when she is older, it's damn near a social occasion for her). When Mike complains he whimpers and then stops. When she complains she yells and keeps it up, until she is picked up or falls asleep out of exhaustion. A relevant fact, if you're going to be Freudian about this, is that Mike is never picked up and held for a feeding. He lies somewhere and somebody holds the bottle in his mouth. One reason for this is that neither Mrs. Walter, who is very old or Vesta, who is very young, can hold him, and they are auxiliary feeders. Kathy is of course always picked up and cradled in my arms when she's fed. Generally I'd say Kathy is an extremely aggressive child, Mike is not. Now the question is are these enduring behavior patterns and would you say Kathy is a better integrated child? I'd say yes to the latter, anyway, if she has to live in a competitive world she will be. On the other hand, she is sometimes an awful pain in the neck to her mother. And do you think that if she is a better integrated baby because she is demanding and sees that her demands are satisfied, she'll be a well-integrated two-year-old, say, or will she be a pain in the neck then, full of demands which we won't want to satisfy because they won't be as basic as the feeding, social response ones now? I'd like to think that if I do everything for her now she'll be tractable later on, being free from insecurities. But Freud may be all wrong - anyway the child psychologists following Freud, and she may be like this always. I don't know what to think. I'd hate to think I was spoiling her now for later on. On the other hand, I think it would be wrong for me to ignore her demands now because she is so helpless and because I have nothing else really vital to do (besides writing you) but satisfy her and try to do a good job on her. I purposefully refrain from drawing invidious comparison between Joan's and my handling of the infants because I know Joan has a hard job - a 48-hours workweek for one, and another child to boot. Vesta incidentally is a garrulous attention-getting kid and not very attractive, it's sad to relate. But of course that doesn't mean so much in a six-year-old. Braces and cosmetics can turn anyone into a beauty.

I hope you're not bored with this wealth of detail. It may sound

tiresome all set down in a letter but these are the things you would observe or that we would talk about if you were here. Oh yes, and how much of this do you think is inherited predispositions. Kathy seems to me to be an awful lot like you, in disposition as well as looks (though I'm sure no baby could be as pretty as she), yet your mother handled you rather differently from the way I handle her, in small details anyway and one more or less basic one - that she used to dress you up and fuss with your clothes, which I never do with Kathy (mostly because I'm too lazy - I rationalize it by saying it isn't good for the child). Good God, if I had given as much thought to my college education as I give to this whelp of ours, I would have had a string of Phi Bet keys from here to the Bronx.

In between all this extreme maternity, I read a little of that lovely Times weekly edition yesterday. I didn't read the articles you marked - by then my eyes gave out - but I headed straight as a mouse for its hole to the editorial on the fabulous bike ride of Chaplain Roach. I love the style of writing in English periodicals. It's so measured, so dignified. You'd feel that even more strongly if you'd been exposed to some of the purpose prose in the Sun, emanating out of the Chaplin trial. Incidentally both Bill and I think his goose is cooked, I rather regretfully because although I have no positive sentiments for Mr. C., I think both the Mann Act and women like Joan Berry very reprehensible indeed. But I keep thanking the patron saint of virgins that our Kathy is too young to read now. At least, I hope she is (maybe when my back is turned she sneaks into the bathroom, where I file the Sun, and gets a gander at these lewd goings-on). I mean, I want to shield her from that style of writing, not the facts of life themselves.

What a nice feeling this is. It's ten o'clock and our little dove is asleep and I can go to sleep too when I finish this, for the past couple of nights she has abandoned her ten bottle, I hope for the duration. You don't know what this means to me. For the first time in three months, starting tonight I hope, I can get a good night's sleep. She still sleeps in the morning. I have to set the alarm and wake her up myself around a quarter to eight, so

she won't be thrown too far off the feed bag. For this I love her dearly, although every cloud has a black lining and it means that she is more wakeful than ever during the day, necessitating frequent buggy rides and generally jollying about.

I guess you've had a bellyful of babies this trip. And you KNOW all I ever want to say is that I love and miss you and think you're wonderful. Every time I think it's April I want to cry. I guess the best thing is not to look at calendars. But still, God bless the Russians. Late news has them in Rumania.

I'm sending you a clipping, the last paragraph of which is funny, for its relevance to us anyway. And so to bed.

I love you always.

As ever (with a leaky pen and loving you, that is)

Jill

***AL TO JILL APRIL 2, 1944 V-MAIL***

Darling Jill

I am living in magnificence for the moment and I wish you could be here to enjoy it too. Yesterday I had Italian cooking for the first time in a number of weeks and enjoyed it very much. The teeming life that I encountered almost startled me out of my rustic wits. It was a great joy to see all the masses of humanity shuffling along though in a depressed state. It's doubtful whether they saw much to be happy about. My quarters are very good. I have a large room on the top floor of a palazzo. It is light, clean and furnished well. Outside is a great roof garden with potted plants and wicker chairs. When I step out on it, I can see one half the world and when I walk three steps to the right I can see the other half. I share a completely modern bathroom with Hadfield who lives next to me.

I don't know how long I'll be here but it will remain as a sort of

Central Quarters I believe. I celebrated the comfortable peace and quiet last night by finishing Borgese's book. He really doesn't become very clear in his intent and ideas until he gets to the last fifty pages but he is good throughout. I'll send it to you to read along with other books I'll be sending home.

Of course, one of the first persons I should meet is Charlton and we couldn't do anything else save collapse on each other's straps. He is returning home lucky dog and is full of all sorts of connivances for the future.

He has written a book, a gossip sort of thing that will probably make a great hit and, in a weak moment, I said it ought to be published in the U.S. because it would earn him more money there. Offhand I can't think of anyone to send a copy of the manuscript to but certainly there is no harm in sending it to you. At least you will be able to read it. I'll be thinking of people I know who might do something about it and, meanwhile, you might, when you get it, try the Chicago Sun supplement to see what they think about it. I'll be sending the manuscript to you as soon as he gets it typed up, which means as soon as he sobers up sufficiently.

I haven't been able to get the Russian news today. I follow it eagerly because today, it is really the only hand of the clock which brings me nearer you. Many kisses to you, darling, and my Kathy.

Your Al

***JILL TO AL APRIL 3, 1944 V-MAIL***

My sweetheart,

I am trying very hard to be the stern mother, having put the baby to bed for the last time tonight (it's 8:30 now) with the intention of her sleeping the night through. At least that's my intention. Herself wishes to do otherwise, presumably to play,

and she is whining most piteously. But I am hot in pursuit of my new found freedom from baby from the hours of eight to eight approximately, and therefore it isn't very hard for me to resist going in there and soothing her wounded feelings. I don't think I've been stern enough about seeing that she has regular sleeping hours. Now that she doesn't need that last bottle at night, I suppose I really should be firm about her going to sleep this early. Once she's asleep she's very good about staying that way until morning, which is something in her favor.

I got your V-mail of the 18th today and am distressed about your itch. I hope it won't last much longer and that it won't scar your pristine complexion. Oh yes, and in reply to something else in your letter, I saw that poem by Vlerick too. I guess it was very good. I'm not much of a judge.

With my hawk-like memory and occasionally astonishing attention to detail, I recall, with not much difficulty, that today is some kind of anniversary for us. At the risk of embarrassing you or the censor, if there is one, this is the anniversary of Kathy's initiation into the world of living matter. It's hardly a circumstance I can forget, first because of the somewhat unusual manner or rather time of the occurrence -- people usually go to bed to rest after a long bus trip -- and secondly because I had to remember the date for the benefit of the various obstetricians through whose hands I passed on the long journey home. And it was a particularly pleasant day, all told. Though we had parted only six days before, I felt as overjoyed to see you as if you had returned from China. I often dwell upon the day we'll meet again. Will I be able to come down to the boat with Kathy on my arm, will it be a rendez-vous at some station or airport, what will we say to each other, what will we do. I have a feeling you'll be surrounded by a lot of other men and that you'll say "Hello Jill" and touch me in that wonderfully restrained but tender manner that you've used before, notably when you left. I suspect that I'll burst into tears and cry for a week thereafter, out of sheer joy admixed with self-pity for all I've missed. If Kathy is along she'll probably cry too because she will have decided at that moment to be hungry, over-tired or



neglected. I had the damndest experience the other morning, I was lying in bed, resting after the rigors of the seven AM feeding and having a nice daydream about you, thinking how wonderful it would be to get a cable saying you were coming back (to train troops in PW in this country, it went). Just then the doorbell rang and I got up, put on my robe, preparing to receive the cable with absolutely no surprise or hesitation. A little colored boy came bounding to the door, handing me a yellow envelope with a glasseine front, just like a wire. Then he mumbled "Gas Company" and the dream was broken. But it was the strangest extension of fantasizing into reality, a dream with sound effect, so to speak. I wasn't so much disappointed as stirred by the tricks one's imagination plays.

Kathy is finally asleep. I just snuck in and she is lying there like a sad sack, a pathetic tribute to the efficacy of parental harshness. You know, she doesn't really mind that shark oil, though it must taste terrible. She just screws up her face but doesn't cry or anything. I guess she would if I had to ladle it out by the cupful to her. This way I just put a few drops in a spoon of water and slosh it down, just once a day too. She does have some vile facial expressions though, purported to scare off such fatuous youths as Steinie who press their suits too warmly.

Talk about my bug-eye view. I was innocently johning last night and the most enormous bug walked across my shoe. I screamed "Mother", which just shows to go where my subconscious attachment still lie. (As a matter of fact, I kept yipping for Mom -- it could have been either yours or mine -- when I was having Kathy. You see, you're just a friend to me, which is probably just as well, since I hardly think you'd relish the role of my rescuer from the dull distresses of my life -- the bugs, the burns, the cramps and the stubbed toes. My, what a long aside that was). Anyway, I seduced this fellow into a glass jar and took him up to Virginia's who was having a party which I hadn't planned to go to. He was pronounced a water bug by the assembled intellectuals. I should have known. You found one on your shoulder once at 5479, tossing me into hysterics as I recall. Then they went on with their discussion, which had to do

with the world of objects vs. the world of ideas. I can hardly say that I got left behind because I never was there in the first place, so I left after a glass of beer. I'm not very good at that sort of thing anyway. I do better at vis-a-vis arguments, and then only when they concern politics or psychology. It's nice to know one's limitations, I always say. And you always say, I presume, balls.

I kept the bug until this morning and then released him in the alley. He was awfully ugly but I couldn't bring it into my heart to hate him because he was apparently quite blind, although his inch-long feelers probably stood him in better stead than my 10-10 vision does me.

Darling, are you out of film? I would so like to have some more pictures of you, especially in your beard. I don't think I can get your film for you but maybe Fritz Neugarten can when he comes back. He and Bea are away till next week. Tell me what number it is. I forget now.

I am going to take a bath now. Oh yes, please tell me if you can read my letters. I have a feeling I need a new ribbon but need an angry complaint from you to jolt me into buying one. Relevant to nothing in particular except that it's near the end of the letter, it certainly is a nice feeling to know one is very much in love with somebody else. They say a person can fall in love with any number of people, that is, one of a number, but I always think that if I had lived a million years in any number of different societies it would have always been you. Maybe I would have married somebody else but I could have never loved anybody the way I love you.

Always your -- Jill

***AL TO JILL APRIL 3, 1944 (A) V-MAIL***

Dearest Jill,

I have only a few minutes before leaving my place this morning

in which to write you. I thought it better to write a note now and then more this evening. I have been very well occupied here and am enjoying my work. Yesterday I went with Howard to Goldsmith's office and, after Howard finished his task there, I stayed on to talk with him. He is doing a fine job; there is no doubt in my mind that he is a highly capable man who, for example, has been able to master an intricate system with only an imperfect knowledge of Italian. The way I know about his whereabouts was an overheard conversation in which his name was mentioned. I thought then that it must have been Geet's father.

Several of the people here had gone up to see the lava from Vesuvius when it was erupting. They say the sight of the huge wall was astonishing. They were also struck by the people who sat in front of their houses watching the wall approach and sure that God would interfere in time.

Last evening, Robbie, Greenlees & I talked at some length with two prominent politicians. Their reactions to the CP proposals to unite with the government were what you might expect. I got to bed very late.

Nevertheless I dreamt about you pleasantly, which is never time wasted. As always, I love you. Kisses to both of you.

Your Al

***AL TO JILL APRIL 3, 1944 (B) V-MAIL***

Dearest,

Your letters of March 19 & 20 came this afternoon. I shall be looking forward to those pictures of Kathy though I was never one for naked posing of babies. I suppose you should be able to better tell a husky body that way but most babies' bodies look about the same to me. You are a better judge of flesh than I. The box of cigars and candy you describe should last me to the

end of the war. Many kisses for them. Your descriptions of the Canvassing were not exaggerated at all. I know just what you mean. It's a hell of a job but I'm sure the experience is good. Then you won't have to leave me some day to see how it's done. One more day together, you see. Now, darling, the second story regarding the bonds and checks and nasty old money, is that you pick them up off the floor as best you can and toddle down to the bank, not worrying too much about the bank's being shaky. Most banks are perfectly sound these days. I see not the slightest reason that you should take in both the boys. Ed is sufficient. They might as well be separated a little from each other now. You are perfectly right in confessing that 1) you are always being exploited or 2) you are always in a rage at being exploited. I don't know what to do with Jan. But I'd like to try. I was surprised at how little Kathy cost. And she keeps on growing, too! She must be a lovely little devil to play around with now. You can go out wherever and whenever you please when I get back. I'll play with Kathy.

I spent a quiet day today, working at my desk. I saw Brownie Roberts early today and had lunch with that hard-worked HQ of my old company, Jerry Stern included. They're all doing about what they did at Ritchie. We had a couple of correspondents at dinner last night. Cecil Sprigge of Reuters was one and he is a very nice fellow. Speaks Italian well.

I'll write more tomorrow. As always, I love you.

Al

***JILL TO AL APRIL 4, 1944 V-MAIL***

Darling --

Kathy is at the moment rattling her beads, called Plakies in the language of the trade, I have eaten my evening meal and am waiting for her to work up sufficient appetite or chagrin to do same. The day has been cold and wearisome. She keeps crying

out in the wee hours, waking me if not stirring me from my cold, pajama-less discomfort. I don't know why I immediately doff pajamas come march 23rd but I do and there it is, as J. P. Marquand would say. The winter, which was mild when it really was winter, is dragging on into spring like last year and it's really very unpleasant. Diane came over about noon and we walked over to the Coop on 57th and Blackstone. While they're more expensive than the local markets they deliver, which is an asset to consumers of quantities of Carnation milk, as your little family is. Then we hauled Kathy inside Stineways and ate lunch there. Did I tell you -- they have completely remodeled the place, making a self-service cafeteria out of it and the food is somewhat, though not much, better than it used to be. As Diane put it plaintively, it couldn't be much worse. Then I came home freezing and have been sweating it out since, trying to get orange juice down the little lady at odd intervals. Now that it's getting lighter later (neat thrust, that) I find myself wishing away the hours until nightfall, when I can turn on the radio and listen to my favorite un-comic comics. I have become a devotee of Fibber and Molly, which shows how low I can fall when I start falling. And I hate to disclose the following, but feel I must since you are my all-in-all. I started embroidering last night. I became charmed by the notion, reading an alluring paragraph on the Sun's Woman Page on that subject and sending away for some patterns and directions on same. Anyway, I started messing up an odd pillow case of Kathy's -- not that she has a pillow or would ever use one -- and find it a dull unproductive pastime. In the first place, like having babies or skiing, you need a lot of equipment to do it well, which I don't have. Furthermore, you need a pair of hands that are not open wounds, and mine usually are, what with opening cans and dissecting chickens. Oh yes, I bought a chicken the other day and that damn butcher uses a feinting strategy, i.e., he flirtingly showers me with praise and fool that I am, I succumb so that I find myself home with chicken undismembered. But I managed finally to tear it apart with my bare hands and made a very interesting dish out of, off the cuff too. It would have tasted fine if I had any taste buds left. I sprayed it with a lot of hot pepper, thinking it was paprika. You

see what fun you are missing. Hah.

Mom is worried about your itch and wishes to send you Resinol ointment which I dissuaded her from doing. You do have adequate treatment, don't you? Truly if you don't we will send you something.

That boy upstairs is practicing his clarinet -- this is the little German refugee boy, not the big one on the other side of the building who plays the trumpet. It is slowly driving me mad. I'd like to tell his family that you are not fighting to free oppressed peoples to be clarinet players but it would be mean. The best thing is for you to come home so we can get a house on a hill. I love you very much.

Jill

***AL TO JILL APRIL 4, 1944 V-MAIL***

Dearest,

It would be hard to describe how much I need you tonight, but I'm sure you would understand if you could step out onto my roof garden and see the moon shining from behind sheltering clouds on the city. You could then realize that if you were here I couldn't help feeling as romantically happy as ever a young fool felt. The sunset was beautiful tonight too: every minute of it gave an eternal verity to Shelley's poems. Though my place is part of a large, grand building, with marble stairs, great chandeliers and lofty ceilings, it is still remote and lovely up above where it stands. In the morning I throw back the shutters and step out into what seems like infinity. I told Howard that the sensation was worth an hour's sleep a night, so stirring and arousing is it.

He agreed. For your confusion, this was Hubert. He is a civilian. His brother is right here too, as a captain. Both are extremely nice and the best of company. Hubert, Robbie and myself had a

discussion two nights ago that lasted far beyond a reasonable hour because of that trait. Both are so true to the British type that they are almost unbelievable. They are perhaps more intellectual than most of their kind, which means that they are very much so. They both speak Italian well.

Capt. Howard and I effected a nice piece of barter today. In return for a variety of PX supplies he put into my trembling hands a bottle of Canadian Club. It was unbelievably good to roll it down my gullet. I've been staring at the bottle fascinatedly since I got it. He can have his old tooth paste. I got plenty to last me for Christmas.

I've been doing most of my inside work in my room, letting the breezes that wafted Aeneas blow gently through my open shirt. I shall be off soon for a while, leaving most of my things in my rooms here. The mission will probably be interesting with perhaps a little excitement. Unfortunately, communications between us may not be so good. But you cannot doubt, whatever the space between letters, that I am completely your devoted husband.

Conditions have improved somewhat in Italy. I don't think they will be able to recover completely until the armies move farther north, and more materials, both Italian and foreign, are made available to the country. I expect, though, that the next months will see an accelerating progress. The Italians really look more confused than they are. They are capable of remarkable work when given the materials. The curse of a place like Napoli is the large impoverished class, people who have no decent clothes, no food, no morale, and no honest employment. Only the most drastic social measures would get rid of the class. Perhaps, though it may sound calloused, the only way to get rid of it is by use of semi-penitentiaries and stern laws, ruthlessly enforced. The closest thing to this sort of people is the type of the pariah found in Dostoevsky's work and others of the Russian realistic school. The adults are beyond redemption, the children partially so. People like them, like other classes in other countries, give the lie to words about the wisdom and goodness of universal

democracy, though their cause and cure would probably be effected by something approaching universal democracy.

All my clothing is in fine shape now, neatly washed and ironed. I look quite respectable. I'm sure you would love me if you were to see me so odorless and shaved. I gave the maid a huge sack of laundry when I came in and it came back to me within the next two days, total cost, one dollar. My favorite is a very old lady who is chief housekeeper. She is obviously one by profession and must have been formerly with some very genteel family. She speaks very good Italian and is full of quaint and sweet expressions. You can see that at times she is grieved by the vulgarity and lack of discipline of the other servants.

You must all be on edge over the second front at home. I entered a pool on the subject the other day, taking a day that you would no doubt disagree with as being too late. But the secret is certainly well kept. So well kept that one begins to wonder whether there is a secret.

I find there is very little I need to know about Kathy. You have kept me so well informed that I even know what incident invariably brings on what expression. I almost bought a little knitted jacket for her today but sensed somehow that you probably had one just like it for her. From what you say she must be a very well dressed little girl. Lovely, too. She is probably doing better in those first few months not having me around to divert you. I can't say the same thing for not having you around. Nothing the old misanthrope Robbie can say can dampen my enthusiasm for the return. I must somehow drag him to America to tell you stories. Strong men have died of laughter from them.

All my love, dearest. Kiss Kathy for me. Your Al

**T**HE "D-Section" people in Naples put in a call for him, and a gobbledygook 5A HQ AG TO of April 3 sends him off. It is



extraordinary; they still number no Americans among them, not a military officer; they had seen to this somehow; they had among them only the famous American violinist, Albert Spalding. The Lieutenant was their lusty, ironic, laughing companion of yore, spouting episodically the radical epistemology and sociology of the University of Chicago, knowing something of British history, who could be as insulting of the Americans as they of the English. And so it happened.

He leaves the Front depressed and strangely nostalgic. He loves the faces and voices that have surrounded him. He will miss the tired slovenly figures along the paths, in the tents, sprawled among ruins, who between wanting to know nothing and forced into knowing nothing, do know practically nothing, but will say something to be helpful and will even speak up, muttering phrases on occasion. The Italian campaign is still going poorly. The Second Front is nowhere in sight; hopefully it is near in time but is a well-kept secret. Luckily for the Allies, the Soviet armies are absorbing the energies of over 90% of all the German armed forces of the land and air. Everyone who can join Naples now does so. Witness one familiar face encountered beneath the charming Galleria, the nicely thinned-out debonair Major Rathbun of the First Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company. Hearty greetings, and "*molto piacere*" to a pretty girl hanging on his arm. The Major is here with the "advance party" of the leisurely outfit. He could sing, you may recall. He is indeed singing. He discloses that he has been admitted to the eminent ranks of the San Carlo Opera Company of Naples. He is so proud. War? What war?

"You must come and hear me sing, Al."

"I sure will, but excuse me, *scusi*, I must find my jeep."

Alfred has left his jeep down the street for a few minutes. That's the limit of endurance for your property on a Neapolitan street. It doesn't matter that he has chained its front axle to a post with a great padlock; chain-cutters prowl the streets. The unchained jeep will swiftly be stolen and driven to one of the innumerable companies at the Front; and which commanding officer or motor pool officer has ever objected to the sudden appearance in his motor pool of a jeep? If the jeep's body cannot be removed, the same cannot be said of tires, wheels, horn, distributor cap, sparkplugs, windshield wipers, and

locked welded boxes -- to begin with, the gas will be siphoned out.

The Neapolitan thieves are on the loose, and intent upon honoring their mondial reputation. The Allied troops are close on their heels -- as competitors. The traffic of Naples is still military. The troops come in on leave, jump off the trucks and spread about. The difference between the Germans and Americans is this: the Germans would come to town, drink something and walk along the street in a group, arm in arm, singing; the Americans, as soon as they arrive split up, and go off searching for a girl somewhere. These are the profound observations of an Italian intellectual, one of two dozen who work for "D Section" and share its board.

The port is booming; the materiel of war and the troops pour out of the ships. The warehouses are filling with supplies and the racketeers are conniving to get at them. Since practically the whole population needs food, notions, clothing, and medical supplies, and everything is destined to be given away anyhow, whether to the troops or the civilians, the black market can be regarded as an alternative distribution route enriching to some modest degree a few unworthy souls.

Corporal Laudando is affected by the poverty of the neighborhood he was born in before being carried to America, and procures for them foodstuffs in some quantity; he has the CIC and MP's hot on his trail, and appeals to Alfred to help him out of his jam. He gets cool sympathy and a referral to Major Greenlees, now Commander of "D Section," a man of so many principles, half of them aberrant, that he can afford to forego one or another of them from time to time. "After all, the wheat flour in question has gone to women and children who are quite hungry, one must admit, don't you think so, Sergeant?" Thus Greenlees to the M.P. investigating. "Waaal... maybe." "Surely. Let me be responsible. I shall straighten matters out." And so the problem is solved. There may be added an intimation that the man is soon to be sent to the Front; there is punishment for you!

Alfred is allotted a magnificent room atop the Palazzo Caracciolo that "D Section" has taken to itself in the old heart of the City. The rest of PWB is housed Hollywood-style in a modern hotel that is reached by a twenty-minute drive through the tunnel that takes

the seaside drive to the north and Pozzuoli; it stands on a cliff looking out to sea. The personnel commute to an office building in the City whence they seek to control and direct the communications and media of Co-belligerent Italy. Alfred has it so much better, being independent of transport, near to the incredible fish and produce markets, a step from the old port, assailed by the noises and smells alternately so charming and odious. When he steps out of his room in the morning, scaring up flights of pigeons, it is onto a large roof garden, blooming with great plants. He views much of Naples and beyond; Mt. Vesuvius, still erupting, eludes him. Friends have gone up and returned from the lava fields, astonished as much by the villagers sitting upon their stoops praying that God will bring it to a halt as by the red hot wall descending upon them.

The large number of Italian personnel puts a strain on the rations and fresh food is costly so that the portions at Palazzo Caracciolo soon diminish and Alfred is found complaining that he is still hungry after meals, a gripe that Greenlees, who outweighs him by fifteen stone, and is a gourmet, takes to heart. "They have so little to eat at home," he apologizes, but the lean Lieutenant points out that there seems to be no limit to the number of agents, secretaries, reporters, archivists, painters, broke nobles, politicians, and military visitors at the ever-enlarging table, now in two sittings. And who knows, he adds, haranguing Robbie and Greenlees and Hadfield and the Howard brothers, how much food is leaving by the kitchen's back door; there is no limit to leftovers. And when it comes to the cats and dogs of Naples, shall we go on to feed them as well? They agree. They love him and besides he is their only American officer, their ultimate argument when demonstrating that their effort is truly Allied. Yet he feels slightly embarrassed when his word is heeded: a bit like he did in Syracuse when he slammed shut the door against the crowd that was bursting into the printshop during the air raid, and as he feels when stuffing himself from cans of rations set out on the hood of his jeep, and there gather around several people, kids, too, hungry perhaps, though they never ask for anything, almost never.

**JILL TO AL APRIL 5, 1944 V-MAIL**

AL DARLING. I'M WRITING THIS WITH KATHY ON MY LAP. SHE IS AN INTERESTED SPECTATOR, TO SAY THE LEAST. SHE HAS BEEN SLEEPING MOST OF THE DAY AND NOW THAT NIGHT HAS FALLEN AND MY THOUGHTS TURN TO YOU, SHE INSISTS ON NOT SLEEPING AND WANTING TO BE AMUSED. BUT ANY CHILD OF YOURS IS A CHILD OF MINE AND SO I WILL AMUSE HER. SHE IS CAVALIERLY RESTING HER LEFT LEG ON MY RIGHT ARM (WHICH WILL ACCOUNT FOR A PREDOMINANT MISSPELLING OF THE JKLUIOP WORDS) AND SHE IS FINGERING MY SKIRT WITH HER HANDS, AS IF SHE KNEW I only paid \$18 for this suit. I decided it was just as easy to use upper and lower. Three letters came from you today, the damndest mix-up, pages 1 and 3 of march 21 and page 1 of March 26. Both Mom and I are very glad you are getting good treatment for your infection. Of course I'm sure I could have fixed you up in no time, with soft words and mercuric oxide. I still have some left from when I got something like what you had from swimming in the exotically fouled depths of the Long Island Sound. Dear, is that Kooperman guy from here? If so, I know him, I think. He used to be part of that Grand Adams, Askow, Irv Palitz group if it's the same guy.

Kathy is getting rather restless, rather, she is acting as if she were in a wonderful mood which I know is a prelude to a bad one so I'd better put her away. But first, a few words. XXXOOO

The trouble is that the only thing she can really work is the space bar, so the effect, so far as you are concerned, is like getting a case of doughnut holes. With me as the propelling force, she can also punch out the letters on the bottom row, but as there are no consonants on that row, nothing makes much sense. But she has a very good grip and will probably make a very skilled space bar operator when she grows up.

I called on a neighbor today, a girl who just had a baby and also has a husband in the Army, an enlisted man. She has a nurse

too and I had asked, through a mutually known neighbor, if I could have anything sent from the Coop for her. That led to her calling me, gushing over an act which caused me no trouble and which I wouldn't have done if it had, making me feel like a fool and misjudged, even if in the right direction. Anyway, I went up to see her because she said she liked having company -- I didn't when I was at her stage. She has to go back to work because her husband is an enlisted (I said that before didn't I, but their place is expensively and tastefully furnished so she can always sell that before the mite and she starves, so I didn't feel as sorry for her as I do for Joan and Liz Evers. I think it's the husbands who get the worse breaks anyway, guys like you who have never seen their kids. While the system of allotments is very stupid, actually very few of us wives with new babies have as much basically to kick about as you -- we may have to double up and that's inconvenient, or we may have to do everything alone (if we have money, like me) and that's lonely, but we don't face any real deprivation inherent in parenthood, like the guy who has fathered a child and never seen it. So far I know only two men in that position -- Bill Evers and you. Of course, I realize the worst part is the separation of adult and adult. Darling, I love you and have to go clean the kitchen now. If you were here, I wouldn't.

***JILL TO AL APRIL 6, 1944***

My darling Al--

The second half of your letter of the 25th came today and I'm glad it makes you out as healthy wealthy and wise as the first half. I think it was I who sent you a paper containing that news story on Mayer. It is disgusting, isn't it? Poor Gerson and her family -- they're such solid citizens anyway, and Mayer is not only an eccentric, he's a heel. I used to be very tolerant of people like that, but I'm not any more. There's just no excuse for such behavior when so many people have to give up so much.

I'd love to help you write things, if only for the reason you gave - - it will be a fine excuse to keep us together, preferably in the fresh air. Today gave Kathy and me our first good taste of that heretofore scarce quantity. It's been lovely and sunny all day, and we spent hours on the porch steps of the Steele's house, gabbing, eating and gabbing. It really looked like a George Price cartoon. The Steele's house is so moldy, anyway, and there we all were, crowded on the steps, several generations all moldier than the next. Mrs. Steele, Peggy, in her fifties, taking care of a year-old granddaughter, her sister, her 16-year-old daughter, Pat the dog, Julie Hess who arrived with another girl in the sleek Hess convertible, a jarring note that except for the fact that Julie is such an eccentric herself, and several other odd neighbors, including the Borden milkman who rested for a while and gave us the sad news he was going into the Navy Saturday. Actually I'm relieved. He keeps leaving cream whether I want it or not and my food bills are fantastic. Kathy was bottled and burped in this airy social atmosphere and enjoyed herself tremendously. I've never seen her in a better mood. She is awake now and playing contentedly on her bed. She seems to be happy despite my puzzlement over her formula -- I still don't know what to give her since my doctor is still away so I just kind of close my eyes and make it freehand -- and despite her steady refusal to take cereal. I even went out and spent a buck-fifty on a double boiler and brewed her what I considered a most alluring dish of oatmeal for supper tonight and she spit it right back in my face. Virginia watched this time and said she wouldn't have believed such stubbornness existed if she hadn't seen it. The three of us just returned from a nocturnal ride (Kathy rode) to the bookstore. Virginia bought a whole mess of books; Hin, her husband, has finally decided to read and gave her 30 bucks to spend on books. That sounds fantastic, doesn't it? He really has a fantastic mind, brilliant and original and full of the damndest quirks. He's not a mere handicraftsman -- he intellectualizes very seriously and productively on what he does, but he has some queer philosophy on the relation of ideas to objects which I don't understand and so can't explore for you. But anyway, they are

good people to be with. Speaking of books as a commodity, I got the enclosed ad in the mail the other day (some enemy has put me on somebody's mailing list -- last week I got an ad for a sex book, starting out "Dear Friend -- Sex is the most important thing in life." Don't I know it, brother). Anyway, I think this thing I'm sending you is absolutely the reductio ad absurdum of something or other. I got a great bang out of it and hope you do too.

Gosh, I don't feel like saying much except drooling over Kathy and you. She gets more wonderful every day and is sunburned this day, making her even more wonderful. Oh yes, I got the curse today, the first in over a year and feel fine, thank you. I'm relieved -- I thought I might have something wrong which would necessitate my going back to the doctor again -- perish forbid.

I'm sort of sleepy so think I'll end this with an astronomical quantity of kisses and hugs for you, darling, to be delivered on sight.

Always your -

Jill

***AL TO JILL APRIL 6, 1944 (A) V-MAIL***

Dearest,

There was honestly too much rush about yesterday to write you. It wasn't so much too much to do as it was too many people in the holiday spirit and not inclined to facilitate the administrative tangle I found myself in for wanting to get a few things done. Part of my trouble was in finding the proper method of transferring the insurance. That is being done, however, and I hope to complete my signature today. I also found time to visit a good glove store and came out with five pairs of gloves I have sent you already. Three are leather, two cotton. All can be worn in warm weather, I believe. I paid ten dollars for the lot. You'll

know better than I if the price was too high and whether you can use them. I hope you like them. I also mailed a box of your letters back, an act not to be construed as unfriendly but exactly the contrary, since I have set out madly collecting your newly arrived ones, not being able to feel human without at least a few of your letters around.

[Ye gods] I just got a call saying that the PO won't accept the letters without paying first class postage. Now I must either fork over a couple more dollars or start carrying them around with me again.

We had T.V. over to dinner last night and enjoyed him very much, much more than the dinner. Despite heroic efforts of the local cook, spam is spam, and we get plenty of it here. Edmund Howard knows him too. After the long dinner, I walked T. V. back to his billet and we talked for an hour or so about American politics. It may make you feel better to know that he advances very good reasons for preferring Dewey as a candidate to either Roosevelt or Willkie. I'm not convinced but at any rate will not throw in the towel and read Schopenhauer if he does get in, but will wait to see developments. TV doesn't like Willkie because of his lack of political experience. Apart from the political talk, he was in good form, reciting a poem by Housman when I showed him yours and Kathy's pictures and another one by Ogden Nash on whiskey that was very clever and funny. He is doing a first class job in his educational field. I'll be sorry not to be seeing him again for a time.

This Easter Sunday hasn't been so eventful. I got up fairly early and settled a few more odds and ends. I got locks to put on a couple of ammo cases I use for foot lockers. How much I miss the wonderful Sundays we used to pass together! Nothing is the same or as nice since I left you. I can't feel the spirituality of Easter or the joy of Christmas without you. Basta, I say, as did the lion when they kept throwing him more Christians, I'm fed up with it. I want to win. Quickly. (And saying that emphatically, he finished the letter, and lit up a cigarette, staring out the window at one of God's blackest meadows but finding in it only the great



beauty of the girl he loved.) End (), end letter.

My fondest kisses to you and Kathy, darling.

Your

Al

***AL TO JILL APRIL 6, 1944 (B) V-MAIL***

Dearest Jill,

How I love you this fine day even though I don't feel entirely in the pink. But well or not makes no difference; Yesterday morning a conference I was in was broken up by a call from Reyner who wanted me to be public relations man with two military plenipotentiaries; so I was rushed into a great car and we speeded all over the place; a typical American Cook's tour now that I think of it: but we had a wonderful dinner at a forbidden spot in the most poetic part of Italy and saw a lot of ruins and things (colon means period; this damned typewriter .. you know). Afterwards we came back to my place and broke into that bottle of Canadian whiskey I was telling you about. Then we had supper here. I was exhausted and relieved when they finally went on their way, and spent the rest of the evening chatting with Howard on the roof.

Before I began writing you I was engaged in pulling tags off my new coat. In a fit of desire, I bought a combination topcoat and raincoat at the PX. It is army issue, something like the one I left home but incomparably more intricate. It has a hood, a blanket lining, all sorts of buttons and catches which would keep out any little draft. Don't think this is a rash impulse, I've been thinking of buying this particular coat all winter and very many officers here have them. It will be very useful whenever we get caught in the rain at home on one of our long walks. I can button you into it, too, and pull the hood down over both of us and there we shall stay until we're ready to come out. It cost \$31.50.

I read the clippings you sent me this morning that included "Leave us face it". Need I say that hardly ever has the deep and abiding love of me for you been expressed so poignantly and exactly. Leave us face it. One of these days we'll be teaching each other how to kiss again. Horrible thought. And Kathy will be kissed by a strange man.

Reading the Sun clippings, I remembered that its circulation is increasing; that's a good thing. The picture they give of our Congress at work is a sad one, but Christ, we can't worry about every single problem in the world. I can't say that I'm not interested in all the problems, but I'm not so capable of being terribly frustrated in the New Republic fashion by every indication that this isn't the best of all possible worlds. I admit, however, that I still react more than most people to evil political ideas; as you also do. I can't forget easily about the day I skinned a knee ducking a shell, vacationists in Florida were crying because they couldn't get a Pullman to New York and congressmen were refusing to tax people for the war.

It's not that I mind my own lot so much as I mind the attitude people take towards their lot.

I shall send you some pictures within the next couple of days. And I got hold of some film too which means you shan't go entirely without an idea of what I and things around me look like.

As always,

Your Al

***JILL TO AL APRIL 7, 1944 V-MAIL***

Darling --

I think, in a fit of choler in one of my recent letters, I told you not to suggest I read this or that -- that I didn't have the time. And now that you mention a book (in today's letter, March 26) and

didn't even tell me to read it, I immediately abandon baby to do so. I mean Katherine Porter, whom I'd never heard of before either, except that Virginia just bought the book last night on our book-buying expedition. So after I got your letter today I quick borrowed it and have been admiring your taste and her style ever since. Usually I get sick of short stories after the first one or two, like chocolate eclairs (pre-war ones, I mean), but these are very good. I haven't gotten to Flowering Judas yet because I'm reading straight through the collection but so far, all of them are just my meat -- a combination of beautiful prose and easy reading (I'm rather ashamed of the latter requirement but THERE IT IS). It's funny how much you are a part of everything I do -- what I read, even what I eat. I was thinking tonight as I ate supper about you, what you would think of my diet and what I would be cooking for you. Actually, you wouldn't think much one way or the other about my diet. Strangely enough it's balanced - - you know how fanatical I am about things like sleep and vitamins because they all touch my vanity and you. I. e, I have to have a good figure for else what would you think, so I eat a lot, anyway, a lot of meat, eggs and starch. I don't see much point to vegetables unless one has difficulty in the bathroom, do you, or unless one wishes to reduce. I usually can turn out a fair meal for myself, always with the same basic ingredients -- garlic, oil or butter, tomatoes or wine, cayenne or paprika, with everything thrown in the frying pan. After your present tour through the Mediterranean area you probably would like a change from that sort of potpourri but I honestly don't see how I'll ever progress beyond that level of cooking because I don't like anything else (except steak and chops, of course). Maybe when you come home your presence and soothing encouragement will turn me into a pie-maker. You might play the trumpet or tickle my back while I flour up the kitchen. But at present, such culinary activity seems all too dull. Kathy, that big dope, still won't eat cereal. Tonight I made her cream of wheat. She's just awful and I wish you'd write her about it. If she doesn't eat cereal she gets hungry about two hours after her bottle so I spend the whole day feeding her. It works out evenly in the end because her day is so short -- she retires early and rises

comparatively late in the morning. When I pick her up now she grabs on to my hair, a cute trick if it weren't so painful. I spent quite a lot of time playing with her today. It was raining out all day so we missed our usual walk. It's funny at how early an age does a rainy day present a problem. And she also stayed awake more than usual today -- I guess she slept a lot yesterday and they're like that. There's a dopey bug flying around here, very distracting. I wish he'd bite me and get it over with. I'm still hungry from my wonderful continental dinner (I guess that's the essence of continental cooking -- it leaves you hungry) so think I'll retire to the kitchen, leaving but still loving you.

I really do miss you terribly, sweetheart.\

Always your Jill

***AL TO JILL APRIL 7, 1944 (A) V-MAIL***

Darling Jill,

It is morning. I spent most of yesterday reading through a lot of material which will be useful for what I am going to do soon. I think I got off a letter to the kids too explaining about why only Ed ought to stay down South with you: if you think he will be of help, I don't suppose he should wait for college to start but could get more study in preparation done down there. The more he is adjusted to the new environment before the start of school, the better he can do afterwards.

Hadfield picked up a pair of boxing gloves yesterday and in the afternoon we thought we might get a little needed exercise. We went out on the roof with Hubert Howard and put them on. Hadfield who is a middle aged rather heavy man, immediately went down into a crouch that made me stare in astonishment. It was so professional that I knew I was in for something. He admitted he had done a lot of boxing before, afterwards. But we only tapped about lightly for a couple of minutes and then I had a go with Hubert, who was also surprising. For though he is the

most mild-mannered person always, he turned out to be a very aggressive fighter. We batted away at each other until we were exhausted, a matter of no time at all. We all agreed that we should get that sort of exercise more than once every couple of years, but I doubt whether we will carry out our own preachings. The best part of the exercise was the bath I had afterwards which was followed by a drink of my good whiskey.

This morning's paper had the astonishing news about Willkie refusing to run any more after the Wisconsin electoral primary. That is one of the worst things that could happen. The Republican party can now unite on a platform of reaction and Anti New Deal. They will have all the cockiness that comes from a party purge. I can't understand his decision, though he must have good reason for it. Wisconsin is not a typical state, even for the Midwest. What a tragic thing, a man without a policy of any kind getting an overwhelming vote.

I'm racing to try to send off your letters today finally. I hate to part with them frankly. I've carted them about so many different places. However it's safest and there will be lots of new ones constantly arriving.

The Italian political situation is beginning to improve. With the Allies and the Russians all exerting pressure on the Italian parties to unite, plus naturally strong reasons among the Italians for doing the same thing, we should achieve some unity, a greater contribution to the war effort, probably a more auspicious future for Italy's needed changes in the present government. It is, not least, a contribution to getting Alfred home. All my love to you sweetheart, and to Kathy. I think about you all the time. I'm sure that no soldier overseas loves his family quite so much, or has a wife so deserving of love.

Take care of yourself. Many kisses.

Al

**AL TO JILL APRIL 7, 1944 (B)**

Dearest,

After receiving your letter of March 15 this afternoon, I feel that I ought to assure you that I am in the best of health and intend remaining so. That is in regard to the insurance. However, there is no doubt of the effectiveness of your serious lines; for I have resolved to change my insurance at the first opportunity, which will probably be tomorrow. In other words, the fact that I realize I'm being subjected to propoganda doesn't make me immune to it. In fact, I rather like it from you - though from no one else in the world.

You were right in letting my tax go for the time being. I'll be around to take care of it soon enough. And since I wouldn't be paying much, there is little point in your worrying about it now.

I just got a beautiful picture of Ed in a letter from Dad. He is as almost [*handsome ?*] a youth as I've ever seen. I showed it to the tubby English-Irish girl who works for our section and she pressed it to her heart in a swooning gesture, then she said she thought it was me. So you see that I haven't grown completely repulsive of late. But I really think Ed is far and beyond the others of the family. I'd like a good picture of Vic now.

I've enclosed three of the pictures we took on a trip I mentioned sometime back. I've looked the others over and though I would like to very much, I think they would violate some censorship regulation. I'll save them for you.

I've just noticed with dismay that I have a number of books around and must do something with them. If worst comes to worst & they arrive, just hid them somewhere. Bear with me, comrade.

I also got a letter from Vic today, very brief. He just told me that little Joey is talking a lot; Vic no doubt senses a lot in common with the little tub of lard.

Incidentally do you remember that silly picture we took in Tunis grouped around a Nazi flag. I was told recently that it was the cover picture of some magazine around last November. May be it was "Rotary" or some such mag.

I believe after the generals the other day, I can qualify for the American Express Co. after the war, or perhaps as City Hall greeter.

Dad's letter sounded as if he didn't know his sister was well and not in need of anything. Perhaps you might tell him again for me.

Keep a stiff upper lip, gate, except when you kiss Kathy for me. I'll hate to toss Ed out on his ear just as he starts college, but I'll rent him a room somewhere there.

Your loving Al

***JILL TO AL APRIL 8, 1944***

My darling Al --

Saturday

A great pile of V-mails reached me today, March 20, 24 and 28 and I perched on a stoop on 57th St., pushing the buggy absent-mindedly back and forth with my foot, and reading them with great coos of delight, to the astonishment of passers-by. Several stopped, thinking no doubt the coos came from the carriage, and then I got interrupted and involved in the subject of how much personality (their word, not mine) Kathy has for a three-month-old baby. Her pictures came today and I'll send them off to you perhaps in this letter. I am going up to Virginia's presently to see what we can do about mounting them. That gyp photo place didn't but nevertheless I am grateful to them for catching the spirit of our little sprite. Incidentally, you will notice that the larger one of her smiling is taken from the little, or wallet size of her all naked.\* [footnote\* Mom will send it. I left it at their house yesterday (4-10-44 J.DeG.)] I was horrified by the tricks

the camera played with her stomach -- she looks as if she had taken the water cure. I guess it really is pretty big when she is propped up (those are my hands concealed by the blanket). Don't be disturbed by the adhesive tape on her stomach. It is to hold her slightly popping navel in. Little Paul had one on too for many months. Perhaps it is a family characteristic, perhaps it is because they cut the cord right before she left the hospital and maybe it didn't grow right. Anyway, it's nothing. I change it every four or five days, taking off the old one with cleaning fluid. She seems to enjoy the process because the fluid is cool and tickles.

I read your letters on 57th St. because they came just as I was leaving the house with Mac. She dropped over and we took a little walk, stopping in at the Todd Horton's, who live in a beautiful house on 56th opposite the Semantics place. They are those friends of hers who have the beautiful pool out in Flossmoor. Then we ate at Stineway's and then she left for home, leaving me to bask thus in the sunlight of your words, as well as the sunlight. It was one of those days again, which I spent the bulk of on neighbor's stoops and stairs, smoking, feeding the baby and feeling guilty about not being inside doing something silly, like housework. I used to get just such guilt feelings on Saturday afternoons in the spring at Smith -- knowing I should be inside studying but nevertheless clinging like a leach to my particular spot in the sun on the lawn outside the dorm. I just finished dinner at Virginia's and am going back in a little while to try and do something about the pictures and to help her color Easter eggs for her kids. Tomorrow is Easter, you know, and we are going up north in the morning, right after the first feeding if I can get the little tramp organized. I guess we'll spend the day and come back about seven. This is Kathy's first trip up north and she will probably be loved to death by her various male relatives, who haven't seen her since she got so fresh and handsome. I shall probably have to be hospitalized after the effort of getting there, but I'm sure Kathy will survive, which is all that counts. I think she can take more batting about than I can.



Sometimes in the course of conversations about books and things, I mention that oh yes, Al read that and said -- and people always are amazed that you read -- possibly because of their distorted notion of warfare, possibly because their own sluggishness would keep them from reading at the slightest pretext, if you can call war the slightest pretext. However, I'm not amazed, only delighted because it gives us that much more to love each other for, i.e., reading more or less the same books and liking them. Not that we need anything to make us love each other more, or that we haven't reached the summit of all love for all time. Honestly, darling, it never ceases to amaze me how much one can be in love, and how happy one can be over it, even if one's lover is far away. It makes me cry and laugh all at the same time. I never thought I could be so happy, potentially anyway. I have everything anyone could ask for -- a wonderful guy, a divine child and a reasonably germ-free constitution and it all snuck up on me all at once, the realization anyway. So did the child, I guess, too. Sometimes I get awfully depressed and frustrated over your absence, but when you say things like "the only barrier between us is time -- I have no intention of magnifying that obstacle into more than the little puddle which it is" I get quite optimistic and happy once again.

Anyway, I was talking about books -- we have one Barnaby book and another one, about the election and the talking dog (Mr. O'Malley gets elected to Congress in this one and it's really the funniest episode in the whole works) is coming out soon, which I'll get. I remember and love that Perelman story you talked about, and also recall the Benchley one, thinking it somewhat, but not much funnier than you said. I agree with you about PM. I think all leftist or rather, muck-raking journalism or any creative endeavor like that, like leftist plays, are terribly dull and soporific. I guess it's because we know the theory and don't have to be belabored further with endless facts relating to the sore spots, not to mention decadence, of our civilization. Even my non-cerebral brother (yes, I think that he's beautiful and charming and talented) was moved out of his usual apathy by one of those little In Facts by Seldes. He wrote a ranting letter

about the stupidity and rapaciousness of it all recently, saying he was enclosing one in case I never had seen a copy. Then he forgot to enclose it, the dope.

But I always was bored silly at union meetings and never would go to the leftist Rep group plays, and sometimes I doubt some of the capabilities of Joan, being able to put up with that crap year after year. I'm sure Marx never expected such a welter of silliness and stupidity to follow his great cerebrations. Well, actually even a lot of the theoretical stuff in the social sciences, right or left, is pretty stupid and almost always badly written. Veblen is the only American I can think of offhand who had something to say, and said it well, about the contemporary social or rather economic scene. I guess that's rather a cavalier judgement. Forgive me -- I'm in a hurry to get to those damned eggs. I'll end this part of my Easter weekend letter to you now -- more later. I love you beyond all reason and wish I never had anything to do except write you and occasionally chuck Kathy under the chin because she is her father's daughter.

Always with love --

Jill

P.S. This is edited on the Monday after Easter. We went up north yesterday & Mom is here now. More later.

Love love love

***JILL TO AL APRIL 10, 1944 V-MAIL***

Darling --

I've dispatched Kathy's "Studio" pictures to you via Mom, who will have them weighed in so they can go air mail in the letter I sent. I don't suppose you'll much admire the mounting, as it was the best thing we could think of offhand, and the idea was to get them off to you as fast as possible. Darling, if you would like a

folder in leather or some other light durable and attractive material, I have taken measurements of both pictures and will send it to you. If you would prefer to keep them as is until I get a 3 1/2 by 5 picture of myself and then send a folder, let it ride that way. Then you can have Kathy on one side and me on the other. I think Field's sells them. If this size is not OK please say so too. Irmie is coming Thursday and then I'll have time to have my own picture taken. I guess that you, like me, will prefer the laughing one to the one on her stomach. I only had that one on her stomach made so you could see it. Actually it doesn't look very much like her, except the eyes and eyebrows, because of the camera angle elongating the head. Of myself I'll just have a head and shoulders made. No naked sprawls on bear rugs, though I'm sure it might titillate some.

Let me see, yesterday was Easter, Beautiful Easter. Rain rained, gales blew, your brothers practiced incessantly, but Kathy and I were there with diapers on. We left early in the morning, about 9:30, took trolley, IC and cab from Randolph St. As I predicted in my letter to you Saturday, Kathy weathered it fine, napping in public conveyances, smiling for the family, taking her food like a trooper. But I was bushed. I did manage a walk to the lake with Steinbrecher, on whom I paid a call with Cooney. His family are well, except for an aunt that died, and always ask for you. Bill is so funny and complex. I never can figure him out. Sometimes I like him and sometimes I don't. I thought he was very domineering but he said, in an amazing lack of reticence for Bill, that the reason he and Gert didn't work out was because she needed a man to dominate her. Search me. I do know the guy she was going with before he went over was a very dull tool. It was a nice walk though in mist and wind. We ate an enormous dinner, just the family because Bill had to eat elsewhere, two kinds of meat, dandelion greens which Mom and Dad claim great therapeutic value for. Whenever people start making claims like that, I always think they are veiled endorsements of whatever it is as laxatives, and then I get nervous on account of this chronic stuff I have from drinking lake water or being nervous, I don't know which. I wish they'd

come right out and say, this is a laxative, so I'll know not to eat it. Then everybody drowsed except Kathy, who picked that time to annoy me who was trying to sleep on her bed. She pulled my hair and finally yelled in my ear. Cooney was on the bed too and was so annoyed he left. The boys kept practicing on and off all day thought I pleaded with them not to because it curdled Kathy's milk. Vic had on a pair of pants that did likewise. I had to keep begging him to stay on the windward side of Kathy while I was feeding her because the pants kept distracting her. Everybody was amused by her but nobody bounced her around. Ed made a stab at feeding her but she cried. She is pretty sensitive about that -- she likes to be held a certain way I guess, or have the bottle likewise. But nobody made like a stagecoach around corners, viz. your hair-raising stories of child care. In a way I think it would be nice to bring up a child around noisy boys but on the other hand I think it would make both baby and mother a little nervous, though on the whole relieving the monotony of life and putting the infant in its proper place, i.e., not the center of things the way she is now. On the other hand, undoubtedly she is a better-organized and quieter child just because she is the center of things and can have every wish fulfilled before she gets into a crying jag. Search me. I guess the idea setup is daddy home but everything for the baby the first six months, then things adjusted a little to the adult's way of life later on. I know she's been terribly sleepy all day today and I have difficulty getting her up for feedings. I just arose from a nap with a bad taste in my mouth and a worse conscience. You know, I was supposed to work at the polls tomorrow. Oh why do I always do things like this. I decided I wouldn't and called Mr. Duffy the precinct captain (Democratic) about it and told him the baby was sick. Poor Mr. Duffy now has to find another clerk. It is my worst vice I know, my utter undependability when it comes to jobs. I guess it's because I never needed money very badly. Beat me if you will. But god, the thought of working from quarter of six in the morning until late at night, even if Mom would take care of the baby, suddenly appalled me, especially since I have been feeling rather tired lately. Your impetigo has been itching me so, I can't sleep a wink. So Mom came back with me last

night instead and left this afternoon. I really needed her help getting home. Rain rain everywhere, no cabs, people drunk as lords in the streetcars, little boys throwing popcorn around, it was awful. Our tender bud slept but heavens knows the impressions or germs she has stored away. Right now she is complaining -- hungry again. But she just ate, almost. Anyway, I gave her the bottle and some cereal and she spit up because she doesn't like cereal -- and doesn't have coffee to wash it down, like you. I got your letter of March 23 today, the one written on note cards. Isn't that *This is My Best* a stinker? Don't you remember my lugging it around to El Paso, California and all over? I hated it but didn't have the heart to throw it away. I think I finally gave it to June King and she probably hates me for it. What are you doing, reading, the *Reader's Digest*? Another stinker. I mean the magazine, not you. You are wonderful and you need never think that I miss all the pleasant nuances of the man-woman relationship so much that I won't wait to get it from you. Though I realize it may be a long time yet and a grim realization it is, I have all the austere single-mindedness of a virgin about waiting -- the true virgin I mean -- not like the ones I used to know at school. It's sort of like being a nun -- dedicated to Christ and quite happy about it. It's a fine feeling, which can't happen very often in the lives of many people. You get very sure about what you want and are willing to wait for it, with as much patience as the situation allows -- the situation of wanting someone so terribly you could almost burst. But everything conspires to keep my eye on the ball, so to speak -- the memory of you, daily reinforced by pictures and letters; your child, who is so much like you in so many ways. It's a fact -- we can't miss. I even have fantasies of us at seventy-five, stumbling about in some pleasant country place, with grandchildren at our feet and hot toddies at our elbows, since it seems that everybody who lives that long attributes it to drinking a quart of something a day, be it goat's milk or whiskey.

Mom sends you her love -- I just talked to her on the phone. Incidentally, the subject of Ed's going into the Navy came up at dinner yesterday. Ed said he didn't want to enlist, after I had

presented to him your suggestions and arguments in favor of it. So I guess that's that. He didn't give any reasons and I didn't press him. Maybe Buss's civilian propaganda got there first, maybe he has some reasons of his own.

The inevitable Rosina and Willie showed up last night while I was there, bringing Kathy a pair of shoes she will never wear and me a handsome cookbook (Rosina gets them wholesale). I really do enjoy the cookbook though. You know how batty I am on the subject. I wish people would stop giving Kathy baby shoes. They are the kind the baby can't wear when it starts walking because the soles are like bedroom slippers, and I think it's silly to put shoes on somebody who can't walk, don't you?

I just did about three days' worth of dishes, or so it appeared, and now I think I ought to take a bath. Now that you're out of the hospital you won't be able to take so many showers, will you? Lucky you. I'm getting around to your way of thinking, anyway, the way you thought when you were a civilian, i.e., that it's a waste of time keeping clean unless it can be a social occasion. Didn't we used to have fun in the john though? I was always trying to follow you in, even when my presence was obviously superfluous. There's something so cozy about a bathroom though; it's simply irresistible to me. The bathroom here isn't as big as the one at 5479 although the tub is as large. There's not quite enough space here to flick a big wet towel. When we have our own house let's have a nice big, but not barny, john and a big kitchen, with comfortable rocking chairs, bookshelves, ironing boards that are easy to get at so we won't have arguments over who is going to iron whose pants, lots of shelf space for food, tables for food and jigsaw puzzles and one self-drying table where a person can sit down and write without getting the paper all wet. I think it's a lot nicer to have a big pretty kitchen where everybody can eat and play and keep the cook company than a lot of nasty little rooms segmented off as pantries, dining rooms etc., don't yo? Gosh, I've been writing a long time. Kathy's awake again and playing with her beads. First she cries, and then she sleeps and then she's playful. That's life in the big city for you, as Vic would say.

All my love, dearest -- Jill

**AL TO JILL APRIL 10, 1944 V-MAIL**

Dearest,

Last night, I did my first extra-curricular letter writing in weeks, a letter to Borgese, but so contained am I in you that no sooner had I written it than I was sorry I hadn't written it to you. I am in a harmful state of mind where I feel that a thought on anyone save you is a thought wasted. That is, of course, because I want so much to be able to be with you. But I guess we can make out the remaining days all right. It will be a great joy to set eyes on you, not to mention hands. I don't know whether I would like to spend our first evening together at the best restaurant in town or broiling the biggest steak obtainable in the kitchen together. At the moment I am famished and can hardly wait to get at my spam. I'll be glad to resume the insular life again, even on a different island; the food is generally better.

I just met Rathbun on the street, a nice-looking girl on his arm. He is enjoying himself beyond words in Italy and is progressing rapidly in his opera singing. L'Amour has slimmed his waist considerably. He hasn't exactly broken down under his huge responsibilities. There are lots of nice-looking women in these parts, despite the handicaps of diet and lack of beauty aids under which they work. The hordes of soldiers keep up a running whistle. Certainly it is from the non-British elements in the US population that Hollywood draws its types. So commented Heycock a long time ago. On Sundays and feast days like Easter the population looks entirely different. Everyone who can scrape up a suit or whole dress wears it. Even most of the dirty street urchins seem to be captured by their families and washed on Easter. That seems to sober them down for days.

I finally sent off your letters this morning first class mail and I feel pretty good about it. I haven't gotten those candy bars and

cigars yet nor the magazines but I hope that they reach me ultimately. I shall shoot anyone I find eating a suspicious-looking chocolate bar.

I had better go eat now. Take care of yourself, Jill, and I'll be very nice to you when I get home, feeding the baby, broiling the steak and making real spaghetti. I haven't had a really good dish of spaghetti in months, and not even then. Ah, for one of your sauces, made without my interference.

All my love, as always. A kiss to Kathy.

Al

I wish I could draw pictures like you in order to adorn this space. Such an artiste!

***JILL TO AL APRIL 11, 1944***

Darling --

Goodie goodie, two letters from you today, the 28th and 29th, which I just finished re-reading because when I got them this morning I had to swish through them and then downtown for my apparently monthly orgy of throwing your dough away.

And yesterday came that lovely lovely German first-aid kit, emitting a charming aura of formaldehyde and holding rare promise of being the long-distance booby-trap of all time. If you think I am going to open up any one of those neat brown packages before you come home with a contingent of sappers to help me, you think me a dopier dope than I am. Virginia came down and we examined the little bundles with shuddering interest while she translated for me. The upshot of it all was that I chloroformed Kathy briefly and sat down and wrote the following poem, which I dedicate to you with much love and no harm intended.

LITANY TO BE SUNG ON RECEIPT OF A CAPTURED



GERMAN FIRST-AID KIT THE MORNING THE BABY BROKE  
THE LAST BOTTLE OF FORMULA AND THE TOILET RAN  
OVER.\* [*Footnote: \*which is why I didn't write yesterday. It took  
me nearly the whole day to dehydrate & Sanitize the joint.*]

I'd rather have caries,  
A rash from strawberries  
Or arbitrate Montgomery Ward  
Than receive the attentions  
The lovely inventions  
Of my darling soldier abroad.

CHORUS:

Three thousand miles between us  
Is spitting distance to Al  
Occidental potions  
Oriental notions  
GI notions  
Sexy French devotions  
All come from my pal.

I get pen and ink sketches  
The creative itches  
Of a barber he once knew in Bari.  
He sends me with labor  
The blood-stained sabre  
Of a Jap who made Hara-Kiri.  
The postman rings twice

(Maybe this time it's nice)  
And dumps at my feet a neat bundle.  
It contains carbines and cooties,  
Tinned Spam and patooties  
And a sleeping bag in which we may trundle.

The afternoon mail  
Brings a still sadder tale  
In an interesting package of loot.  
Al sends me the boiler  
Of a sunken French oiler  
And throws in the captain to boot.

I am doing a penance  
Because two lieutenants  
Decided to write of the war.  
Al sent me their scrivenings  
Now I spent afts. and evenings  
With my foot in a publisher's door.

In the calm of the morning  
Comes a box writ with "Warning!"  
"If the PM inspects he's a sap."  
I wince when I say it,  
But tell me, I pray it,  
Is it love or a booby trap?

Our mutual passion  
Contriveth to fashion  
A bower where magpies might thrive.  
But a change would be handy  
So if postage is handy  
Send yourself and Chanel No. 5

Chorus to be sung at odd intervals.

But really, darling, keep sending Everything. And you can have fifty percent of the royalties too.

Gosh no, neither Mom or I got Easter presents for you. I got a nice and far too expensive picture folder for you today, which I'll send with my pictures when they are finished Saturday. I also bought a dress (blue cotton, woven by starving Mexican peons, guaranteed), an unpainted wooden chest of drawers (it's obvious why we need more drawer space here), three pairs of pink pants and a bathing suit that must be seen to be believed. The bathing suits this year all are cotton and have obnoxious figure-concealing ruffles, so when I chanced upon this grim grey wool number I snatched it up. It looks like a tank YMCA suit and feels nice and springy like one. The only difference is that it's a Vogue original and probably the only one of its kind in existence, except for the one size larger that they seemed to have difficulty selling and was so expensive that I shall defer telling you the price until you see me in it. It sounds horrible but it really is terribly smart and looks just the way I would look if I weren't wearing a suit at all. But I fell in love with the sheer eccentricity of it and figure that one vast extravagance like this will keep my morale up for weeks. The dress wasn't expensive - - 12.95 -- and is very Sweet and Practical.

I was interested in your critique of those who criticize the modification of the Atlantic Charter. You know, the people who do that here are really the isolationists -- the Hearst McCormick

boys. At least I haven't heard anybody else take that line of attack but then I don't get to speak to many people.

I left Kathy with Virginia while I went downtown today and she was a very good girl, I am pleased to relate. She likes to play with paper now so was very happy to see me come in with all those bundles. And this morning I left her with the envelopes your letters came in and she liked them, i.e., chewed them, too. We have a secret corner now we retire to when I am holding her for a burp. Mom gave me a little anchor with a non-functioning thermometer attached, souvenir of the New York World's Fair, and I have it hanging from a wall light fixture. Kathy espied it one day and started to laugh at it, so now when I burp her I always carry her to that corner of the room, where she makes passes at it and bounces it against the wall with great delight. It's really amazing to watch the evolution of the infant. Only a couple of months ago she just lay around and smiled, and now she can play with things and use her hands quite well and even join in little games, like me hiding and suddenly pouncing on her. She likes that very well. I just know she's terribly clever because I don't remember Paul or Joe doing any of these things when they were her age. And it isn't just because I was a stranger to them because Kathy will act this way with anybody after a few minutes. This morning I rather gave her a start by putting on a hat. She stared at me for a while, trying to make up her mind whether to cry or not, I suspect. But then I picked her up to bring her up to Virginia's and she got reconciled to the idea of Momma looking odd. God, darling, I wish you could see her. She's such a little person now, not a little Al or a little Jill, but Kathy. Although I still identify you two very strongly, even to the point of getting mad at you when she won't take her cereal and I'm in a hurry. It's all very well for you to cater to her tastes and distastes trans-Atlantically. You don't have to answer to a stern pediatrician for your child's defections. "But Dr. Wile, she doesn't like cereal," I wail endlessly, to which he replies endlessly, "Well, make her take it anyway." This man's world -- phooey.

I think I'll go to bed now. This isn't a very good letter -- I don't

consider my great poem a part of it because I wrote it yesterday and only copied it today. I wish you were here to take off my shoes when I limp home from the Loop and force a martini past my fevered lips and admire the brilliance of my taste and feed the baby and put me to bed. And I guess, now that you've heard the extent and audacity of my potential demands upon you, you're glad you're not.

All my love to you darling and a million kisses.

Jill

P.S. I just looked at the calendar & today is the anniversary of the day we said goodbye. You know how I discovered the date? Looked in the old checkbook & looked up the stub of the check I gave that awful hotel in Newport News. There was another way of telling, too, if I'd kept the stub. Oh I forgot -- that's a secret.

All right, I'll tell you. When I started driving up that day I got into a race with a truck, & guess what. The nicest man stopped me. He looked just like George Saunders. Yes, 15 bucks & costs. Wasn't I clever to keep the secret a whole year. What actually happened was that I was so sore about it then I didn't want to tell you & then, when I had eased my conscience by going to work that summer I forgot it.

P.P.S. The costs cost 7.50. What a racket. I told him he should use it to clean the dead dogs off the highway.

But he did look just like Geo. Saunders & had the nicest manners.

***JILL TO AL APRIL 12, 1944 V-MAIL***

My dearest darling --

I am slightly winded, having just beaten out some impromptu jive with my feet and lungs for Kathy's benefit. I'm not very good at improvising tunes and certainly can't carry any in my head,

but the results were noisy and rhythmic and amused her immensely. Like most young infants, she has a fine and startling appreciation of rhythmic noises. I am thinking of getting a couple of Count Basie records for her that we can beat out together on. Sunday the boys played one of theirs and I bobbed around with her on my shoulder and she loved it. I wish you were here to play to her -- I'm sure you would find her one of the most appreciative audiences you ever had. I also wish you were here to speak to her about her sleeping habits. Last night I put her to bed after her bottle on her stomach, for she always sleeps the night out that way, and then hopped into bed myself to read a while. I found myself feeling most peculiar, and looked up to find her reared up on her elbows, staring at me as if she were trying to hypnotize me. I kept bobbing up and pushing her down so she would sleep and she kept bobbing up and staring at me. Then she finally put her face down on the mattress so I got out of bed to tuck the covers around her sleeping form, only she wasn't sleeping, she was smiling secretly with her face half buried in the mattress. It was the damndest funny sight. Then of course she overslept this morning. I am having a devil of a time getting her into good sleeping habits, i.e., going to bed early in the evening and waking up at seven AM for her bottle. She prefers the debutante pattern of living -- staying up late and sleeping late. You'd think I'd prefer it too, but I really would rather have it the other way, now that she appears ready to go on four instead of five feedings a day. If she starts her feedings early in the morning, it means that I have the whole day to do my chores in and then can either sleep or go to the movies at night, if I can get somebody to stay with her at night. This way, as long as she has a late-night bottle, I can't very well get out as I don't like other people to feed her. She certainly is getting sassy, all the way round. She can grab at things like my fingers or the bottle with a grip of steel, and she is so interested in people now that I can't get her to feed if there is someone else in the room. She would much rather watch them than eat. She very clearly distinguishes between faces and the rest of a person's body because if somebody looks at her she grins tremendously and then, when they look away, she assumes a

rather hurt, inquiring expression, as if to say "How can they pay attention to anything else when I'm here?" So help me darling, this is the whole truth and nothing but. I really am trying to be objective about her. I got an Easter card from the Dannenbergs today with a couple of snapshots of their little daughter, who is dark and cute and seems to look like Hank a bit. Not much else happened today. I am rigging up the silk stockings you sent me for spring, taking the color out and re-dying them a lighter shade. So far it's worked very successfully on two pairs. Aren't I smart? They'll probably fall apart when I put them on. Tomorrow Irmie is coming and I'll write more then. I have to straighten the place up a bit.

All my love to you, my darling.

Always,

Jill

***AL TO JILL APRIL 12, 1944 V-MAIL***

Dearest,

I wish I had a typewriter to use in writing you. I could get more said quickly. At the moment I am seized with a fit of sneezing of which I once thought only you were capable. About six in a row. Maybe it's a sort of insular hay fever not found elsewhere, a sort of compensation for the beautiful scenery. I got your latest V-mail of March 28 in a last-minute mad manhunt for well-meaning Edmund Howard who was bent on getting it to me but was bent in the wrong direction. If you could only have witnessed my desperate race against time, you would realize how firmly they are the nuclear element in life.

I have a hell of a lot of work to do now under somewhat annoying conditions, as I don't have enough personnel or equipment. All I do have is a lot of inflated lire as a matter of fact. But the work is interesting and to it is added the novelty of

adopting my imperfect Italian to a rough dialect. Like everywhere else, I've met some people I knew elsewhere, whether it be Africa, Italy or America and others who have common friends with me. Last evening I was with some naval & mercantile officers who consumed liquor in the vast quantities only hardy seamen on shore leave can. One JG was trained at Columbia and his CO was a senior in law there when I was there. I just missed Tatem, a friend from Columbia, by four days, he told me. If you refer to my frantic correspondence of those days, I think you'll find him mentioned. They almost caught me again tonight, but duty and writing you call me even stronger. The worst offender is a sweet-voiced Norwegian of the Merchant Marine who has a luxuriant beard. Besides, for the last week, I've been having stomach cramps at about 6 AM, that responds to bicarb but it's not nice and only today did I find some bicarb to take. Like everything else that happens to me, it affects you, because I feel disgusted and ill and begin to want you by me with a painful intensity. I think if I were to have a baby, like you did, I'd die with desire for you.

Buzz wrote me and sent me a clipping of the leaflet story. He wrote about every one at home and I was very glad to hear about them from his lips. Because we grew up together, his simple evaluations of the family are very meaningful to me. He also said Kathy was a beautiful baby, which makes everyone unanimous. A rather hungry Italian, to whom I showed her picture, was struck most forcibly by her plumpness.

I guess our mail won't be so regular for a little while. I wish telepathy really worked, I have so many things to talk over with you. You should be mixed twins so I could take along your male component as a buddy. All my love to you, darling, and to Kathy.

Your devoted

Al



**JILL TO AL APRIL 14, 1944 V-MAIL**

Darling --

Ring the welkin, goggle and gape, your little wife has new typewriter type. Under the undoubtedly correct impression that you haven't been able to read my last month's letters, I finally stirred myself to get out and remember a new spool. They are cardboard now, by the way. In part this is penance for not writing you yesterday. Agie arrived all in one piece and looking far more chic than anybody who took care of me as a child should, and we were very busy and hectic. It is fine having her -- much good cheer and food and so forth -- but I long ago weighed the goods and bads of such a situation -- several times in fact, when I was confronted with the alternatives of living luxuriously with Day, well-fededly with Mom, fraternally (since we are such emancipated women) with Joan, and you know the choices I made. It still goes. In the first place, I have my own way of doing everything, or rather, my way of not doing it. Everybody who comes in here insists on doing the laundry straight off. Well, I only do the laundry once a week, in my own good time, and while frequently we must wear sweaters instead of nightshirts and nightshirts instead of sweaters, depending on what ran out first, we are very happy. But this week on Monday Mom did the laundry, turning the house inside out, and yesterday, Irmie did likewise (although I could have sent it all out to the diaper wash today at no extra cost). And as a result, I am utterly exhausted from watching all this activity and answering questions as to the location of soapflakes, clothespins, etc. Aren't I ungrateful? But truthfully, it is all a part of me you might as well know now as find out later. I hate being bothered by other people and would much rather do things myself. Or, the basic thing is my temperament -- I get awfully excited and jumpy when there are new people around the house, even though I love them to begin with, and can't sleep and feel fretful, just like Kathy when she gets overstimulated. I guess I sort of live on the edge of things all the time -- I have just enough energy to keep her and me going at a relatively peaceful level of existence, and just one more person, and/or

one more phone call a day, pushes me over the edge and then I get jumpy and this awful insomnia It's awfully hard to make people realize this about me, because I look healthy and am awfully strong and muscular, capable of prodigious feats of lifting and walking and climbing. But people confuse muscular with nervous strength, or the ability to take long hikes with the capacity for being nice to an infinite number of people. I know Mom can never figure out why I'm always so tired around her when I was able to varnish all the floors and paint all the furniture in the apartment and take long walks with Cooney all last summer. But she wears me out because we're always talking and she's always wanting to wash or sew things at a time when my unconscious daily schedule calls for reading or crapping or writing to Al. I know that as I get older I get edgier and need more peace, though at the same time I get healthier, stronger and better coordinated. I know when you come home I'm going to try to be terribly nice about doing things for you, like mending socks and stuff, because I think a wife should do those things if she's in love the way I am, but there will probably be times when there will be just one too many visits from the family, one too many drinks set out for an old Army pal, and I'll probably go into an astonishing temper tantrum. But it won't be anything personal, I assure you long in advance.

So I bought a bottle of B vitamin pills today and will probably feel better in a while. Irmie is staying until a week from this Monday. You know, she is Catholic and is all pepped up over the idea of Christening the baby so we'll probably have it done while she is here, mostly because if it involved the family descending on me, she will be here to clean up after them. She has been working like a dog as it is -- I wish to hell she would sit down and not feel she has to wait on me. I got along fine before she came so she really oughtn't to knock herself out cooking and stuff. She was telling me all sorts of gossip about the family -- things a little kid wouldn't pick up but a family retainer would. Like Day's long-standing love life with Walter and stuff like that. And the awful nurse I had before I was two, when Irmie came, who slapped me around all the time. I listened to that with

horror. This woman used to slap my hands all the time when I was just a little baby. I probably accounts for my strong bent against authority. Even Irmie was horrified. More than ever am I convinced that I would never have a nurse for my children. It's a wonder I turned out as well as I did, and can only thank a just and compensating deity for digging up you and Kathy.

I finally got the mysterious second page of your three-part V-mail of March 21st yesterday. The third page had something about Eddy on it and I was dying to know what glimmers of wit and wisdom the second page held for our favorite little brother. But it turned out to be an Eddy Pinacnik or whatever his name was of Houston, Texas, who gave you some Camels. Many thanks also, Eddy, from a devoted wife who does not send her husband Camels. Anyway, I think they are a stinky cigarette.

Kathy has been spitting up a lot the last two days, which adds to my small burden of woe. I called the doctor and he suggested I try a weaker formula, which I will. I feel so sorry for the doctor I hate to call him. He's really awfully busy. All the civilian doctors are.

I got a swell long letter from Ann yesterday, full of useful and kindly baby advice. I am really awfully sorry I ever got mad at her last year because now I know what she was up against. A person really isn't selfish because they want to spend all their time with their child and husband. If you want to do a good job on the former and really love the latter, there just isn't any time left over, and the rest of the world anyway pales in comparison with the small helpless sprite entrusted to one's care.

I had to stop writing for a while to perform numerous functions and return to this, struck by the beauty and brilliance of the typing. Such mistakes as I make now I have a new excuse for -- a sore index finger, left hand. I don't know what it's from. Not thumbsucking, anyway. Mom and Irmie are on the phone now, plotting against my peace of mind no doubt. Something about the Christening, I guess.

Well, we have each other, don't we? I really do love you. In big black type, I LOVE YOU.

Your Jill

**AL TO JILL APRIL 15, 1944 V-MAIL**

Jill, my darling -

It was nicer to think of you than to write you yesterday, especially since I wasn't feeling in top form. I'm still waiting for that morning sickness to pass away, though the bicarb works all right. I've been a little too tired from working to sleep my usual deep slumber too the last couple of nights. And, finally I must take malaria tablets and they sicken me so that I doubt whether I shall take any more. As long as I watch my netting and my ankles, there isn't much danger of being bit. I thought last summer would be my last of malaria danger, but here we are again, approaching another season of it. I hope profoundly that we'll be far away from such areas by the time the summer is on its way. I suppose we must admit that we won't see each other this spring, even though that be our fondest hope. I'm not afraid of waiting longer. I can never love anyone else or have the remotest desire to do so. All I want is you. So I hate to wait and work without you. And any spring is a hellish thing without you. Or perhaps in reality you are my spring. For even when your teeth chatter and your face is so red when we walk arm in arm in the winter, I can't really feel badly about the cold. I enjoy you too much for that. I love you too much for winter.

I saw a 4F movie two nights ago with a Norwegian sailor and an American lieutenant. A worse picture couldn't have been gurgled out by Kathy in the space of a day. Frank Sinatra starred in it and it was called Higher & Higher though we sank lower and lower in our seats. Sinatra is a good singer, of course, and likeable enough. Most of the cast was hideous. Lots of us were curious about him, having pondered the mysteries of the orgies back home over his singing. He first

broke into the film singing, and GI cries went up from the audience, high-pitched squeals, an ecstatic cry of "I can't stand it!" and everyone had a good laugh.

I got two messages from Jerry the last couple of days from people who had seen him of late. He is doing well. Perhaps I'll be able to see him next month for an evening.

Tell me when I can begin to write Kathy love letters too. I'm certainly in a hopeless position as far as expressing my feelings towards her are concerned. Will I be the first man to kiss her actually, or has some wise guy sneaked in a quick one? Of course, I realize that she won't wait for me forever, but it shouldn't be long now.

As always, your loving Al XXX



Camera-shy officers of D-Section snapped by Al's little camera as they gather for a twilight whiskey: l to r: Greenlees, Edmund Howard, Robertson, Hadfield, Denham.

*End of April (first of two parts) 1944 letters*

