

AL TO JILL JUNE 16, 1944

Darling Jill,

Again a poor excuse for a letter, but at least I can add several pictures. Isn't the news wonderful. We're simply plastering the axis from all sides. The B-29s are certainly out of this world. What will we ever do with all the power we have? I hope the world can forget that power is capable of being used for any warlike purpose in due time.

I'm waiting five minutes now for lunch to be served. Then I must leave the city for a day. I have working with me a very nice Italian naval lieutenant. He's done a lot the last few months clandestinely.

I'm feeling fit, have a huge appetite and love you ever more. Your pictures are lovely, too, and I'm becoming infatuated with that tremulous, smile-thru-a-film-of-tears side of you.

I'm glad we're in accord on the house in the country. We'll take our time and do the job properly when I get back. It'll be fun to talk about it at great length. Two great minds working on a decisive problem of housing ourselves for a long time. What gaiety!

All love, dearest.

Al

JILL TO AL JUNE 17, 1944 V-MAIL

Angel --

Even if I didn't use the appellation affectionately (which I did), you look as if you were about to wing your way heaven-wards in that picture of you I got today. It was much appreciated, as was the letter, but you certainly look as if you needed some sleep

and good food, as if you didn't know. Though my cooking has markedly deteriorated since you went away, I can see that I shall have to shovel great quantities of food and soft mattresses at you when you come home. Really, darling, you don't have to work that hard. I'm sure nobody else does, knowing your propensity for trying to live the lives of twenty men in one. Take it easy, you'll live longer, etc. etc.

I suppose I should start thinking about farm lands, although the way I've handled the victory garden, we would starve on what I could grow. There are several good books out for the amateur or would-be farmer, all discouraging, I read in the Sunday book section. I don't know their names but could probably get them at the public library next time I am downtown. What do you think of the idea of just renting a place when you come back, in the country I mean, until we decide what we want to do? I know you'd like to come back to a completely settled life but I hate making big decisions myself.

Thank God it rained today and I've spent most of it around the house, mostly listening entranced to the news broadcasts. The Nazi war prisoners' march through Moscow must have been something to see. The Russians certainly have a gift for grim irony. And the thought of the German civilians fleeing before the Russians in the Baltic area also gives me un-Christian pleasure.

I just spoke to Mom and she wants to know if you would like a salami from her. She is mad because I said you looked thin in your picture -- mad at the Army and mad at you for not resting enough. Would you like some food from me too? I read where families of Jewish soldiers could start sending them presents now for Chanukah (that's the holiday shortly before Christmas, which corresponds to Christmas). Maybe I could get something to you under that pretext, unless they start asking for your union card. Chanukah is a very nice holiday, celebrating the eviction of the pigs from the temple. Don't ask me what the pigs were doing there in the first place. You light one candle every day, increasing the number until you hit seven. Our candelabra tipped over one year while we were downstairs at dinner,

causing a sizable blaze, so we confined our festivities to Christmas after that.

Klaus Ollendorf came over last night. He is that boy who communed with you on the subject of entering your branch, only to be declared 4F later. He is an extremely ugly young man, somewhat on the idea of George de Hussar. He had a car with him so we took a long drive -- Virginia's husband very kindly sat with the baby -- and we ended up at that place where we spent that ill-fated evening with Rosable and Buster. We had some overly salted spare ribs and came home. He is a good friend of Rosable's and she had told him to look me up. It was an amusing evening for a change, making me feel like a girl about town and not a matron once more. I spent the whole day at the lake

[V-mail stops there - next page is missing.]

AL TO JILL JUNE 19, 1944

Jill, Darling,

I feel somewhat more relaxed now and ought to be able to write more and better for the next couple days, after which I'll undoubtedly go hustling off somewhere. It's not that my work has diminished so much as that I've gotten used to not doing it, and, in fact, have finally drawn up this morning a foot-long list of things I haven't done. That makes me feel happy and accomplished.

The food is very good mostly because the dull rations are well prepared by professional hotel cooks. I have a nice room overlooking a garden in the hotel we have taken over. Life is now very civilized. Think of this: Last evening I gave a real cocktail party in the room with Spumante (dry and bubbly), Sarti cognac and real, solid ice, the first in months. Of the people you know about, there was only Brownie Roberts. Rowina Vining, the little Eng.-Irish girl was there, Jack Collins, a swell guy from

New York, Fred Annunziata, also from N.Y., an Italian girl and another Hungarian girl. I was complimented on the deftness of the hospitality (C-rations biscuits included) and feel that all hope is not lost yet and that I may still be very civilized and a credit to our fair home & Kathy.

As if that weren't enough, I went to a tea party at the home of Contessa Gasperini yesterday afternoon, Sunday and met some very charming and interesting people, several of whom I had known before. Gaby, the niece of Ely Culbertson, was there with her Italian aviator husband. She is a lot of fun. There was a British officer from Kenya, a retired Italian general, two professors at the University, my friends Giany Makaus and Walter Lionetti, Lt. Gasperini, just in for a day or so on pass from his arty. outfit with the 8th Army, and two or three rather shy and charming girls. I had such an involved discussion of political science with one of the professors that I couldn't let them practice their English on me. It is still a strain for me to speak Italian, incidentally, I find. That is, a physical and mental strain. When I am very tired, also, I speak very poorly, mumble out a few words and let it go at that.

I left most of my clothing and extra toilet articles and cigarettes in the South. I have been pretty short on smokes, since the Italians are great cigarette moochers, not having any of their own. Today at lunch I got two packs, however.

It has been several days since your last letter, May 26. I hope the last two weeks have passed for you with the same wonderful speed they have for me. How incomparable you are to any girl I've ever seen!

Many kisses to you, and Kathy, too.

Al

JILL TO AL JUNE 15? 1944 V-MAIL

[Probably June 20]

[in ink]

Darling --

a red-letter day for me with two letters from you - the fateful 6 of June and the 11th, and a package full of Sardinian dainties. Darling, I don't blame you at all for not writing. Even my meager civilian imagination can conjure images of the exciting, busy life that must be yours. (Mine is not so exciting - I'm writing this at the lake, swimming while Kathy takes her 1-3 PM nap -- I hate staying in and doing housework at this hour and the lake is the next quietest place for her to be). The package from Sardinia was of varied contents to say the least. I am sorry to tell you that the two cigarette boxes broke at the hinges in transit. I hope the local Leonardo who did them didn't sock you too much for them. I appreciate your getting them very much and I hope you won't be mad if I tell you they have not turned out to be any masterpieces of functional (and ergo aesthetic) design. The books look interesting *[typed]* (damn, I always run out of ink when I get down to the lake) but will have to await a bookcase ere they are displayed publicly. The little doll looks like a hex device of some sort, fascinating in a horrid way. I hope you didn't mean it for Kathy to play with, but only for her education in a visual way. The incomparable Flossie, pride of a Mrs. Oppenheim upstairs, who has just left her husband and gone to new York, is coming to work for lucky me tomorrow so I shall have her wash out your underwear and shirt. It's funny but everything smells so awful after it's been sent from abroad. Moldy or something. A lot of things smell moldy in this apartment so I should be used to the smell but apparently not.

Christ we're doing well in Europe don't you think? It really shouldn't be long now. But you can understand how it is possible for me to keep writing about maids and trips to the lake and stuff like that, can't you? It's still pretty much in the

headlines to us back home.

I had a nice time at the lake today. We went to the rocks at 53rd and as the weather was not very hot, I put Kathy's mattress on the rocks and she played and kicked all afternoon. There were a lot of girls down there, airline stewardesses from United on their day off and they played with her, leaving me to stretch and sun for a little while anyway. I still think gals like that have an exciting life, even if they are all University of Illinois sorority sisters. Maybe I'm stupid too, but I a helluva lot rather work for *[page 2 dated June 20]* an airline than do research for Sam Stouffer in an out of the social science building. I guess I just wasn't cut out to be an intellectual, except in a very cursory fashion. Of course, in my present capacity I don't envy them. Rather, am I the envy of them, since every right-minded female (except the ones who do work in the S. S. building) openly and blatantly wants a man, money and kinder (the middle item being the least important).

Did I tell you that when you mentioned meeting a guy named Sam Strang, that I knew him back in my social science days. A horrible misfit he was then, full of feelings of persecution, etc. etc. Honestly, that sociology department collected more sad sacks than all the KP details in Christendom. I am ashamed to admit that I ever took courses in the department and I am probably one of the few living examples of the U. of C. soc. student who has lacking notably glaring defect of face, form, or social adjustment.

Kathy is so tan that people are beginning to chaff me about her being a little colored baby, which I do not consider the highest form of humor. The next time somebody says that, I shall sick her on them, and next to having Cooney bite one's legs, Kathy's grip of steel on one's face and hair is the most frightful assault in miniature that a human can bear.

I got a letter from Liz Evers yesterday. She is seriously considering coming to visit me in August, as I suggested, unless the unexpectedly wonderful happens -- that you come home. I

guess the poor gal is pretty depressed, having to stay with her mother who is apparently no rose. And the baby cries a lot, she says. I think one of the reasons Kathy is so good-natured is that her doctor is so good and has always made sure she had just the right foods and formula. Pediatricians vary a lot in their prescriptions and I think we chanced upon a particularly good one. Diana has had some trouble too. She got a local infection and had to go back to the hospital with the baby. But it didn't turn out to be serious and she is back home again. She is able to nurse the baby in entirety, which is very unusual and enviable.

So much for our friends and their babies. You know, I was thinking. I wrote you yesterday that I didn't think I needed but 150 a month, but I started adding up my theoretical expenses and if I keep this maid, which would be nice since I don't feel much like doing housework in the summer months, I think I need 175. But really no more.

[in ink] I showed Kathy the little doll and she grabbed at it, but I wouldn't let her play with it, thinking to save it for her old age, relatively speaking. I haven't let her play with beautiful Cat, which is the admiration of all the little girls who come to visit her, either. She has quite a few rattles anyway, and actually enjoys playing with anything like clothes, pins, eyeglass cases or cellophane.

Darling, this is the end of the line, this new V-mail gyps me for space. But there's enough to tell you I love you passionately.

Always your

Jill

AL TO JILL JUNE 20, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

After a good night's sleep I feel about as good as Kathy does all the time. I ate two helpings for lunch and don't even feel sleepy. I can't understand that still, since all my life I have dozed after lunch. Perhaps I've had a change of life. It has rained like the devil here for the past day or so, an extraordinary thing for central Italy. Naturally my fine new raincoat is in the South with the rest of my belongings and I got wet. This morning Hartsshorne handed me a long article from the New York Times about the big controversy between Hutchins and faculty at the University and it looks like a real squabble this time. Somebody must give in sometime. I hope that between them they don't tear the University apart. My sympathies offhand are all with the faculty. If Hutchins wants to start a cult, let him go off in a corner and start one. But a faculty shouldn't be cudgeled into expressing one dogma only. Obviously, a university does not teach by force or compulsion. If so, then, and Hutchins is the last to deny it, it must convert by reasoning. If the faculty does not follow his reasoning, they cannot be evicted. If they are wrong, presumably the pure reason and unshakable logic he is so convinced of ought to be able to bring them around. I think that in the back of his mind there is purely and simply the desire to propagandize his ideas, and he would like to found another Peripatetic School. But he was never one to realize the irrational factors in his character.

One would think that the most interesting news for me is still in Chicago. Well it is. I wish I could get pictures all the time of you and Kathy at play and work. And letters, too. I haven't had one for several days. I think it won't be long, really, before we're together again. And if I were to prepare a list of all the things I would like to do the first day, it would be miles long. Chances are that we will mostly stare at each other blankly and play with the baby, with a crowd of howling friends about our necks and ears all the time.

Life these few days is definitely pre-war except that the bars are open for a couple hours a day only and there is no food available outside of the rations. I'll don't think I'll be staying. The Northwind calls. I hope I get to Berlin to sow salt on the rubble. Many Fascists are escaping to the North. They will have a holy hell of a gauntlet to run before long.

All my love, darling, and kisses to Kathy.

Your Al

PWB Naples has come up in force -- day by day trucks arrive. John Reynor is in charge of operations; Lt. Col. Culligan is military head. Alfred finds it no problem to be under two bosses, especially since neither gives him any orders and he stays in "D Section," for the time being. He laments the loss of his jeep, turned into the motor pool by general order. He goes onto the street and seizes a halted car, signs for the owner a slip of paper telling him that he can apply for compensation at some future date. It's one way of getting transport, also a form of looting. He has his eyes set upon a whole garage of cars, in fact, and envisions his comrades driving about town in style, but when he shows up to make the final arrangement for requisitioning them, a blustering Air Corps Lieutenant has preceded him and waves convincing hunting licenses in his face, so he slinks off humiliated.

He lends his seized car to Gianni Makaus who drives it to Ostia near where he had concealed his uniform and valuables when the Germans took over and he had gone underground; his watch and most of the other stuff is retrieved. He also brings back with him a batch of fresh sole, the most delicious fish that Alfred, quite deprived of seafood, can ever have tasted. But the car he seized is stolen by persons unknown, probably by its owner. He wonders whether the man will ultimately be compensated for the car on the basis of his piece of paper, while having the car as well. Now the Lieutenant must use cabs or the motor pool of the newly established HQ of PWB, a handsome modern office building next to the hotel where the personnel live and eat.

Soon, however, he rents an apartment with a garden, not far away. Rome is still a manageable city. One can walk from one end to the other in the course of the morning. As soon as he moves in, he throws a party for the old gang, combined a little differently into a new gang: Brown Roberts (he never did leave the theater), Rowina Vining, the clever Irish girl who carries on now as a kind of office manager for "D Section," Fred Annunziata, an OWI radio engineer, Jack Collins from Manhattan and Seattle who had worked for the Associated Press, Gianni Makaus, Lt. Gasperini of the Italian artillery that is now attached to the Eighth Army, *et al.*, not to mention the aforesaid beautiful Hungarian, and more and more people, visitors from the Army Teams, and the Bianca set. It is really too much for him; he is not a socialite. At one gathering, somebody -- it might have been himself -- tipsily tips a gas lamp and sets fire to the place. They put it out in short order, but the apartment will never be the same, thankfully.

Clara escorts him to a great Mass at St. Peter's Cathedral. Trucks from a hundred Army units push into the square. Never has such a sea of khaki swept over the flagstones and in through the grand doors. The Pope presides. The crowd stands reverently still for the Alta Maggiore, one hour at least, a platoon of officiating priests, music, hymns, bells swirling their sounds through the air swallowing all human breath, so loud as to be tasted. Clara knows the Mass, the ritual, when to kneel, when to cross oneself, when to repeat the Latin and Greek. He merely copies some of what she does. It may have been the first full Mass of his life. She looks so serene and lovely in profile; it makes him fond of her; he hopes she was not praying for him to fall in love with her, to have his love for life.

When asked, she says she is a ballerina. She could be: her legs are sturdy; she walks well; she does not flinch at people, peek, engage in useless gestures. Anyhow, what else can a girl of twenty-three years in Rome in 1944 say that she is: it is either that or a student. Perhaps she could say she worked in the movies, which at the moment were shut down. She lives with her mother in a small flat next in Messagero Piazza. Her father is a Hungarian army officer last seen heading for the Russian Front and extinction. Clara has a beauty that only Hungarians, or so it seems at times, can possess, a blondness without pink, suffused overall, brown eyes, a skin white and firm. She is quiet,

even-tempered, honest, un-demanding, just the kind of person you would want to have around if life were hectic, you were cagey about flamboyant Italian women, you had important privileges to dispense, and you hoped to move on one of these days to points north, like Berlin for instance.

She is not of the swinging set, too poor, too unconnected (Moffa directs films, Gasperini's mother is a countess -- and gives a nice tea party to them all --, Bianca's father is the petroleum distributor for Standard Oil in Naples, there is the daughter of Eli Culbertson, the great bridge expert who wrote, Alfred knows, a good book on world government, and so on), but she carries herself perfectly and is well-liked by women who in a way envy her and might have disparaged her, and by men who might have chosen not to respect her.

As usual, he does damned little for her, and she probably needs a lot, except to introduce her as the occasion demands, have her for meals whenever possible, take her to view a church -- or does she take him? -- walk about with her in the evenings, and provide a sexual partner who may or may not have been premier in her experience but probably was -- at least she acts as if that were the case. Somehow all the propaganda, circulating in both male and female circles, that a man must continually show his affections by gifts in order to please a woman, has not captured him. Perhaps the propaganda is false. The subject is fascinating. Perhaps what counts is that he does not indulge himself materially, on gifts to others, on clothing, cars, and what-not. Not being greedy, he does not attract greed.

He would be quite drowned in the almost purely Italian milieu if it were not for occasional visitors haunting him with yesteryear. George Peck comes to town and is his guest. Last seen at Pacific Palisades in California, with his wife Christine Palmer, at the home of Giuseppe and Elizabeth Mann Borgese. (Alfred happens to be finishing Giuseppe's latest book on the war and the peace to follow, *Common Cause*; he has just received a letter from him as well.)

AL TO JILL JUNE 21, 1944

Dearest Jill,

This is probably the coolest central Italian summer in many a year. So far we have hardly had a hot day. I am still wearing woolen clothing and don't feel any ill effects. I haven't yet found a suitable box for sending you the silk stockings but patience will have its reward one day. And maybe I will get to see you in these ones soon. What a lovely sight that would be. It's about time that I get another picture of Kathy, don't you think? She changes remarkably from one film to another, always looking older, more preoccupied, and glamorous. Like her mother, except that I can't for the life of me detect any difference in your looks between now and the time I first met you. And no attempt at sober studio photography makes the slightest difference to me. You still look like an ingenue frightened of a camera.

My friend Capt. Gian (but not to use his name) borrowed my topolino (Mickey Mouse in Italian, a tiny Fiat car) the night before last to go to a place by the sea where he had hidden some of his clothing and his watch when the SS was out hunting for him. He found his clothing gone but recovered the watch. The SS did catch him and he was about to be shot when we landed at Anzio. The Germans burned all the records and afterwards didn't know who was who in the cell where they had these men. So they interrogated them, and Gian told them he was dealing in the black market, so they let him go on the condition he act as an interpreter for the Germans. He agreed and that was the last they saw of him.

Well, I started out to say that he brought back some fresh sole, and this morning at breakfast I had a large filet of sole served up. Nice, huh? We must have lots of gorgeous fish dinners when I get back. I have famished for decent fish dishes for a long time. Do you remember the nice fish dinner we had with Walter and Daisy one time in New York? I really enjoyed that very much. Let's have great lobsters, and broiled halibut running over with butter, and millions of blue points, cold, fresh

and sparkling. And we'll have bottles of white wine with the fish, dry and tangy, and crunchy white bread that is a blood relation to the wine.

Liv H. is going back to Washington as a Lt. Comdr. I'm sorry to see him go through I haven't seen much of him in the last couple of months. He is going to call you on the phone when he gets there and tell you in so many words that I am all right. Not that you could ever think otherwise. I am thinner, though, I am frank to confess at the moment, and have lost the urge to rack my body with physical exercises. However, under better conditions I would probably recover the urge and the poundage. You must get me back on the farm where I can eat bacon and eggs every morning and chop wood.

Many lingering kisses to you, darling.

Al

AL TO JILL JUNE 22, 1944 V-MAIL

Dear Love,

Now the shoe is on the other foot and I have had no word from you for a week or so, a pitiable condition indeed. Fortunately I have been able to put my hands on a couple of bottles of Sarti cognac, the original, and am consoled thereby. Since I wrote you yesterday, I've worked, had a good meal, met an indeterminate number of people whose names will probably be forever mixed up in my mind and have looked in vain for a carton to send home stockings in. About the people, many of them have calling cards, but that doesn't do any good because when I see them again I triumphantly pull out one from the dozens that line my pockets and it's invariable the wrong name. The good meal was at the hands of a couple from the Alto Adigo who have been more or less hidden in Rome for several years for anti-German activity up there. The man was educated to be an economist in Florence but was one of the best skiers in

Italy. He was chief trainer in the Eastern Alps region. The politics of our time have certainly wrecked a lot of lives. I meet people like him all the time. He built a beautiful Alpine home on a snowy mountain, lived there for one month, and was chased out by the Gestapo. I saw pictures of the place and it is really a thing you would love.

A woman friend of mine today asked me if I wouldn't ask you to buy her a pair of shoes. She very kindly picked me up, dirty and bedraggled on the first morning, and gave me a fine clean bed. Her husband was very nice to me and Brownie too. I stayed there for three nights. So if you have any coupons left and can spare them, you might buy her a pair that corresponds to the following description: walking and sport shoes, low-heeled, thick gum or rubber soles, wide in front and very soft leather material, size 38 1/2 Italian size, maroon or beige color, or chamois skin instead of leather. If you can't get them or lack coupons, you might have a pair of yours somewhat like the description that you wouldn't mind getting rid of.

I haven't been able to get my laundry done yet for lack of water and electric current, nor has my baggage arrived yet from the South. Annoying, isn't it, this blitz business? I wonder when we'll finish off the whole damn thing and get home. I wish I could see Kathy; she must by now be a delightful creature and slightly puzzled by the singularity of parentage. Time to eat dinner now. It's seven fifteen and all is well. I'm glad the day is over. I get tired talking Italian a lot, specially when the subjects discussed must be handled carefully.

Me for the homestead you and Kathy. Al

JILL TO AL JUNE 23, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

I am absolutely splitting at the seams from a hastily downed and self-indulgent meal of spare ribs, baked potatoes, cabbage and

beer, my bastard Germanism suddenly coming to the fore. But I think I earned it, since I spent a busy half day cleaning the house and doing the laundry, and the rest of it dashing down to the lake for a sunbath and swim. You'd think I'd be something terrific and brown after all this sun but actually I'm only a light indefinite tan, nothing at all like you used to get. The allegedly jewel-like Flossie, the cleaning woman from upstairs, just didn't show up as she was supposed to today, no great surprise to me, ergo all the domestic activity. I got your letter of June 12 today and was glad you got the pictures but agreed with your implied comment that they were no good of me. I don't know why I take such awful pictures -- I'm just terribly and uncontrollably self-conscious in front of a camera. I suddenly feel my face, if you know what I mean. The rest of the time I'm quite happy about it as a matter of fact. But it's nothing you can try to correct with harsh commands to go and do otherwise because I've tried myself and simply nothing can be done about it.

I think I'm a little tight. I just ate and probably waited too long, it being nine o'clock. But I had a super -- don't ask me to finish that sentence. Two days have gone by since the great thought I would have had, had I remembered it was conceived. This letter was interrupted by some event or visitor or phone call long since forgot, and then yesterday I went to the folks' for Ed's graduation (which I mercifully didn't have to attend) and then didn't have time to write you. yesterday was, to say the least, exhausting. I departed about ten with Kathy, laden with milk bottles, sneakers, bathing suite and even a quart of Bourbon for Dad on Father's Day. We took a cab to the Loop, where I planned to make a quick call on the eye doctor and pick up my new glasses, but the damn fool had screwed up the order so I had to wait in his office an hour until he straightened it out. Meanwhile Kathy laughed, sighed and yawned audibly. Finally we got the bus to Addison St. where we arrived hot, sweaty and hungry. Immediately after lunch I was commissioned by Mom to take Cooney to the lake and bathe him. Cooney has been terribly sexy of late and goes out and rolls in malodorous

substances, and also has fallen in love with Mom and keeps following her around and sniffing at her. We dashed down to the lake, took a life buoy bath which didn't make much of an impression on him though left me feeling fit as an advertisement. Then we dashed back, my being very homesick for Kathy, who was having a fine time all along playing on the couch on the back porch. naturally some of Mom's friends dropped over to see her. We had dinner and then Kathy and I went home. Eddy was going out with his friends after the exercises so there wasn't much point to my staying around. Kathy loves the boys and their records and Cooney, who surprisingly enough likes her, and also Dad, so she fits right into the family. She wasn't half as tired as I was when we got back, although she slept very little. However, today she's been asleep most of the day, and so have I, for that matter. She got a terrific bang out of the ride down to the Loop in the springless Checker cab. In the first place the top gadget was open so quite a breeze was blowing at us. She kept looking at me and smiling, as if I were creating this new and bouncy diversion for her. I wonder at what point they start realizing that their mother is not the source of all phenomena, good and bad. it's quite clear that now she thinks I do all these things, and I think I'm getting infected with this feeling of a minor deity, for now when we go under the IC underpass I say to her, "See, Momma made the lights go out."

Gosh, darling, I'm beginning to share your feeling that you'll be back by Kathy's birthday. I guess I ought to learn how to bake a cake for the two of you then. Won't it be wonderful to be together again? I'll probably become such a clinging vine that, as with going to the lake without Kathy, I won't be able to go to the corner without you without fleeing back instantly. And it will be very nice not to write letters for a change. Now that the really hot weather is upon us again, I sure don't feel much like writing, even to you. All I want to do is lie down and suck my thumb, like Kathy. At the moment she is lying on the couch, watching fascinated while Momma makes a banging noise and she is playing absentmindedly with a piece of string. She slept four

hours this afternoon, missing her bottle, both of which events are unheard of around here. Yet she doesn't seem to be very hungry and mind waiting while I finish this.

There was a terrible thunderstorm last night which just about frightened me out of my wits. And good housewife that I am, I got up to close the windows (really just a byproduct out of having to get up to go to the john) and the lighting was streaking against the windows with the most awful effect. I finally let out one piercing yell "Al!" and hightailed it back into bed, whither I hid my head under the already suffocating covers.

Laura called up today. All kinds of weird people like George McElroy and Brewster Adams are in town on leave so she is thinking of giving a party tomorrow night. Laura is kind of main headquarters when anybody from the class of 38, 39, and 40 drops into town. I may go except that I think in a benevolent moment I invited Virginia's Hin to dinner, so I may have to drag him, which should prove fascinating to all concerned, since it is absolutely impossible to understand anything he says in his low German accent unless he writes it on a blackboard, which he frequently resorts to.

I ought to run out and get a paper, to see if we have taken Cherbourg yet. It's amazing and wonderful how fast the Allied Armies go to the center of town already.

So, darling, I'll write you more tomorrow, from the beach no doubt. Keep well and remember I have a million kisses for you.

Always your Jill

P. S. G.O.P. convenes this next week. Bet that fart Dewey gets it on the first.

AL TO JILL JUNE 23, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

I just saw two sackfuls of mail come in below and I am sure there must be something for me amidst it all, but I'll get this letter off anyway. I haven't accomplished very much today. Or so it seems always when one is frustrated by little things like not having a car handy when the time comes to go somewhere, or not being able to get rations for one purpose or another, or losing touch with people in the very disconnected world in which we serve. I am sometimes reminded of the story of little Sambo and the tigers when I observe the hordes of people chasing each other around in an uncoordinated fashion. They all have hold of each other's tail and it won't be long under the hot Italian sun before they'll be turned to rich creamery butter. And like little Sambo, I hope I will be around for the welcome supplement to my rations.

The news is too stupefying to be appreciated. America is now fully wound up and striking with everything everywhere. Or so it seems, although I realize that bigger things are yet to come. But while we stagger the Germans at Cherbourg, and kick them in the pants in Italy, we knock down the rest of Berlin with a couple of thousand planes and destroy part of the main Japanese fleet. I am slightly dizzy from it all and it is a good time to realize how insignificant any one man's part is. And yet the whole organ is nothing more or less than a number of millions of people like myself wondering largely about when he'll be able to see and hold just one other person again.

I am sadly in need of a bath and suppose that I ought to go to my room and scrub myself down. Again I think wistfully of my own bathtub in Chicago, even allowing for a slight confusion which will undoubtedly result from you and Kathy crowding around. It will at least be familiar and clean, and the water may be warm.

My letter was just interrupted by a mad fellow who has just been

down to Naples. Some of these guys are funnier than hell, completely out of this world. I am talking about the young, rich Italian officer class. The war is full of coincidences, too. A number of months ago he was trying to cross the lines just at the point I was at the time. It was in the Venafro sector.

I'll finish this now and see if I have any mail. All my love to you, sweetheart, even if I don't. Give my Kathy a hug, and say hello to the family.

Your Al

AL TO JILL JUNE 25, 1944

[Note: This may be June 26, or the last letter June 24]

Jill, my darling,

The mail of the last two days has put me in a desperate position. Yesterday I got about eight letters from you and some miscellany, the first mail with two exceptions since a while before the fall of Rome. Today came more miscellany like Time magazines, a letter from Buzz and one from Earl Johnson, and about nine letters from you. What can I do? I've read them all until my eyes are red slits and yet feel as if I've not digested any part of them. And I feel that a flood of mail in reply is owing, but despair of keeping up physically and temporally with it. And then you so gently and kindly say that you have been receiving such nice letters from me, when I remember too well and with great shame how fragmentary and trite have been my letters of the past three weeks. To take one day, for an example, that of the invasion. You wrote a letter describing your feelings on it. I didn't. I said something, I recall, in a dazed fashion and let it go at that. It's partly a matter of time and over-excitation. One gets pricked so often by needles that finally daggers only cause blunt, vague emotions. I didn't cry, like you did. All I remember saying was muttering a few times to various people "Christ, they've really got going." Or some such silly thing. And where

we were it was hard to tell whether the excitement of any particular group was caused by the invasion or by the liberation of Rome.

My general impression of all your letters put together is a very happy one. They are generally in a tone of being very interested in what you are doing, especially regarding the little baby, and of realization that the worst of the waiting is over and we may well be coasting downhill to our great reunion. I feel the same emotions too. I can, if I want to indulge in such masochism, ponder all the unhappy elements of my present state and end up in a fine sweat of melancholy, but I have found a more rigid, intellectual approach to the problem of the separation easier on the heart. I know what I know, and the probability of a final happy end makes too much emotional suffering based on the knowledge wasteful and harmful. There is nothing to be sick about in the fact that we shall be together soon, that we shall live together in the country if we can buy a suitable shack and something bigger than a victory garden, and that I love you more than a mere chemical explanation of life and love can describe.

I attended mass at St. Peter's yesterday. Trucks with soldiers came from many miles around. It was a magnificent sight to see the great mass of khaki sweeping into the gigantic doors of the church from the enormous square. There were so many of them and every man looked so tiny in the vast spaces of flagstone and the lofty framework of the colonnade that the pealing of the bells seemed to sweep through them like a breeze waving the grass of a field. The mass was the *alta maggiore* and took an hour of standing still. The music and hymns were beautiful and a number of priests participated. I wasn't very adept at the ritual and managed the sign of the cross and little else. The next time I shall bring along a prayer book and find out what it is all about.

Alberto Moravia gave me a book of his short stories yesterday and I'll see him and his wife again today. I picked them up in a rather sad state in some mountains to the south after they had been hiding out for a number of months and helped them back

to civilization. The story is a very interesting one in the little details which can't be dealt with here, at least not while I have a howling mob to face outside the door -- well, two people anyway. I just feel they are a mob because they all present complex problems which seem too much for any one or two people. And they are continuous. But yesterday I took the whole day off in a ruthless fashion that I am proud of today. After mass I had a most wonderful dinner at the home of some friends. Zucchini made in a fashion that was heavenly, baked in a pastry with cheese and crumb layers and flavored with olive oil. I also had pasta asciutta and fine red wine which is most difficult to find in these parts these days. If I had no stern conscience and not so much work, I could enjoy fine dinners more.

God, they burst through. Let my final words for today be "I love you." Many kisses, to be shared with Kathy.

Your

Al

JILL TO AL JUNE 26, 1944 V-MAIL

Angel --

I too have horrible guilt feelings about not writing you, and with far less reason to omit writing than you have. In fact, the only reason I can give is extreme fatigue due to the heat, the daily trips to the beach, and the mad mad whirl of people that have descended on me. And I feel doubly the hell for not having written you over the weekend because this morning, Monday's mail, brought me four fine letters from you, including some simply wonderful pictures from Sardinia, so good that I doubt that they were taken by our 4-F El Paso camera, a classification that you may resent since I don't know what your feelings towards that camera are. Mom is here and has been most of the day because I had to see Greenhill and the dentist both in one full day, so I've only had time to read your letters once, and

therefore won't be able to answer them fully until I get some time and what is more important, energy, to read them again. But I do remember, disturbingly, your confession that you are not feeling up to par. Darling, I know how you hate free advice, but I really think you ought to try vitamin B pills. They do wonders for me and for anybody else, for that matter, who is nervous-tired-rundown. If you can't get the capsule concentrates, get regular brewer's yeast which is just as good and a lot cheaper. The doctor a long time ago told me to take six or eight of them a day, which I didn't do because I don't like the taste. But you try it anyway. Advice is cheap. They make you terribly hungry, which you don't need, and more important, ease that tired feeling. I don't think you should drink coffee either, no matter how tired you feel. I had two cups today, for the first time in ages, and also a coke because I was so tired, and am nervous as a fox tonight.

The trip to Greenhill was only routine, six months after the baby is born, and he found me in wonderful shape, with nary a scar to show for it. I am flat, firm and free from any of the ailments one might pick up after childbirth. The dentist put in an inlay and also told me about a divine, according to him, house for rent very cheap in Michina shores which intrigues my imagination, since I am heartily sick of apartment house life. I may even take a trip down there some time to see it. But more of that later, when the enthusiasm is tempered with reason and also when I see it. But honestly, when you think of how long it will take for any of us to fulfill our postwar plans, and the horrible alternatives of living in a little box like this or worse, yet, a forty-year-old biggish tenement, the more I just want to light out of this underbuilt overcrowded blighted city.

To review the dull tread of my days before getting to the more exciting discussion of your letters, Friday night Tom and Joan came over and that took up time. Tom is fine and bored with replacing a Wac in N.H. Saturday I went to the beach and Saturday night Bill came for dinner and then we went to Laura's party, where Bob Brumbaugh's wife, Butch Arnold's wife, all sans husbands, Jerry, Morit, and Warren Kahn and the Berquist

sisters held forth. It was pleasant and familiar and a little dull as a gathering and they all send love. The two first-named men are both in (sh-sh) cryptography down in Washington. Sunday I went to the lake again with Virginia's husband, and there I caught a glimpse of Gertie Goldsmith who was too far ahead to accost, a girl who live next to me at Smith -- I think you met her once at Int. House, very wacky -- and other miscellaneous people. I was tired and made formula and went to bed that night, unable to sleep for the heat. Today, this morning that is, I went shopping on 55th before Mom came and who do you think I ran into but Bob Lochner, just in town for a few days to see his sister. He is in the shortwave department of NBC, doing the same stuff he's been doing for quite a while. He sends his best to you. Isn't it funny how everybody from the department has gravitated into psych. warfare. Then I ran into Ruth Shils this aft on my way to the IC, but thank god didn't have time to talk to her. Now you know why I've been too tired to write.

You really look awfully well in those Sardinian pictures and I was touched beyond words to see you holding the dove. As Mom commented, the pictures must have been taken before you got skinny. P P S Mom sends love.

Amazing that the pictures I sent showed up Kathy's typically Ed-Al DeG forehead. It's really all there. Also characteristic of you and Ed is a very full red mouth, somewhat turned down at the corners. She is beginning to get the funniest mannerisms -- one of wrinkling up her nose which is short and concave like Dad's, so much so that there are tiny lines of wrinkles across the middle part. She has also and mysteriously learned to make a Bronx cheer and it is most embarrassing to me as we walk down crowded thoroughfares, since nobody will believe that a baby can make such a noise. Oh, somebody around the juncture of Cornell and 55th lit up to me yesterday and said, "Oh that's Al DeGrazia's baby, isn't it?" She turned out to be one Rose Azelrod, whom I didn't know very well at school who also has a nice child of about 10 months, out of one Marty Lieberman. I hope you remember all these people. I hardly do. She knew it was yours because somebody else, Ruth Broday I

think, had pointed out the baby when I was in a store another time. This letter is getting more involved than I had ever bargained for.

Kathy can also sit up all by herself now, and it's claimed that she got up from a lying to a sitting position all by herself -- by Hin, the great moment occurring when I was in the water yesterday. She can also say "Boobooboo" and likes to dangle her feet in the lake. I tried that on her yesterday too. So you see, there's no stopping this miraculous child of ours, unless she get another one, even more miraculous. Which is of course just what I'd like to do. God darling, it's so awful the way I miss you and so wonderful when I get a raft of letters like today, bringing you back just so much closer to me. And the news is so good from Russian and France too. I think it's amazing how fast they got into Cherbourg, don't you? But getting back to you, I think that best of all I remember the way you feel, so that even when I see a new picture of you, it makes me think of how you feel rather than how you look, or rather, also. I can remember you feeling very slick and cool, like an educated seal, and that rather unfortunate analogy is prolonged when I think of you playing the trumpet. And your hair is very soft and black - hell I might as well go to the circus.

Darling, I didn't mean to be so silly. I do love you so much. Jill

JILL TO AL JUNE 27, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

I've just been reading some of your old, April to be specific, letters in a vain effort to straighten out my drawer. How I wish I had the time and the eyesight to read and re-read every one of your letters endlessly, so that I would remember every word for ever. It always distresses me when I read an old letter to discover that I had quite forgotten some part of it, if not all. I am starting in a waste paper drive in the house, specifically directed against my old sociology books and some awful crap you have

lying around (never fear, I shall be discreet) but one thing that will never go in it is the box full of your letters. Until the president has to write his speeches on birchbark will I hold on to them.

Your cocktail party sounded nice, probably a lot more civilized than anything I ever do here, where my entertaining goes no further than taking a quart of beer out of the icebox and handing it and the opener to the guest in question. If he or she wants a glass he can always find one in the bathroom. And you make my mouth water with your talk of fresh fish dinners. I too am a devotee of freshly-caught stuff but you have to live near a place where you can get fish easily. I've never had any decent fish in Chicago, one more cogent reason for us moving out and I am getting quite inflamed with that idea, as you will continue to note in successive letters. It was 98 today so you can hardly blame me. I dragged us down to the lake with Priscilla Berquist, who is really a very nice girl, much nicer than Laura if not so vivacious, and we really suffered. The awful part of it was that the water in the lake was just icy, it being an offshore wind, and you couldn't stay in to keep cool. The grass was unbearable and full of flies, so we fed and dangled Kathy right by, and hazardously so, the water's edge. With great pain we came back around five and I took a shower and gave her one, and now I am very cool, because it is so cool in this basement apartment, its only charm I might add.

I'm excited about the stockings you plan to send. Angel, I hope they are big enough this time, size 10 1/2. Generally, and I mean no harm by this, I don't think you ought to buy me any more clothes, because you, through no fault of yours but all the variables inherent in the buying of women's clothes, buy me the wrong size, usually too small which may reflect some notions you have of my personality. I like to be thought of as a helpless little thing, but leave us face it, I have a very big chest, hands and feet, although otherwise am a dainty creature. I also have muscles in my stomach like a wrestler, the result of doing some esoteric exercise twice on the beach. By the way, how much is 250 lire, what you paid for the stockings. I shall shudder if it's

too much.

I just wrote Buss and Mir thanking them for Kathy's high-low chair. I'd been putting it off for weeks. For a girl who used to be such a prolific letter-writer, I certainly have developed a distaste for the pastime. Maybe it's the weather. But even if I write you silly, badly typed, ungrammatical, short letters these days, I still love you very much and wish you were with me now.

Jill

AL TO JILL JUNE 27, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

Your letters are arriving in fearful and wonderful abundance. Wonderful because you are always wonderful and I love you very much, fearful because two letters this morning practically announced your complete alienation of affections for me because of something I said regarding Dewey. I can't possibly answer you properly and in that sense your excess of denunciation is probably ill-mannered and unfair. I have a hell of a lot to do. I feel like the Mauldin GI in the crevice of a mountain who was being asked by a reporter what he thought of some abstruse political issue. On the other hand you are amusing for trying to confound me with an argument I formerly belabored you with and to which you objected, namely that political accord is part of love too. Briefly then, though your only arguments were heated threats to diminish your love for me, I can say a thing or two about the substance of the Dewey statement. In the first place, you can set your soul at ease about any fundamental disaccord between us. If I ever did accept him by voting for him, it was not because we disagree in our political philosophy. You and I agree pretty well on that. It is because I see a greater possibility of achieving our mutual ideals in different means. In other words my analysis of the practical political situation is different and therefore our political actions may deviate slightly. You are very silly to accuse me of having

no political philosophy. On the contrary, it is you who are infatuated with the personality of a politician like Roosevelt to the extent of ignoring the political results of his personality when mixed up with all the other factors in the complex political situation. I stick to my ideals and insist that they are greater than any single man. To cut the whole business, anyway, I never said I would vote for Dewey and probably won't, and furthermore, in any event no emotional withholding on your part could blackmail me into changing an intellectual decision. Especially at the moment when I am besieged by every kind of personal pulling and tugging which I hate and which takes much of my energy to resist. To have it come in the back door and from you is startling and then depressing.

I got a letter from Dad too this morning, praising Kathy to the skies. Give everyone my love. I can't write more now.

Many kisses from your sweetheart,

Al

JILL TO AL JUNE 28, 1944

Darling --

You know what, it was 100 yesterday, not 98 as I said in my heat-ridden letter. Today it seems to be just as hot but I had the sense to stay in a good part of the time and not run down to the lake, so I really feel pretty good. I had a nap this afternoon when Kathy took hers, a practice which I ought to follow more of the time. It's about 4:30 now and still hot as hell though the temperature is supposed to go down by tonight. Kathy is lying on the floor not doing much except talking. I got her a playpen and pad but only the pad came -- I don't think the playpen will for a couple of months, so I just put the pad on the floor and she lies on it.

Isn't it funny the way one becomes obsessed with the weather,

when it hits extremes. Actually, there are a lot more important things to talk about and read about, but my sole purpose in buying an afternoon paper these days is to see what the temperature is. As a matter of fact the papers are full of news -- a lousy Vichyite slain in Paris which is good, and here it will probably be Dewey and Disaster, or Dewey and Defeat, or Dewey and DogDays (to offend the dogs) -- take your pick. I have an unlimited supply. Or how about Dewey and Damnation, Dewey and Depression, Dewey and Darkness, as long as I'm going? Those Roosevelt and Ruin boys have finally met their master, in the person muscular, Kathy-tending, lake-loving, keen-witted Jill DeG.

I just got your letter, a V-mail of June 20 which has you pointing your great nose northward, to take a leaf from us nautical, Republican-hating, Roosevelt-loving Oppenheims. (How did I get started on this anyway?) I think you're right about the Hutch faculty controversy too, although I don't know any more about it than you do at your distance, or possibly less. Anyway I am against this idea of a strictly classical education, though perhaps for different reasons than his opponents in the social sciences. I think there should be much more of an emphasis on the physical sciences in the high schools and lower colleges, not perhaps as they are taught now, but as they should be taught so as to give people more of an ability to cope with their physical environment. You speak of how abysmally dull most of the people you've met are, how incapable they are of adjusting to the simplest situations. Possibly it's because education in this country hasn't taught them to take things apart and put their together. Anyway, it hasn't even given them the logical framework for approaching the problems of physical existence. As a result, the prototype of the Hutchins educational product, guys like Aaron Bell or George Huzzar (even though they were in the social sciences) are as helpless as babies when they get outside of the protective barrier of their books. Oh hell, it's much too hot to formulate any good ideas. I'll argue this out with you some cool day next winter.

Your brilliant, talented and beautiful child is now playing with a

clothespin, the dope. I keep losing her rattles for her, beast that I am. Today is her six-month birthday, a great event, and I bought her a number of gifts Monday when I was downtown. I added to her collection of glamorous Cat and old faithful Panda with a washable stuffed bunny. I also got her a pink cotton coverall, technically known as a creeper which is nice for cooler weather, and some straps to hold her in the buggy when she gets to the stage of leaping out. It's absolutely murder to walk down the street with her now. She sits up in her buggy as spry and flirtatious as you please, and all sorts of people rush up and smother her with compliments, and, if I am not careful, kisses. I guess she is one of the best-looking babies to ever grace this earth, and she is so friendly too that it is hard to beat the pestilential mob off. And it is doubly difficult to know what to say when people start telling me how wonderful she is. Should I say, "Yes, I know it" or should I hang back shyly and say, "Gosh, she ain't that good."

Did you ever see these pictures of Hank's baby which I am enclosing? Now it's your problem to dispose of them. Maybe I will be able to get to the drugstore and pick up the roll of Kathy's latest before I mail this tonight. If I do I'll send them along.

It's really too hot even for a Republican. I hear they're dropping off like flies down at the Stadium, between the heat and the oratory.

Angel, we send you all our love, me in particular since Kathy is very busy trying to crawl at the moment.

Jill

AL TO JILL JUNE 28, 1944

I'm in a hell of a sweat, dearest, so forgive only a few lines this morning. I'm sending you back your family pictures because I know you want them. You looked very sweet, though petulant, as even now. Paul is, of course, beautiful. Your mother looks

the stern Roman matriarch.

I'm also sending you the signed bank card. It looks familiar and I am sure I signed one like it before. The Mauldin cartoon is a good one, if you know life in the front [*are as well ?*]. I understand people are not so enthusiastic about him at home. It is a shame. They really can't understand the conditions which make his drawings so real. They are used to thinking of the soldier as seen in the ads, invincible, the "best of young American manhood", clean and inspired, shiny and enthusiastic.

I'm feeling well and, after that chain of three letters of imprecations for a remark about Dewey, am resigned to the first divorce papers arriving in the fourth letter.

However, many kisses and all my love,

Al



Mauldin cartoon (1944)

JILL TO AL JUNE 29, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

The temperature dropped nearly 40 degrees overnight so I feel reasonably human today and will bore you no more with tales of Chicago weather. Probably the great spate of oratory last night from Messrs. Dewey, Bricker et al, which boomed at one from every nook and cranny of Hyde Park -- for verily I fled my own

home and the temptation of turning on the radio to see what time it was -- acted in some devious meteorological fashion. Probably the hot air in the Stadium created a vacuum and the hot air in all the rest of the city rushed in, where it will be firmly locked in the pharynxes of all the Republican orators until next November. Come the next heat wave and all I shall do is utter, "Free enterprise, kaff kaff, no one-man rule, kaff-kaff, this great nation of ours, kaff kaff, the perils within kaff kaff," and forthwith Kathy and I shall be cool as cucumbers.

Speaking of cucumbers I spent a harrowing hour or so weeding in the victory garden today, which was positively teeming with everything but vegetables. This once every two weeks gardening is not conducive to making the good earth fruitful for anybody but the flies and cutworms and I shall either have to do more work in it, which seems unlikely in view of my other activities with baby, lake and writing you, or give the whole thing up. Probably I shall do neither and the garden will limp along half-assedly until that queen of inefficiency, Virginia, returns from her summer vacation.

I spent a busy day otherwise. The cleaning woman came in, that alleged jewel from upstairs. She really is very good but unreliable, so she cleaned exactly half the house and then disappeared on some devious mission of her own. That left the other half of the house even messier than before, if possible. I did the laundry myself and rushed out to buy food that would please her particular palate and also took my bike to have a flat fixed. I really don't have long enough stretches of time to myself any more to do the job myself. I have to go tonight and pick it up at Stoney and 57th. I also have the curse which further reduces my enthusiasm for any of these tasks. Kathy has been pretty fussy also the past couple of days, not eating much and crying on the lest pretext. I don't think there is anything wrong with her, probably just yesterday's heat. Anyway I take her to the doctor day after tomorrow so if there is anything wrong he will discover it. Thank goodness she is asleep now. I am devoted to her but am still always glad when seven o'clock comes. She seems to

require so damn much attention, even between meals. I think it is really just as easy for me to take her down to the lake all day as to keep her at home, because when she is home she gets bored and fussy. Although I'm still not convinced that babies can be spoiled, if any baby is, she is, between the attention she gets from the general public and then me. Well, when she starts walking I will have to watch her all the time so I might as well get used to it now, and resign myself to having no moments of freedom except for those at night and when she takes her afternoon nap.

I wish I knew the names of the dopey-looking trees outside this window. They are about 9 feet high, just sticks with a blob of green leaves on top like the models [*illegible words*] of green cotton. \

I love you.

Jill

[comment at the printed bottom notice: Have you filled in complete address at top? "I resent this!"]

JILL TO AL JUNE 30, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

How I wish you could have been with me at the lake this afternoon (and how I wish I had remembered to bring a pen, for I did bring paper to write you while I was there). A stiff north wind is blowing and it was lovely and cool and the lake was almost rough enough to suit my father's and Paul's taste for what they considered an amusing afternoon's sail. I myself would have just been content to sit on the rocks with you and watch the waves splash over our immobile base of operations.

But each one etc., to quote the French. Kathy took her nap on the sidelines in her buggy but when she woke up I bundled her up in a sweater and sat her on the rocks with me for a while. She was much impressed. Then an Army convoy sizable enough to chew off a chunk of Fortress Europe rode by and I showed her that. Apparently their mission was something less than military and no military secret, for they were loaded to the hatches with stage scenery, of all things. Finally we took two reefs in the buggy and sailed over to the dentist's, where I finally solved the problem of what to do with Kathy when I went to the dentist by plopping her on his floor, where she sat demurely and ate cellophane. Earlier she had distinguished herself at Mrs. Snyder's Sweete Shoppe by knocking over a chocolate soda and a glass of water I had planned to down. She is now sitting on the living room floor planning some devilment that will probably interfere with my writing you. She sits up fine by herself now, great genius that she is.

The house is now sparkling clean, after two days of Flossie-the-cleaning woman darting in and out of here like a wounded rabbit. She amazed me out of a sound slumber this morning, just walking in through the back door which I had accidentally left open after feeding Kathy early in the morning. She's just full of tricks, which I must grin and bear because she really is so good and the house has never been so clean. Like asking me to type the envelopes she sends to her, quote, intended, a soldier stationed in Iran. But such are the perquisites of cleaning women these days, besides the five bucks a day they nick you. I wouldn't address envelopes en masse for my own mother, I might add.

The more I look at those pictures you sent from Sardinia, the more I am impressed by 1) the beauty of your countenance, particularly in the one of you holding the guinea pig which I have previously and erroneously referred to as a dove and 2) the excellence of the photography. But since when have you been taking up with guinea pigs? I don't recall them as being one of your pre-war or post-war aims. And how do you know those

Sardinian Virgins are such? Anyway? Listen, do you want me to send you some film so you can take more pictures of virgins and yourself? I think I can get some now if you ask. Kathy is beginning to crawl now. She crawled off a low cot this morning on to the floor and was very mad about it, though otherwise unscathed. I am looking frantically for a playpen. The cleaning woman thinks she can get one for me free, among her wide acquaintances with the haut monde of Hyde Park. Damn, the end again. I love you so much darling and would give anything to kiss you now.

ON June 19, General Kesselring, Commander of German forces in Italy, has issued to his officers a license to murder:

The partisan situation in the Italian theater...constitutes a serious danger to the fighting troops and their supply lines as well as to the war industry and economic potential. The fight against the partisans must be carried on with all the means at our disposal and with the utmost severity.

I will protect any commander who exceeds our usual restraint in the choice of severity of the methods he adopts against partisans.

In consequence and for example, when partisans kill two German soldiers at the quaintly beautiful village of Civitella della Chiana, SS troops appear by surprise on June 29 and massacre all male inhabitants (250 people) and blast the village to the ground. (A surviving infant, Leonardo Paggi, will become many years later Jill's and Alfred's son-in-law. Both his father and his grandfather, both medical doctors, were killed that day.)

End of June 1944 letters

