

JILL TO AL JUNE 1, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

I feel very virtuous, having resigned momentarily from the lake front social set (it was cloudy anyway today) to do a huge wash, polish the furniture, clean the woodwork, mop the floors and otherwise conduct myself like a busy little hausfrau. The only difference between me and that benighted prototype is the speed and efficiency with which I conduct those operations, i.e., I'm speedy and inefficient. Somebody's maid was supposed to come in today but to my great relief she didn't show up so I did it myself. I still think it is more trouble to butter up to a poor cleaning woman than to do it myself, but periodically I contract to get one, with no results, fortunately. But goodness I don't know why I have so much laundry every week. I don't know what I'd do if I had a bigger family. And there is always so much tension involved in doing the stuff in the community washing machine, for no matter how hard I try I invariably flood the joint or the puddles detach themselves and start a slow, yoga-like rise to the ceiling, or I knock somebody else's wash down or some of my home-dyed yard goods slowly relinquish their coloring, staining Ridgewood Court attractive shades of red and blue. And then the neighbors complain or the janitor chides me gently, and he is a man so obnoxious that his love is as hard to bear as his hate. Oh, I have a genuine A number one enemy in the building, the German refugee doctor's wife who lives above me. She doesn't like my noise, which consists of the radio loudly playing at all hours -- I'm sure I never would have thought of playing the radio loud or otherwise before I moved under her -- and I don't like her son's clarinet, and while we have never had words besides my asking her sweetly one day who she was giving hell out of the window that morning, she obviously regards me as being one of the worst elements in American life, an idea that pleases me immensely. Ah, what fun I have on Ridgewood Court and what a bore it must be for you, listening to this. I promise you that when you come home I'll never regale you with neighborhood gossip.

The new father Oliver came over bright and early this morning with a bottle of rum, which I politely refused to share. Diane apparently had a comparatively easy time of it, more luck to her. She is going to have quite a lot on her hands when she gets home -- Oliver is such a big baby and absolutely unsuited for fatherhood or for anything else. They haven't even gotten some kind of help lined up yet and I have a horrible feeling that I am going to be called on to aid and abet them -- and I do so loathe the Good Samaritan role. Oh, I just let the matter of paying them for the lie detector test slide into the oblivion of silence. I really hadn't sanctioned it any way to speak of.

I got a letter from Day today. Everybody is well and she sends her love to you. My cousin's husband in the Coast Guard is back in town again. She has had more damn luck. I am consumed with envy every time I hear of anybody coming back to anyone, not to mention the quantity of civilians in this area. Damn it, here we are loving each other more than any of these people possibly could, yet separated by thirteen months and thousands of miles. Dam it I say again. But all the kisses to you darling I haven't been able to give this past year and all my love.

Jill

AL TO JILL JUNE 1, 1944 (A) V-MAIL

Dearest,

Here it is June already and you are not even a bride, even though a mother. The last day or so has meant more waiting than anything else for me. I've fortunately had your New Yorkers plus a copy of Time of May 15 that Duke gave me to help while away lazy hours. I went swimming yesterday afternoon with "Lil Abner" Joachim and enjoyed myself no end. The water was almost too cool at first but rapidly became perfect. The sun was just right and I'm sure had some therapeutic effects on the rash of flea bites for which I'll never forgive Dabinette. I achieved some measure of revenge by escaping from his camp with a

wine bottle full of his gin, a loss I am sure will strike him to the marrow. Of course Duke and George Rehm have already gotten the bottle down to pint size. And Raynor dropped by yesterday, his nerves all ajangles from waiting around, and soothed himself with a good nip.

I heard a fine dance band under a tent in the field yesterday. They are from one of the divisions. It's quite a sensation to see them stripped to the waist and playing so furiously, sending themselves and the hangers-on like myself clear back to America. I can't understand why people get enthusiastic about books like the one by Adams on The American that stop on some distant jurist and forget something like the music which is a more integral part of the ordinary American's life than many worthy theories. If a man from Mars were to read such a book and then be thrown into the company of Americans he could never be convinced that he was dealing with the same people. I should add that a book like Middletown is twice as good an analysis of the American character than Adam's book, solely because it includes the movies, dance, music and the automobile. Nor has anyone written anything about the peculiar walk and gestures that are American. One need only look at an American throwing a baseball and then at one of our MP's directing traffic to see the effects of the national pastime.

I haven't received a letter from you in several days, which should mean that better days are coming. I wrote Ed and Vic a letter yesterday. Is Ed coming to stay with you or has he changed his mind about the University? I wish I could stay with you instead. I probably wouldn't be very useful but at least I could give my interested comments on any clothing you acquire from the prone position, while sipping rare American drinks. How much do you weigh now? Are you actually underweight as you said recently? If you become a mere shadow, I could probably get leave to come home to spoon-feed you, which is probably all you need -- someone to take interest in your meals, if only from the selfish standpoint of getting enough himself. Seriously though, I feel I could do a splendid job of making you fat and happy, just as you're doing now with Kathy. I could also

turn you over in the sun at intervals, a privilege that shouldn't only be accorded to babies but also to grown, beautiful women.

Many kisses to you both.

All my love,

Al

AL TO JILL JUNE 1, 1944 (B)

Jill darling,

I have my candle lit and should be able to get off a letter. Several of your minor masterpieces came today, together with a letter from Dad, an Alumni Bulletin, and a report of the year by the Political Science Department. The last was a little ado about nothing. The department which used to be the best in the country drew a complete blank as far as I can see. Hardly a faculty or a student body remains. I can't possibly imagine myself as being around there at times like these and therefore my opinion of the people who are around is rather low, except for Wright and Kerwin, of course. It's a wonder that they haven't had any classes at the U. I'm sure they could do a worthy job of waking some of the people who are embroiled through one reason or another in that organization. Political science could stand a thorough house-cleaning in practically every university in the country after the war. And that is not a new idea of mine produced over here, as you undoubtedly remember. And how you do remember things.

The incident of the blossoming petunias on 57th Street is not exactly the sort of thing that remains forever brimming on the level of one's conscious memory and yet you produced it. Surely, I was glad to have them bloom while you were gone. Perhaps then you might have been missing me a little more, I thought. Every slight advantage helps in the desperate game of love. All the things I have done in my life to save you from

careerism, travel, useless studies, bad jobs, and other men. And to the end result of being torn away from you afterwards for over a year. It would drive a less-determined person crazy. But I must admit your sportsmanship. As soon as I was no longer capable of getting around problems, you no longer presented me with any. What a lovely nice girl you are. No wonder I love you so much.

I can't say the same for the fleas that infest me. I am a tolerant man. I deny to no living thing its right to a living. Not even an honest parasite. But when it denies to me the right to sleep at night, comes the counter-attack. I attacked them with tooth and nail today, killing at least five (I didn't think there were that many). I put them through fiendish tortures, too, blast them, ending with roasting them on the end of a match stick. I am sorry to reveal to you this bestial side of me, but you will undoubtedly realize the justice of my position. I want sufficient time to dream of you.

Dad wrote about Ed coming out of the Navy tests for flying cadets well, and asked what I thought of it. I am not sure. I don't know what Ed's interests are tending towards these days. I am more than half-inclined to urge him to enlist in the program, and unless he is definitely hating to enter the service so young, shall urge him to do so. My only fear of anyone going into the Air Corps is that he becomes entirely ignorant of the rest of the world.

Dad also wrote that Buzz has entered a quartet in a composer's contest. At least, I think the word was "quartet". It would be very funny if he should win the prize or honorable mention. So out of keeping with the grim times, you might say. Musical theory is too much like mathematics for me. Instead of memorizing the formulas I waste my time on the "Why?" instead of the "what" and come out of it with nothing. The same goes for language study and law. Even in speaking Italian, I can express myself well-enough on a limited vocabulary and lose patience with learning new words. Instead of trying to remember the name of a strawberry, I manage to describe to someone what I mean

and then promptly forget the word when it is told me. I have a very lazy memory on the specific side; I remember a concept, a picture, or a syndrome and let it go at that.

While ogling the ads in one of the mags, I saw a Peck and Peck sweater, and suddenly I wondered if you had ever gotten the one I ordered for you at Christmas time. I vaguely recall something you said about it, but perhaps ought to ask about it again. If you really want to impress me forcibly with your receipt of it, you might send me a sweater-girl picture. I could never forget it then. You still have to acknowledge getting all the gloves, the letters and the candy, flowers, and wool animal for Kathy, not to mention the package I sent off the other day with the wooden boxes and Sardinian doll.

I can imagine that Kathy must be beautiful indeed with all the suntan she is acquiring, and the very ideal environment you must be providing for her. You are just the person to conduct a baby through the trials of infancy. When I think of how I might be tearing my hair and gnashing my teeth at this distance because of improper handling of her and blunderings, I realize how fortunate I am. The corollary is, too, that I must love you and trust you very much to be as little worried about her development as I am. I don't think I ever doubted for an instant, from the time I first met you, that you would be a fine mother.

After being in my present location for several days, I noticed that my New Yorkers were thinning out. Finally, through various informers who come up from the depths every now and then, I obtained information which led me to a deep, dark cave to a recess from which fiendish chuckles were heard to emanate from time to time. There I found Sgt. Harrari, né of Hollywood, gloating over a copy by light of a candle. I had no idea he was anywhere in the neighborhood, a fact which may enlighten you on the fantastic world we live in. Duke tells me he never comes up for air. But then Duke wouldn't know. He's always sleeping, on the pretext that the air raids keep him awake at night.

The country around here would be a great vacation land for us,

considered solely on the basis of beach, sea, and sun. I can't call anyplace or anything a vacation without you, though. They can only make life a somewhat mitigated evil.

Many kisses from your

Al

MARK Clark need not march through Rome. He is intent upon it, though. He is especially eager to do so quickly, because he knows a secret: that world headlines and radios on June 6, just two days off, would scream "Landings in France!" It is a costly useless unmilitary gimmick, another victory handed the Germans: they escape around Rome and out of Rome, half-heartedly pursued, actually crossing a couple of Tiber bridges farther North than the innumerable Allied planes had not hit, and uniting thus their dispersed Armies.

As for the Liberation of Rome, it is a great party which the Lieutenant desires as badly as his vainglorious General. Since he has little idea of the General's tactics, he cannot be blamed; in fact, he has a real job to do in Rome, "D Section" and all of that.

The night before the Liberation of Rome finds the Lieutenant in a field outside the city with two men. No one has gotten in yet, but the rumor is that American troops will snatch the honor, General Clark being so insistent upon it. You sense that there are great armies breathing somewhere nearby, but just here it is fairly quiet. It is remarkable how you can step aside from the Allies' 4000 aircraft, 1900 tanks, 10,000 cannon, 20,000 trucks, 23 divisions, 67,000 riflemen of 182 battalions, a total of 675,000 men grousing about the center of Italy. Not to mention their scanty match, the German forces, fielding one-tenth the number of tanks, aircraft, cannon, one-twentieth the ammunition, one-twentieth the trucks, one-third the riflemen, one-third the soldiers, practically all of these passing around and through Rome at the moment. It has been a bloody battle for the small units, the fifty fiery points of contact of the past ten days, where half those engaged become casualties. This has been the "real" war.

Another set of casualties has randomly befallen mostly Germans from long-range artillery and dive-bombers. The Allied forces, so huge and potentially mobile, are tripping over themselves, while the Germans are plodding up the roads ahead by whatever means can be found, under constant aircraft attack. There seems to be no way the jammed-up British can catch up with them. Or the French, who have been side-tracked. Or the Americans, who are enticed into the Liberation of Rome at the price of letting the enemy disengage and escape.

There are two main roads and several minor ones. They all lead to Rome, of course. Alfred chooses Highway #7. Darkness. Rumor has it that a German rearguard with Panthers and Panzerfausts and Nebelwerfers and Schmauzers are blocking the road ahead. Unlikely... Still, who would want to get into Rome in the middle of night? Nothing would be open. He finds a small stone cabin littered with electrical junk and they occupy it, possibly for sleeping, anyhow for refuge in the event of bombing or a smashing runover by one of the friendly tanks or half-tracks lumbering about.

The night continues quiet. Then voices. He hears voices in what sounds like German. He calls halt in three languages, moving his position with each translation, then fires a couple of shots unenthusiastically in their general direction. Amicide, enemy ..who knows. A plane comes over and drops a couple of bombs at a safe distance. Amicidal? Or enemy? Hell will freeze over before the "Stars and Stripes" or "Union Jack" mentions the U.S. P-40's that have just knocked out a hundred Americans of that Third Division Column at Valmonte, or the cooperative effort by German and American artillery to decimate yet another U.S. infantry battalion, or the repeated strafing of the First Armored Division by friendlies, or the U.S. strafing of the French at the very gates of Rome.

A figure, American by silhouette, moves over from the road. "What the fuck you shooting at, you want to catch enemy fire?" Argument ensues. Enemy is looking to escape, not fight! Civilians.. they don't count much. (There is a contradiction in Tactical Doctrine: you find the enemy by making him open fire and then call down your pieces upon him; but, don't give your position away. The answer: fire,

then move; nice trick if you can manage it; apropos, don't step on a mine. Corollary: if you don't open fire, you are useless. Fact is, a lot of soldiers are continuously useless unless forced to fire.) Anyhow, there is no room at the inn for this dark character; let him fuck off into the night; he doesn't, though; he curls up nearby. The Lieutenant and his two men lay in the hut. Then the Lieutenant moves out to several yards away from the hut and sleeps better; he didn't want to be grenaded through the window of this nutshell.

At dawn they climb into their jeep and join the stream of vehicles that is converging from all directions to enter the city. The Romans are up, dressed in their finest, and out on the street, a million of them. The streets become crowded. Dusty cloth, canvas, metal are polished by the pressing people. They climb up on the vehicles shouting and cheering. Kids ride cannon barrels. Out of the crowd, a young woman and her friends fix themselves upon the Lieutenant. This will be Bianca Moffa, a slant-eyed, dark-haired Neapolitan beauty, with the figure of a Minoan bull-dancer. A blonde slender man with her, he will be her husband, Paolo. Someone else, too, Bruno Leonardi. "*Su!*" says the American, with an inviting smile, and they climb into the back and upon the hood. They direct him to their elegant modern apartment building. The archetypical scenario: all the insignia of the Liberation surround him, human and material. The dream of the soldier: to capture and be captivated by the Eternal City.

JILL TO AL JUNE 2, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

Oh what a day. It's been at least ninety I'm sure and I had to pick this day of all days to visit Joan. She had just come off the 11-to-7 but wanted to see me anyway and we spent the whole day trying to keep each other awake, with her finally succumbing and me feeding Mike, Vesta, Kathy and myself all at the same time virtually. It reminded me of that ancient dirty joke about the man on the Ford assembly line, which I shall not pause to tell you here. Somewhere in all this confusion I bought a dress in a local fairly good store -- on the way over to the IC

this morning. It's a Lans model, bare shoulders and back and very fetching. I'll send you a picture.

Kathy and I got back just a little while ago, around 8:30 and she just got to sleep thank goodness. She really had the nicest day of any one of us, making sexy eyes at Mike. It really was cute to see the two of them together. Mike was cordial, restrained and gentle, the perfect little host, and Kathy was exuberant, ecstatic to see a real baby and kept reaching out at him, scratching the poor little fellow to bits. But he took it calmly and the only advance he made was to hold her foot absent-mindedly. I think he's going to be the kind of man who plays footsies under the table. He really is a sweet little boy, with a kind little smile and very easy to feed and handle. Joan chaffs me for having a little colored baby, Kathy is so dark next to him and all the other children. Everybody in the streetcar and IC remarked on her tan. Shall I bring you up to date on her appearance? Well, in the first place, it's an acknowledged fact she's a perfect physical specimen. Honestly, I can't think of a single thing that's wrong with her face, head shape or body. Her eyes still aren't quite brown, rather a deep slate color with a brown ring right around the pupils. Her nose turns up and is rather broad at the base, rather like yours than mine. Her lips are full, her ears are small and flat and her teeth are toothless. Oh, Mike's ahead of her on that. He's cut two little bottom teeth already. Oh, I read in Dr. Bundeson's baby book, which the druggist gave me, that thumb-sucking has no effect of physical structure the first couple of years, to set your mind at ease, since our Kathy is very fond of her thumb. I think if she had been breast-fed all along she might not crave it so, but that's just a hypothesis. You know, I was looking at myself today in the mirror and it's no surprise to me that she's such a great healthy chunk, since I certainly look robust though for a long time, particularly during adolescence, people had an idea I was on the frail side. Maybe my constitution has changed since pregnancy -- it may well have, since I am no longer the slightest bit anemic which I always was before. But I'm definitely strapping now, though not at all fat. I weigh about 123, my usual weight when I'm feeling

well but I'm about an inch bigger all the way around, chest, waist and hips. I think we both are very durable types -- I hope so, since we have a lot scheduled for the next fifty years or so, specifically making up for all the tangible evidences of love we've missed the last year. And it never fails -- every time I pass the 63rd St. platform I weep, for the memories of all the goodbyes we said there. I don't know what I'd do if I couldn't come home and write to you at night, darling. It's the one thing that dulls the pain which occasionally mounts beyond all reason. I never think of my letters to you being a duty I have to perform, a kind of sop to throw at you. I hope that their indirect effects are to make you always as happy reading them as I am to write them, but primarily they are the thing I have to keep you alive and close to me. Otherwise the distance and time between us would be insurmountable. As it is, this year hasn't seemed so long, when you think of what we've gone through apart. It hasn't really separated us in any way that would be detrimental to our love, although it's been painful and full of too damn many tears and cuss words. But I know now that the only life I ever want is to make you happy and have a lot of kids, and God knows that's more than many people ever find out in one lifetime.

Speaking of kids, this is the next day already and the house is teeming with them. They keep rushing around, outside where Kathy is to read her a particularly succulent tidbit from their comic books, inside to drink milk and go to the bathroom. They are those four little girls I told you about. I just finished reading your letter of the 23rd which just came in which you're back in the field, being very non-Hutchinsian playing volleyball. Carry on and all that. I spent a restless night dreaming of you which I'd hoped to do anyway. Now we are all making ready to go to the beach. I'll write more tonight.

I wonder how Day got the candy and cigars through the PO without a request letter. You know, I didn't tell her to send it, not at all, but she was here when I got your letter asking for them and I read that part aloud. Wasn't she sweet to have remembered?

But who could forget you. I am positively lush for love of you. But stop giving me orders on what to do with Kathy. You make me feel like a dope. And she is beautiful, so you can show her pictures around without feeling like a dope yourself.

All my love to you baby,

Jill

JILL TO AL JUNE 4? 5?, 1944

My darling Al -

Sunday

I'm writing this down at the lake, full of the conviction that I ought to get another pair of dark glasses. The last pair I had were ground to dust in the sprocket of my bike last summer - don't ask me what they were doing there - the ways of Jill are mysterious and wonderful - and I am getting as wrinkled as an old crow. And twice as cranky. I've been just miserably tired the past two or three days (I have the curse) and every time I want to take a nap the phone rings, the baby cries or somebody else's child trips over my legs. I am thinking seriously of severing relations with the human race. They are all a bunch of hangers-on, to me specifically, leaving me no time for myself or to write you. And if waking me up and taking up my time wasn't enough, one of them, the girl who lives across the court and isn't worthy of further description, even borrowed my typewriter (waking me up to ask me for it). So I must scrawl this so miserably. It's a cruel world and I loathe everybody in it, except you and Kathy. Do you think there'll be any change in your overseas status when they take Rome, which should be soon.* [*P. S. they took it today] I feel I just can't bear another minute without you.

Yesterday I came to the beach with Virginia and kids, and a 17-year-old boy whose voice was still changing tried to pick me up, and when I discovered what he was about and he discovered I was far from 17, the shock gave me a headache and sent him

reeling back to Hyde Park High. Last night after supper I went over to the hospital and saw Diane who is feeling very well, far better than I did at that time. Her baby is quite small but not too bad -- of course there's never been one like Kathy - and will be named Elizabeth Diane. She has a funny nose. They got a nurse thank God. So I won't have to be bothered with that. I wish I could crawl into a hole and forget everybody. And your mother is no help. She called me at 8 this AM just when I was trying to get back to sleep. I just hate talking on the phone and she doesn't understand that it's not that I don't like her or anything but the phone is in the closet and I'll be damned if I'll crawl in there and be trapped for 30-minute conversations with your kinfolk.

A large group of Hyde Park adolescents are about to invade our little grove, which really is quite charming with its little trees (no thanks to mankind), to carry on javelin throwing or sex games, I don't know which. All the girls are named Gloria and the boys Mervin or Marvin. I would like to cut their throats with the contents of your Volkenschaft Berliner Handy Dandy First Aid Kit.

My, what a nasty creature! I'm home now and, far from the madding crowd, in a much better mood. I'm eating my 6th Swiss cheese sandwich for the day. Pretty soon I have to clean the kitchen and then I'm going to bed.

I guess my whole trouble is you. The time seems endless yet the longing for you is ever-present, if anything, mounting as time goes on. When I think of you, which is practically constantly -- you seem so real and wonderful to me and then I realize we were together those two years and I didn't half enough appreciate what I had. I guess that is part of most humans - viewing the past always with this particular kind of regret, always feeling that they have thrown something away. And I do have that feeling, that something I did made you go away, that I could have prevent it, which is quite foolish I suppose, since the ways of the Army are inexorable, but I still can't escape the idea that I'm paying for something by your

absence. I guess mine is still the avenging God.

And I found a fine new rock (the city has thrown some more in) on a deserted very windy corner of the promontory today, and as I laid on my stomach on it with the waves roaring and splashing close to my face, it reminded me of sailing with Paul, and earlier, with the whole family. And again I had the feeling that I had wilfully thrown that away too, because those days really had some very happy moments, because I could have stayed with Paul if I had wanted to and been perhaps sailing and free from responsibility this very day. But in the case of Paul, time has proved that, unwittingly, I gave up one thing and found a better - you.

Anyway, you've taken Rome. Many kisses to you, darling.

Jill

P. S. Another reason why Kathy shouldn't wear shoes. She puts her feet in her mouth.

P. P. S. Her hair is getting to be the color of mine. I think the sun bleaches it.

P. P. S. S. She took a bath in the big tub tonight in about 3 inches of water, just enough to let her lie down in and splash around by herself without drowning.

P. P. S. S. S. She can turn from her back to her stomach now as well as vice versa.

P. P. P. S. S. S. Glad Ferla's getting better. Give Herz regards.

JILL TO AL JUNE 5, 1944

My darling Al--

What a rogue you are, sending me that German postal card. The gentleman from the FBI, who accompanied it, thought it

was pretty cute too. (Do you remember when I told you, in those dear past days when you were being investigated right and left, that an FBI man interviewed me and I told him you didn't read much, only the New Masses. How mad you were! It's no joke, you averred sourly.) But I do share in your wish that I were with you, packing your grip (and how condescendingly and patronizingly I used to do it) even though your grip was my gripe in days past. The card was dated the 30th. How swift. I showed it to our poor stupid mailman, in my enthusiasm over the captured booty, but he was too dumb to figure out where it came from. He also brought your letter of May 28th, a nice long one.

But what generalization of mine moved you to the urge to beat me? You know how I blabber on, and anyway, spanking is no cure. At your hands the indignity is an orgy and we would probably end up you know where. Or is that your plan to begin with? God darling how I miss you. I am taking your advices to heart concerning the quelling of the passions, except that I don't eat oysters anyway, having found some peculiar little red and crab-like parasites in a mess of them several months ago, and I think I need eggs for the vitamins, not to mention breakfast. But I take showers and will do my best to stay on key. But you can't stop me from dreaming, and I mean that literally.

Stupid me, when I first read your letter I thought your string-on-loot device was a new and fancy form of shoplifting and was about to hie off to the nearest five-and-dime and try it myself. Only on re-reading it this very instant did I realize it was just a device of commendable caution. Commendable is a mild way to put it. I can't endorse any self-protective measures you may take heartily enough. Kathy and I both will be very mad if you get so much as a scratch on you for the rest of the war. I forbid you to get even so much as a mashed finger, and as for fleas -- well, leave us not discuss it further.

I was awfully interested and taken with your appraisal of the dissenters in the Mazzini society. I think I've felt that instinctively in recent times about all kinds of protestants, no doubt the result

of prolonged contact with your excellent pragmatism, but I never was able to put it into words. Do you remember the first year or two we spent together and the arguments we used to have. I was always waving some banner or other at you, and then feeling aggrieved because you would rarely give wholehearted endorsement to it. Well I understand now what you meant, although it's very hard to get some of these ideas across to other people -- my own I mean. I wouldn't dare try to put yours across because I can't be as careful about picking words and avoiding cliches as you are and I know how furious you get when I start stumbling around generalizations.

It's positively weird. Every time I get around to writing Ann, which isn't very often, I get a letter from her. It's happened like that all year and we always end up stymied as to who owes who. She told me she's written you and intends to again though (she was pleased because she's always in the position of being the ower, not the owed) she hadn't heard from you at the time of writing. She says little Paul is wonderfully adept physically though he hasn't gotten around to talking in a lot of sentences yet. Apparently they are either precocious at one thing or the other. I think Kathy will be a big talker. She's always been very good at using her head and her hands, which are part of the head at this stage I guess, but she's no whirling dervish so far as bodily coordination goes yet* [*footnote*: * that is, she doesn't walk. She does everything she's supposed to, of course, like sitting, rolling, etc.] (aside from manual coordination that is). One reason is of course that she's so large and heavy. I took her to the doctor today for her monthly checkup and she weighs 17 pounds and 14 ounces, a gain of a full pound since last month. She's in perfect condition. I made a point of asking him whether she had the slightest vestige of any nasal difficulty, because the apartment is rather damp (I told him) and she sneezes a few times every day. And then, I have this constant drip that I think I inherited from my Dad. But she doesn't at all. He told me to start her on different kinds of vegetables, like strained beets and carrots as well as the vegetable soup she already gets at her two PM feedings. She can have a different

can of stuff every day if she wants it, and she is supposed to eat the whole can. At night she is still to get her cereal, but in addition some dessert, in the form of a fruit. I gave her some applesauce tonight and she liked it very much. Of course, liking it is a relative word with our Kath. Actually she doesn't like anything much she can't suck out of a bottle. What an oral erotic she is. I always have to give her her bottle first. Then I set her down against a pillow on the couch, because I've discovered that she gets very offended at being spoonfed in the position, to wit, in my arms, that she associates with the pleasures of sucking. Isn't that amazing? And then I start yodeling and making funny faces and standing on my head, all the while shoveling cereal into her grinning puss. It's the funniest thing to see what I call her cereal smile, which is when she is completely covered from eyebrows to navel with cereal and then breaks through with this enchanting smile of hers. It looks a little like Al Jolson in his Mammy makeup. She certainly is a happy baby is the cliché I hear daily from thousands of strange people. Honestly, she could be dying but if you leaned over her and made a noise like a duck (or a steam engine or an antelope for that matter) she would grin. It isn't even flattering, as Virginia found out. When we were down at the beach Sunday there was a big derrick there hauling rocks off a barge and putting them around the promontory. Kathy was looking very amused and Virginia thought it was at her, until she discovered that every time the derrick would go "brackbrackbrack" Kathy would smile politely.

She herself can make an amazing variety of noises with a number of different lip movements, which is why I think she will talk soon, relatively speaking. She can make b and z sounds which are pretty complicated when you come to think of it, as well as the usual variety of vowel sounds that babies like to do. And she has a certain laugh, when things are at their funniest, which is a real hahahaha (short a). The idea is taking seed, though heaven knows, at the rate I do things, it may take the rest of the war to germinate, for us both to go to a record shop and get a record made, although she will probably pick that day

to be as silent as a mousetrap. And today in the doctor's offices she talked so much we grown-ups couldn't get in a word edgewise. I am also getting the idea that we ought to exploit her. She is a lot better-looking than most of the babies they use for baby food and toilet paper ads, but I don't know what I should do about it, if anything. I do know I'll have some more pictures made professionally for you when she is six months old, which is not far off.

I bought a pretty white cotton blouse today which I needed and took back that jacket to the Lanz dress, which I didn't need. You see, it (the dress) has bare shoulders and then a jacket to match which you buy separately, but I decided I liked the dress the way it was and the jacket was 5.95 which is a lot for a little protection so I swapped it for a blouse and a cotton skirt. The one I got last year in Washington which I wore in Newport News one night which you and Herz like so well is too small for me since I put on that one inch around the middle. I had to give a lot of my clothes away, in fact, some of them very nice ones too. But there is absolutely nothing you can do when a cotton dress gets too small. They just can't be let out like a woolen suit. I gave them to Joan who is just a size smaller than I am.

I heard the President tonight and thought he was very good. But then, he always is. But he is not as optimistic as I would like him to be about it being a short war. I wish to hell you could just get a leave next fall because it seems like hoping for too much for the war to be over by then. It would seem awful beyond words to have another winter go by and another year of my life tick off without you. I feel as if I'm aging rapidly as it is, chronologically if not physically. The awful part of it is that the physical part hits you all at once. One of these days I'm going to stop looking like a college girl and I think it's going to be hard to bear, for a little while, anyway. As it is, I think (with disgusting immodesty) that I am viewed with a certain amount of envy and alarm by the thirty-ish mothers around here, although in re the emotion of the second part, why anyone would want to covet their paunchy, if nice, husbands, is beyond me who have you.

I guess it's time for me to leap into bath and bed. Kathy and I love you very much -- she because I keep telling her what a wonderful daddy she has, I because I know.

Always your

Jill

P.S. I met George de Huzzar on the street today and he said the baby looked like an Italian, adding "Mussolini." I have stricken him off Kathy's prom list.

JILL TO AL JUNE 6, 1944 (A)

Darling -- 9 AM

I guess I ought to say something significant because this is the day. It's wonderful news isn't it, and suddenly you're closer, or the time of seeing you is closer, than it's been in a year. I saw the paper this morning about quarter of seven, it just said that the Germans had given out reports of Allied landings, so I turned on the radio and it turned out to be the real thing. I bawled with joy, for bawling seems to *[be]* my reaction to anything and everything these days, and told Kathy and danced her around. The whole thing seems to be a magnificently coordinated effort and I don't see how the Germans can hold out past fall, do you? I can imagine how people in Europe must feel today. From the point of view of the dramatic buildup the invasion is the biggest thing that's ever happened.

I'll write more tonight. This is a little early for much else than excitement and a bad case of coffee nerves.

Be seeing you soon. All my love,

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

Darling --

The news continues to come in, good beyond belief. Soon the fierce counterattack will probably start, but just the symbolic act of the start of the invasion means so damn much to everyone. To me it means you're that much closer to home and gosh knows my letters of the past few days have been pessimistic enough about that. I've been going around in a daze all day, quite enervated from excitement. At noon I went back to bed, with all apparent intentions of remaining there for the duration. Dietz came over but I refused to talk, the tailor came over and I refused him cleaning, Virginia came in and observed sourly, "That's just the kind of thing somebody would do if they were planning to write their memoirs." So I got up and went to the dentist, which made short shift of me. Our round-headed, brown-legged, oral erotic Kathy has been bearing up well under the strain, eating her applesauce tonight with extreme enthusiasm.

I got your letter of May 25th today and I read it in the dentist's chair, which is the second worst place in the world to have read your letters, the first being the little bed where I commenced to bring forth Kathy. I like your elaboration on Dante's purgatory, German style. You might add giving them a home life on the style of the Esquire magazine mountain folk, with the proviso that if they utter one word of complaint, the thumbscrew will be applied.

Mr. Duffy, the Democratic precinct captain was just here for your address, which I gave him. I hope he'll be able to facilitate voting for the man in this precinct. The soldier's vote bill as it now stands is one of the lousiest deals in our political history. Duffy is a good precinct man. He even asked for the baby's health.

I heard over the radio that there were 11,000 Allied planes over the invasion coast. Jesus! I've never even seen a hundred all in

one place. I don't see how we can miss, can you?

I've recovered my equilibrium, to the extent of mopping the kitchen floor between the first and second paragraphs of this letter. I hope our Hut of the Future will have self-cleaning floors. I also hope it won't be an English basement on Ridgewood Court. It's cold today but on warm days the ants pile in here like I was holding a special barbecue for them. And this is home sweet home for mosquitoes. They don't even bite, they feel so comfy. I think they just live here and go upstairs to the neighbors when they get hungry. They just drowse around on the walls, as if they were taxpayers and it's duck soup to kill them. Home sweet home.

Mom said that Dad had gotten a letter from Buss in Italian, saying he had a chance to go over in some sort of civilian administrator capacity and wanted Dad's advice. And that is the news up to date. The President is speaking now on the radio, that wonderful man. All my love to you darling. I've never been so sure as I am now that we'll see each other soon again.

Your loving Jill

AL TO JILL JUNE 6, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

No need to describe the tremendous excitement of this day. The Second Front, on top of the great excitement of the rush into Rome, leaves your sleepy husband slightly dazed and wanting your cool hands across his forehead. I would hate to confess the number of hours slept in the past several nights. Everything from strafing (?) to the greatest wonders of the world have conspire to this end. But on such news I could live indefinitely. I have no time to write letters hardly at all. I would like to describe to you everything, God knows, but while walking along some shady lane where I could talk in peace and happiness.

For the moment it is sufficient to say that I love you and call it a letter. I am feeling well and having a very interesting time. The troops have now a magnificent enthusiasm. Dead tired, but smiling. That's me too, in violet, now that my pen is empty. Not a bad idea. I go into a purple mood every time I think how much I am missing in not having you, let alone Kathy who must be already more than one man can handle.

Many warm kisses from your

Al

THE hurry-scurry and tiffs among the Generals to get into Rome and be photographed was an *opera buffa*. Several were nearly killed, whether by enemy or friendly fire. A small special force under General Frederick, who should not have been there, was clearing a bridge of mines. Approached from the other side by a small force under General Kendall of the 88th Division -- he shouldn't have been there either -- the two forces shot at each other and men were killed and wounded, including Frederick, before the amicide was stopped. Not until the afternoon of June 5 did all hostile obstruction and sniping quit. By then, the City was infiltrated by a score of processions, one from every lane of entry, flowing out then into every street. Wave upon wave of trucks and guns washed through. Fifty thousand soldiers marched at route step, dragging their feet, pausing, gawking, camping, eating, drinking, dispersing. There was no looting. Onto the streets poured many thousands of young Italians who had been hiding from the Neo-Fascist and German conscription gangs.

These were glorious hours, the greatest triumph of Allied arms in the West, the moments when the ordinary soldier could grasp what he might be fighting for, beautiful cities wrested from a cruel foe, innocent girls in clean dresses, imposing boulevards and grand cafes, churches so grand, with Christs and Marys so sublime, that the hill-billy Baptist might begin to doubt that God was a bedouin. Rome was taken in a glorious spirit. Because everything was in such good order, the soldiers behaved themselves. Because so little had been destroyed,

they destroyed nothing. Because the people needed less food, they received more. The soldiers were so happy to find so wonderful a city that they believed the people must be admirable, even virtuous; hence they deserved better than those other people they had seeing on the way up the Boot of Italy whose ruins, rags, hunger, shivering, opportunism, and depression proved their unworthiness.

For days celebration continued. Once more the population went on promenade. Genuine partisans and freebooters tramped the streets in search of Fascists. There was sorrow and rage to support them: in the last weeks there had been roundups of Jews and murders of anti-Fascists. Lt. de Grazia's jeep is blocked by a cluster of people, who have in hand a man they shout is a dirty Fascist. They would like him to be killed on the spot. The Lieutenant glances the man up and down. Could be. He cannot stop to handle him. "Hey, soldier," to a loitering G.I. "Go with these people to the nearest M.P. post or police station and turn him in." The soldier says, "Yes, Sir," but who knows: he is probably A.W.O.L. from his unit.

A large number of Allied soldiers are gadding about the City. The Lieutenant reckons that the Fifth Army has lost at least temporarily a division of troops just by passing through Rome. Rome has been promptly declared off-limits to the troops but there could be no stemming of this initial tide of the awe-stricken and hilarious. Repeatedly he is accosted by a soldier with "Sir, can you tell me where my outfit is?" "What is your outfit." "The First Armored." "They're all gone North, I think, I don't know, try the M.P.'s." Not likely. His conscience appeased for another day, the soldier wanders off.

Meanwhile the battle has moved North. Thanks to the vainglorious Clark and all those taking cues from him, including the French, the two German armies that should have been isolated and destroyed, fled up the Tiber Valley until they found the undestroyed crossing and joined forces. The line will not settle down until the Germans cease their retreat short of Florence and build a defense across the peninsula.

Bianca Moffa puts him up in a kind of sun-room. From there he goes out upon the street, helps the others find a billet by the newspaper plant of *Il Messaggero*, and discovers the staff of *Stars and Stripes*

already inside readying their first Rome edition. There is little for him to do; he loiters outside thinking where next to stick his nose; a blonde girl, she is of course beautiful, stands nearby looking calmly at the comings and goings. *Buon giorno* and all of that -- her name is Clara Unghy, she lives next door, "*Grazie, non fumo,*" but, yes, she would like to have lunch with him tomorrow, meeting him here, she knows where they might eat well, she is calm and unpretentious, not a flicker of flirtation, plainly dressed. By the next day he has a hotel room, the lunch is excellent, the siesta is put to good purpose: they are lovers; he counts her in on things, he knows where he can find her.

Bianca introduces him all around, to Giovanni Makaus, for instance, with whom he becomes friends. He is an Italian naval commander, now wearing civilian clothes, who was in hiding in Rome and worked for Italian Intelligence. Bianca would like Alfred to be her lover, but there was already Paolo -- would it be proper -- and Clara. He moves out of Bianca's nook but not from her circle. Nearly every evening there is some party with her friends.

JILL TO AL JUNE 7, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

You must wonder how people back here have taken the news of the invasion. I don't think I was very specific as to the general reaction in yesterday's letter. Well, to begin with, Mom, Joan and me all cried. Virginia was excitedly tearless. Bill Steinbrecher reported that life in the Loop went on unperturbed. The only way one knew it was D-day was from the headlines. My dentist commented on it but did not deem it sufficient reason for my being late for my appointment. The Tuesday radio comedians (do you ever get to hear Bob Hope et al over your radio) devoted their programs to patriotic music and there were few commercials, due to the interruption of all programs by special bulletins. I met Oliver Kerner on the street today and explained that I hadn't called Diane yesterday at the hospital, which I was supposed to do, because of my excitement over the good news. He said, "What good news?" Well, I suppose it's

fatuous of me to term it such, considering the stake we have in terms of human life. But one can't help but be happy that it's really started. I've never thought that the war could be won without an actual invasion from the West. So far the news is good, but of course we're constantly being warned against over-optimism. I feel badly in a way that I can't do something more than sit on the sidelines, the way I felt all last year before I got pregnant. I know that if you have young children you really can't do much more than a good job of taking care of them -- I guess that women who do work in my position end up by putting more of a burden on the community than if they stayed at home. But I do wish there was something more I could do than that and buying bonds, which I did today because our checking account can well afford to be thinned out, lest I spend it all on clothes. I got Kathy a 100-dollar bond in your name too. I also dashed out and weeded the victory garden with such fury that you'd think they were Germans. Virginia is going away for a month or so at the end of this week so I am left with the sole care of the garden, a good thing since I was distinctly the silent partner in the enterprise. Now maybe I'll learn something about gardening, which will help when you come home and we have our own little place.

Speaking of bonds, I haven't gotten any of yours since last October. I called up the War Finance Dept. today and they said for me to write a letter about it, stating all details. The last bond I got from them was dated March 1943 so you see they are somewhat behind in issuing them.

Kathy had a good day. She ate a whole can of carrots (the cans are the size of the tomato paste ones) and yesterday she ate a whole can of mashed peas. She likes these new foods very much, particularly the apple sauce and it's not nearly as hard to feed them to her as it was the cereal, which she still has to eat of course, and the vegetable soup, which I guess she was getting pretty sick of. She played a while tonight though the fence with the big Doberman next door. She and I are the only people aside from his family that he doesn't bark at fiercely. He has such a loud voice that all the tenants on that side of the

building complain about him and half the stuff that gets ordered never gets delivered because the delivery boys are all afraid of him. So much for life out our way.

I love you very much and so does Kathy.

JILL TO AL JUNE 8, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

The biggest military campaign in all history is going on and I sit it out battling with the curtain stretcher. Mom came down today in my hour of need, which is every time I make one of my sporadic attempts at spring cleaning, and washed the curtains for me. We put up the curtain stretcher, which is a task roughly comparable to building a pontoon bridge over the Rapido river, the only material at hand being nettles, and I have been gloomily stretching curtains ever since. They are each one a different size, since they are one of the great bargains Mom procured me from Montgomery Ward's -- the other being your child's bed which makes a noise like a bluejay every time she hiccups -- so I must put one up at a time, wait for it to dry, take it down and start over again. The whole thing resembles the crucifixion scene from whatever medieval painter painted it. Mom has long since gone home, a veritable rock she is against the trials of housekeeping. I really think she ought to get some domestic medal of honor, doing all that she has to do at home and then coming down here and sweating it out with me. The thing is that she hates housework just as much as I do. I don't know what I'd do if I were in her boots. That madman Oliver has been dodging in and out this evening. I just tossed him out for the last time, surfeited with his tales of domestic woe with Diane's mother and the various attempts everybody makes to mulct and bilk him. Personally I think he's a bit of a paranoid.

I read Mom parts of your recent letters which she liked very much, particularly the scene you paint of everybody madly rushing at each other with pictures of their respective infants.

Do you remember Mrs. Richardson, that nice lady who rented the rooms on Blackstone Avenue? I met her daughter Tita yesterday in the supermarket. Her husband is exec. officer of a paratroop squadron in Sicily and she hasn't seen him for two years. She has a 14-month-old boy. Ambrose, one of her brothers, is with the Air Corps in Corsica, too. I guess Tita is one of the many who are worse off than I am. I pray that you'll be home before Kathy is a year old. I don't know why that should be the deadline rather than any other date. I think I will make great plans to go to the coast this fall, as Paul and Ann want me to do, because I'm sure the minute I get to the station there will be a cable from you, telling that you'll be back. It's on the same idea of getting into the tub when you want somebody to call you. They always call then. Anyway, you should come home and present to Kathy a convincing argument on why she should eat her cereal. I am having more fun giving her all sorts of new foods. I gave her a mixture of spinach and carrots today, so awful that I could hardly bear to pour it out of the can, and she loved it. Tonight she had canned prunes, livened up with a dash of lemon juice (it said on the can) and after the first grimace at its new tartness, I had all I could do to prevent her from eating it right up to my elbow; It's so much fun feeding her these new things, but it is always work to get down that inevitable mess of cereal, which must first precede all these goodies.

I am reading a most amusing book, Moll Flanders, by the very late Daniel Defoe. Those old guys certainly knew how to write novels.

That's all for now, darling. To bed. I love you more than words can tell.

Jill

JILL TO AL JUNE 10, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

The weather has been grey and rainy for three days now, and so much am I a part of the prevailing climate that, despite the stirring and fruitful events of this past week, I am bored, fretful and frustrated. I guess history isn't everything. Yesterday we stayed indoors all day, a trial for us both. I can't remember doing anything noteworthy except staying in my pajamas until five PM. I didn't even write you, fearing that my spleen would be vented on you. I did vent it on Virginia, who had the misfortune to break one of my teacups. Ah, bitchiness. But I did make a valiant, and so far successful, attempt to preserve an equanimity of temper around Kathy, who has her own misfortunes when she is confined to the house all day.

I am having fun reading Moll Flanders, though. I think I'll get a hold of Joseph Andres when I am through with it. I like the style and wit of the 18th (?) century English novelists very much. While their moral problems revolved chiefly around the relation between the sexes, specifically the superfluity of women in England proper, and therefore are not much applicable to America where women have always had a good break, it's fun to see how these writers deal with the general problem of crime and punishment, or sin and the wages of. They are far more sophisticated in their treatment of morality than do present-day writers having the same relative access to the public mind. For instance, compare them and their works to the current soap operas, movies and magazine stories. Why hell, we're just babes in the wood.

I've only gotten one letter from you this week, which makes me think that you are on the move again. What do you think of the new Italian premier and cabinet? I was afraid that the powers-that-be would let the King and Badoglio hang on after Rome was taken but thank goodness they didn't. I think that Eisenhower will probably do the right thing by the French people, don't you, despite all the mess we've had with DeGaulle

and the French Committee. It seems that things work out all right in the end, probably because no Foreign office or State Department ideologies can really override the will of the people in occupied countries. They've seen and hoped for too much to be led around by their noses, the way Americans can who have not lost or suffered much. Anyway, Eisenhower seems to be a pretty right sort of guy, and if anybody has to do the leading, in non-military spheres I mean, it might as well be him.

Do you think they'll use you after all of Italy has been taken? How much German do you know anyway? Anyway I don't know if what you are doing is predicated on your knowledge of Italian or your knowledge of psychological warfare or both. All I do know is that I wish to hell I could see you for just a little while even. The duration and six months seem to be too damn far away.

Marion Gerson called up yesterday, now Marion Cook. Bob left on his new ship about a week ago and she is back in Chicago, prepared to weep it out for the duration too. I guess this war is creating a generation of women with good characters, for whatever they're worth.

Well, I really shouldn't get too gloomy. I know that next spring will be greeted by us together. We'll bask in the sun on warm days and make love to each other on rainy afternoons and everything will be just wonderful.

All my love,

Jill

JILL TO AL JUNE 11, 1944

Darling -- *[3 c stamp in corner with caption: that was a mistake]*

I've written you a V-mail already today, this morning to be exact,

but I'll start this letter anyway, the occasion being that I got a letter from you since and also that my bath is running (cold as usual) and I have some moments to spare before going to bed. Your letter was from June 1st, and I wonder where you can be, so near a beach and caves too. I don't approve of your having fleas, but I guess you are of like mind.

In hasty reply to your harsh inquiries, I have received PLANT (which has two new purple blooms on it and doesn't need much water), GLOVES, LETTERS and SWEATER from last Xmas. The sweater was a size 34 which was a little too quick a fit for modesty, so I exchanged it for a larger size in yellow instead of green. I am wearing it now and it is covered with prunes, the result of feeding your darling and recalcitrant daughter tonight. She is a little off her feed today and also hasn't been sleeping well during the day, but there doesn't seem to be anything wrong besides that. She is probably afflicted by the cold damp weather, even as I am. But to return to the gifts, I thank you, and have thanked you, for them all. You know I think you're a darling to send me anything. But I have not yet received WOOLY DOLL, CANDY or BOX FROM SARDINIA (of Sardines, I presume).

And thank you too for your praise of my efforts to do right by our Kath. You know, it takes no great effort to be a good mother if (1) you have a beautiful and charming child (2) you are in love with its father (3) you possess a modicum of intelligence. I'll add a fourth point which not everybody is so fortunate to have as I am -- prolonged exposure to higher education and to modern psychological theories, which seem all to consist of telling the mother to have all three of the first conditions available. Oh yes, you've got to be a bit on the brawny side, to take the effort and strain of the first few months. But those months are past and Kathy today graduated into a higher plane of infancy. She sat for the first time in her high chair. It isn't exactly a high chair, either. It's like a little bridge table with a well in it containing a sea. Buss and Mir sent it and it came today, and while it was a great tax on my intelligence to put it together, Kathy was immensely pleased to be jammed down into the little well, there

to sit with an expression of elated surprise. She is still not able to sit in it for long periods of time without feeling tired and I shan't use it for feeding her for a while yet, except perhaps for the last dab of cereal or vegetables. It would be mean to rob her of the infantile pleasure of sitting in my arms while she takes her bottle.

In a great huff at the indignities of life in a grey cold city without you, I strode over to Commons today to have lunch with Syb. While threading my way backwards to that building, because campus was never made for a woman with a baby buggy, I saw a soldier detach himself from a group he was walking with and come over to me. He gave out a muted "Hello" and sank into speechlessness. You don't need three guesses to guess who it was. Bob King, of course. And of course, I always fall down in a fit every time I meet somebody accidentally on the street whom I haven't seen for three days even, so you can imagine my exuberance upon seeing him, and how flat it fell on the dank Indian Hill consciousness of our friend. He asked for you and told me somberly he was studying Chinese in the ASTP and would probably return to the infantry after the course was over. I rattled on like a fool, trying to fill up the empty spaces, and invited him to drop over, which he will probably never do, as God knows what we would say to each other. Funny part is, Sybil had met him already at the bookstore. he's been here for months. She was affected the same way, i.e., thrown into an embarrassed tantrum of words.

Kathy sat on my lap in Commons, viewing the sights with mature interest while I dribbled a barbecue beef on her sparsely settled pate. She is such a little angel, you can take her anywhere with the sure knowledge that she will just sit and think. Yet she is the true and healthy extrovert, since her mind feeds upon the outside world and not some inner chancre. Of course, she has a habit of craning around and watching the damndest things, like a self-conscious 4-F instructor stumbling to his table under a tray. I think people must get the same feeling at being stared at by a baby that one does under a dog's steady glance - that it possesses some super-human critical ability, far more

revealing and embarrassing than the gaze of an ordinary adult human being.

I don't think the sweater will make a good picture because it is large and baggy, owing to my college hungover predilection for large and baggy sweaters, and if I take a picture in it all it will reveal is more sweater. But examine the pictures I am enclosing in this and also another envelope I'll mail with it. Again my pants show and I assure you it's not on purpose and also that I do have pants on. It's just that when Kathy sets on me I can't move and then anything can happen. They are not very good pictures of Kathy and it's all the more reason why I should do something about having more professional ones taken.

Sunday

Today has been a busy one. Bill came down and he and Laura, and Laura's younger sister and us all went down to the promontory. I made a good meat loaf in the morning which we used for sandwiches. The weather was cool but pleasant and we had quite a nice time. It is about eight now but they are still here, sitting on the sofa and following their separate interests, in the correct progressive school tradition. Kathy had a good time too. A man came by where we were sitting with a cute little three-month-old black cocker, and I put Kathy on the grass where the cocker ran around her and she had a great time laughing at him. She grabbed an end of his leash and he the other and they had a fine infantile game of tug of war. I think that when you come home we should get her a little spaniel puppy, don't you? I used to have a great prejudice against cockers but I think that is because so many belong to fatuous over-indulgent owners and get too fat, and also to look like their owners. A miniature collie, or Shetland Shepherd as they are technically called, which Cooney is supposed to resemble (but really doesn't -- I saw one down at the rocks one day and they are more much collie-ish than Cooney) is also a nice dog for children, I'm told. They are nice and small and neat, but still in the category of work dogs. You wonder why I did not allude to Cooney as a prospective mate for our child, probably. Well, I

still am very fond of him but I sometimes wonder if Cooney has his heart in child care.

Well, I guess I really ought to get back to my company, as if they give a damn, as they are all wrapped up in the Sunday paper, which I haven't seen yet. All my love to you, darling.

Always,

Jill

AL TO JILL JUNE 11, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Love,

Every day makes me feel more like a heel. I haven't been able to express a coherent thought in writing to you in over a week. And this will be no exception. You know how fast everything is moving. Well, I don't do anything walking any more. I sprint. Upstairs, downstairs, over hill and dale, in & out alleys - life in Italy today. Every day the army moves nullifies my previous work and doubles my present work. I am trapped part of the time in glamorous surroundings with one dirty shirt to my name. The set of my staff is scattered over all Italy but it is enough to make me happy to know that we are going like hell and that one day not far off now, we can go like hell together. I wish I could give you fine accounts of all these exciting days, but I am completely inactivated (?) by the enormity of the writing required. It suffices, I hope, to say that I love you as always and think of you very often, too often, sometimes, to have any peace of mind when I neglect you in the slightest way.

All my love to you and Kathy, darling. And a kiss full on your lips.

Your

Al

"D Section" sends Alfred over to handle the Press at the inauguration of the new Italian Government on June 9. Badoglio has resigned and Ivanoe Bonomi, who had been once Premier before Mussolini seized power, becomes once again Prime Minister. He is a nonentity. The strongest member of the new Cabinet is Alcide De Gasperi. There is a hullabaloo at the ceremony, photographers, Ministers, reporters. De Gasperi speaks out in exasperation: "What is going on? This is too much! Begin the meeting!" The American Lieutenant is trying to get the cameramen in and out. "*Patienza!*" he exclaims to De Gasperi and everyone else within earshot. "Patience!" is a cliché dear to Italian speech, used for all occasions. Coming from the lips of a young American officer, it makes De Gasperi laugh. It eases the tension. The scene quiets. The First Democratic Government of Italy at Rome since the Fascist Revolution begins.

JILL TO AL JUNE 12, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling,

A great day so far, as far as the mails are concerned. The white woolly animal came for Kathy, a lovely pussy cat with an arched back who has already lost her virginal quality. The minute I showed it to Kathy she grabbed it and smeared some cereal on it. But that is just her way of showing appreciation to the kindness of her old man. I'll try to keep it out of her reach during feeding times, anyway. Came also your letters of May 18 and June 30, the former containing the insurance policy waiver which I'd forgotten about anyway. But I was so horrified by one paragraph in that letter that the rest of your prose beautiful was quite lost on me. I refer to your veiled intimations that under certain circumstances you might support Dewey. Come, come, this is no time for humor, and if this is another piece of your much-vaunted pragmatism, it is completely beyond my comprehension. Even if Roosevelt were not to run again, unlikely as that is, I can't imagine Dewey or any other Republican with the possible exception of Stassen (whom I

don't know much about) even remotely deserving the consideration of any right-minded person. I can't believe that you are serious, or if you are, that your judgement is based on anything but complete ignorance of the possibilities, or rather lack of them, of that dull little crime-buster in the blue serge suit. And I can't think of our having any disagreement that would be more significant than this one, if one exists. I don't know how much you are allowed to write about politics, but for God's sake say something that will set my mind at ease. I don't know what I'll do if you are serious -- it's just the worst thing I've ever heard of. And to think that my one abiding principle, of all the ones I've had and subsequently abandoned, was never marry a man who would vote for a Republican. It's positively blood-chilling. Truthfully, I'm more upset by the possibility of your voting for that man than if you told me you'd gotten another woman (temporarily I mean). I wish you could give me your reasons for doubting Roosevelt at this stage of the game, if you have any. Surely you don't think that Dewey or any other old line Republican could handle our foreign policy one millionth as well as FD has, despite the mistakes he may have made. And surely you don't want a back-to-normalcy domestic policy waiting to greet you when you get home. What the hell makes you think you'll be so much better equipped to brave a chaotic labor market than any other of the ten million returning servicemen, that makes you so confident about placing your fortunes in the hands of an anti-New Deal president? As it is, we're being driven perilously close to a bad inflation by the conservative bloc in Congress, and if they get in full charge after the war, all hell will break loose. Maybe I should send you the Nation instead of Time.

Little Miss Kathy, who is now big enough to sit up, take notice and ipso facto vote, agrees with me in all this. It has been raining again today, so except for a brief spell of lunch out with Marion Gerson at Thomas's drugstore, we have been confined to the house all day but she has been very good withal. Marion just came back from Norfolk, where Bob left on an LST he is skippering, going in your general direction, she thinks. She likes

marriage fine, she says. And so would I if we didn't have any political differences.

Love,

Jill

AL TO JILL JUNE 12, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

I was shocked out of all present turmoil and stress late last night when someone handed me the package of your pictures. I had somehow expected to get them at a time when I could spend hours mooning over them. But they are indeed fine and you look very lovely. I could never consider that they cover your personality, or even much of it, completely. It is the pallid, troubled side of you that outs, a sort of Margaret Sullivan effect. Not that I don't find it extremely attractive. I like the one with the slight smile best, for one thing because it shows your beautiful neck and shoulders. Thanks a million.

Lots of things have been happening here as well as practically everywhere else on earth. And I can practically hear you breathing next to me already. I don't think you have to worry about my being gone for years (your letter of May 22). I have designs for Kathy's birthday party this year, joint with my own.

About taking courses, you may get a lot of fun out of it. I would never take math for fun, but you've a strange sort of mind, bugs and figures and things.

Kiss Kathy for me, Darling. I'll write more tomorrow.

Your

Al

JILL TO AL JUNE 13, 1944 (A)

Al dear --

It is only 8:30 in the morning but I thought I might as well write you now, as I shall be very busy the rest of the day going to the dentist and I hope to the eye doctor, if Syb shows up to stay with Kathy. I spent a troubled night of visions of you knocking me down and running over me in your haste to vote for Mr. Dewey. The trouble with a rift of this sort, if one exists, is that it takes so damn long, at least three weeks, before the argument gets tossed back and forth. In the meantime I am put into a state of frozen perturbation. I can't help but think and I think you will agree with me, that a person's political ideas are one of the most significant things about them. So here is my dilemma: even if my sentimental appeals, as you call them, do prevail, and you yourself deny this possibility, I'll still be left with the thought that you disagreed with me significantly on this one great issue, to begin with. My only hope is that I have misunderstood your intentions totally. The trouble with a guy like you, whose political philosophy is based on no further commitment than "Let's see what happens" is that you get to be as uncharmingly unpredictable as the Communists are. And then you're not a fit companion to any political group, no matter of what shading. While that's no particular desideratum in itself, I do think there are some general alignments of political thinking in this country, as well as others, and ultimately, no matter how one wishes to be a free and pragmatic agent, you're left on one side or the other.

AND IF YOU THINK (the capitals are a typographical error in this case) it's easy for me to formulate any of this with your child raising her voice in a complaining and inexplicable howl, you're crazy. In fact, having said this much with as much difficulty as I've had, I think I'll let the whole thing go until tomorrow, which will perhaps bring me to a mood of greater tolerance for you and yours.

Love, Jill

JILL TO AL JUNE 13, 1944 (B)

Dearest,

I don't know why I keep doggedly on, turning out my daily letter to you, since the returns are not so hot quantitatively or qualitatively, since that unfortunate paragraph in which you turned your big beautiful eyes in Mr. Dewey's direction. You really should never write me anything of that nature ever again. It affects me as deeply and leaves me as helpless of rebuttal as you would be if I were to suddenly start writing you that I was combining operations with another man. I keep telling myself that people just don't fall out over political differences. Would Humphrey Bogart leave Ingrid Bergman in such a case, I keep asking myself? The answer is, of course, no. So, old topper, I am gradually quelling my venom and will try to reserve my hostilities in the future for the weeds in my victory garden.

But hell's bells, sometimes I get fraught with frustration, to raise that old chant which bores you so well. You should consider yourself damn lucky in a way that as long as there's a war on, you're in it. You don't have to trip the light fantastic daily with civilians, grapple with them at the grocery store, come close to getting run over by their cars, endure the wolf calls of their young. If I get whistled at by one more 16-year-old boy I shall dye my hair grey and wear a bustle. Sometimes I wish I were living around an Army camp, despite the inconveniences thereof, just so I could feel that the war was really going on and not just something that fills up the newspapers.

Yesterday I abandoned Kathy to the other-worldly clutches of Syb Farreter, who certainly has nothing else to recommend her as a mother's helper except a willingness to be helpful, and went to the dentist and eye doctor. I am getting another pair of prescription dark glasses to replace the pair I ran over on the bike last summer. The dentist gave me novocaine and drilled two teeth. It left me so numb that I bit my lip experimentally last night, and feeling nothing, thought no more of it. This morning my lover lip looked like I had kissed a tiger. We took in a movie

after dinner together, leaving Kathy under the distant surveillance of a Mrs. Rosenthal in the building. The movie was The Miracle of Morgan's Creek and a miracle of bad taste it was. But I felt a little less a slave to my current black mood after it was over and today I got up good and early and did some work in the victory garden. I planted some more beans and carrots and some mustard greens. Then, after I fed Kathy her ten o'clock meal I went down to the lake, which was hot and pleasant. The water was very cold and I only stayed in a minute. About two a storm started to come up and we came home, and then I started this letter. We have been having thunderstorms almost every day now.

The lake had a windless hush about it that was quite beguiling. The promontory is really a nice place to go during the week, though on weekends all of Hyde Park Boulevard moves over on it and then it isn't very pleasant.

Did I write you -- Rosable finally married Buster. I got a letter from her yesterday. They are living at New London. Buster has a teaching job at the Connecticut College for Women. Apparently he is rehabilitating himself and they are quite happy. Rosable even said she thought she might try to have a baby, after the apparent success of my venture (I sent her a couple of Kathy pictures).

Poor old Kathy is sleeping soundly for a change. I think she must be getting teeth or something because she has been kind of on edge lately and sleeps very little and poorly during the day. Incidentally, I was all wrong about my belief that she would probably sit up at a late age. She is sitting up beautifully now as long as she can hang on to something like the sides of her buggy, and seems to enjoy her little chair and table arrangement very much for short periods of times. This is pretty early to be doing all these things -- I don't think they usually start until six months or more. So again she manifests her characteristic and no doubt inherited precocity, you smug old serpent.

Oh I got envelopes containing The New Statesman etc. and The Times. Were you the officer who drafted the appeal of Cassino "using a vague phrase meaning anything or nothing". I can't figure exactly what that article was getting at? Did they object to the bombing or what? I liked the personal notices on the page opposite better than that erudite competition which tickled you so much, particularly the sentimental couple earnestly seeking a four-poster bed and the Unconvent. people, anx, relax. inform. discuss music etc.

Well, I think I'll take a nap too. Lots of love from Kathy and me.

Jill

JILL TO AL JUNE 15, 1944

Hi darling --

You old stinker . I am absolutely black-eyed with fatigue yet I write you after the labors of the day are over, which include doing the family wash, going to the beach all day, making formula and mopping the floors, the last two being my post-supper activities. Yet I persist in sitting down to write you which must prove something, namely, that I am exceptionally fond of you I guess. I did finally get a letter from you today, a V-mail dated June 1st, exceptional too because that has been the date on every letter I've gotten from you the past two weeks. What's the matter. Are you frozen in June, like a sentimental bride or something. Great God, man, you couldn't possibly have written me all those letters in one day, and yet you chaff me on my remembrance of dates, in that dear cavalier manner of yours. And since I am glamorous with suntan, streamlined of limb from all this exercise (I weigh 123 pounds and could not possibly be considered feeble or underweight, lest you fret yourself on that subject) and possessed of the most beautiful and personable child in all Chicago according to the testimony of all who behold her, I am in no mood to be talked down to. Oh yes, and my hair is blonde and my nose is not runny, and all in all I'm feeling very

sassy, in a tired way.

As I said, I spent the day at the beach, leaping in and out of the sub-zero water, and in between chatting with more women with babies than I care to recount. I am a natural friend-maker at the beach, only the friends I make positively make me prone with ennui. But it is difficult to read when the flies are biting and the sun is hot and I still haven't gotten my dark glasses, so thus I while away the time. Kathy was exceedingly fretful today and cried and slept a good part of the time. She is ready to go on three meals a day I believe, and these little transitional moments are always hard on us both. But honestly, I don't keep her in the hot sun for one moment -- I always find a nice shady breezy spot to dump her, so please don't think I mistreat her to advance my own pleasures. As a matter of fact, the day ended up rather nicely for her. She played for a while when she woke up at four with another baby her age and also a little boy of about a year who liked her very much. then we came home and she took a nice bath in the big tub and ate a scanty meal, because the hot weather seems to affect her appetite as it does everybody else's (except mine, which still encompasses the fried pork chop -- baked beans type of menu) and then went to sleep right away. And at least she will turn out to be a good Democrat because she ate the editorial page of the Chicago Sun today. I had put the paper at the foot of her buggy and before I knew it she had scooped it up with her prehensile toes and started to devour it. She got simply furious when I opened her mouth to yank it out. Christ, what a rage type she is. And you were worried that you had spawned a sweet submissive child. You should see the comparison between her and this other five-month-old girl we were sitting with. The other baby was just a little lump of clay by comparison. God, what a household we'll be, with everybody standing on their rights and probably bringing the walls down upon us all. But I am quite convinced I am in love with you and am quite willing to settle down to a life of turmoil with you and yours.

There is a perfect bastard of a fly flitting and buzzing around me as I write this, making communication very difficult indeed. I

always pray when I see a fly that it will drop dead en route, because my efforts to swat them to death always come to naught, but I guess God is too busy with other things. It must be awful to have fleas. Do they hurt like hell like fly bites or just itch? I told Mom you had fleas and she said Cooney had them too. I knew you'd be delighted to hear it. She also said, to reinstate her in her real role of the loving mother, that she couldn't sleep all night, itching for you. But then Mom is always finding excuses to stay awake.

Ed doesn't know yet what he is going to do. He is graduating next thursday and I shall have to start thinking about a suitable gift. It will probably be dough, a ten-spot perhaps?

I like the picture of your spoonfeeding me but my blood curls when you always qualify your domestic activities with a "well, I probably won't be very useful around the house." I don't know if you mean that in modest deprecation of your versatile talents, or whether you are just getting me prepared for a domestic life on the European plan -- the little woman baking cakes, washing socks, keeping the flies off the old man. Because that, my pet, appalls me, since my postwar plans center chiefly about leaping in and out of bed with you, having more babies, maids and trips to the beach. I feel so sorry for the women around here. They spend the whole damn day around the house doing housework and cooking. I guess it's partly because they have husbands to cook for, partly because they probably don't get up as early as I do. Like this morning, I was doing the wash circa eight, despite the fact that Mac slept here and I had to make breakfast and clean up after her. But I still got down to the beach by noon and stayed till six. I guess if I had to cook a big meal I wouldn't be able to do that. But that's neither hence nor thence -- I certainly don't intend for you to starve. I just hope we have a maid. I guess I have free time during the day too because I do a lot of the work, like formula and mopping after supper.

Well, enough of this vainglorious talk. I love you very much and so does Kathy.

Always your

Jill

AL TO JILL JUNE 15, 1944

Jill, Darling,

I am getting worse and worse with my letters. Hardly anything worth reading since Rome fell. Many apologetic kisses to you, however, and a faint hope that you may overlook my present epistolary delinquency in the flood of news you must be reading. I am including the issue of the Stars and Stripes that announced the opening of the second front. I thought you might like to see it. Just think how I must have labored to save that copy amidst all the turmoil of these past days.

Not only that. The test of my great love came when I took off, much to the dismay of everyone, to find your silk stockings, and I found some too; I shall send them by the soonest post. Nice ones, too, sheer and perhaps just a bit too dark. There are five pairs of them at 350 lire a pair. I hope I shall see them on you soon.

By a rather indirect route I received several pictures of you and Kathy in a letter. They show you in your new bathing suit, and from all I can see, or rather, from the little I can see, it was worth 21 dollars. Your figure seems to indicate you are still under the blessed aegis of the goddess Venus. Close examination would probably reveal improvements. I wish I could say the same. I am slightly worn down and feel rather the worse for wear, several weeks of irregular diet, late hours, and nervous tension. I suppose I have lost a few pounds, and I may be getting to look a little like Li'l Abner McGurgle. Nothing that your borscht and lamb roasts won't cure, however. The time has almost come when I can start thinking of being rotated. So I shouldn't have too long to wait. I'll never feel right again until the day I see you again. I thought a second front was what I needed, but it is far

more than that. Therefore, I have yet to see the happiest day in my life.

Kathy looks fine in her pictures. She is really growing into quite a young child. I noticed that her forehead is a lot like mine. Is it in fact, or just a pictorial figment? I was amused by the synthesis of the lovely baby and the bathing beach siren. It looked like one of those superimposed photographic effects. You must admit that at first glance at you, one, not even and especially your husband, doesn't immediately jump to the thought of sweet motherhood -- though one does jump.

I haven't written anyone besides you a letter in a long time. Please give my love to the family. I haven't thanked Daisy for the chocolate bars, now long since disappeared, either. If you write her before me, please thank her well.

I won't say much about what I'm up to, darling. It's only the old business, running in new places and under different circumstances. Anything else the censor wouldn't like. Besides a short letter wouldn't even give you what you must be getting in the newspapers.

All my love, darling. Take good care of yourself and Kathy.

Your Al

End of June (first of two parts) 1944 letters

