

JILL TO AL SEPTEMBER 2, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling,

This has started out a bad day, full of evil portents, and I had better write you now at mid afternoon than wait until later in the day, and risk an evil spirit making off with my typewriter or a disappointed admirer lopping off both my hands at the wrists. I got up this morning earlier than I wanted to to the music of Kathy's enraged cry, and found her standing in her bed covered all over from head to foot with the stuff one usually is in that song. I took her into the bathroom to clean her off before I had time to turn the light on, my sleepy bug-eyes detected a long sinewy moving thing in the tub. I thought, "A lizard, how cute," because I love lizards but the light revealed the long thing to be attached to a larger-than-average size mouse, or a small rat, I know not which. He probably came up through the drain and was trying desperately to get back again. I yelled, "Help," and proceeded to clean and feed Kathy, occasionally returning to the bathtub for an apprehensive and disgusted glance. I didn't know what to do, of course. My first impulse was to find a man but the only man around was the janitor, and as between his loathsome, shortlegged dirty form in my house and a mouse in the tub, I preferred the mouse. The man next door wasn't up yet and even if he were, I doubt whether the mouse would be harder to cope with than a libidinous forty-year-old. So I took my courage in my hands and filled the tub partially with water, retiring to the next room until the slaughter was done. You understand of course that, the bathtub sides being slippery, the mouse was trapped. I returned a half hour later and the mouse was swimming about gaily like Buster Crabbe. Then I gritted, "This is war" picked up a piece of Kleenex and grasped his tail firmly. Self-confidence suddenly coursed through my veins. I swung him around a couple of times, showed him to Kathy and marched proudly out into the alley, where I swung him over the fence into the yard of my wolfish friend next door, and where he is now, I do not know. But don't misunderstand me, I'm not softhearted. I am ideologically in favor of killing mice but I

cannot do it myself.

I had an awful hard night last night; I took making out file cards on prospective workers in this neighborhood for the campaign. Now I have to call them all and try to get them to a meeting next week. I am working with this girl in the building. Virginia is supposed to help but she is very unreliable and disruptive and it is more trouble to make her see the point of everything you do than to do it yourself. There must be a happy medium somewhere between the anarchic self-styled intellectual and the clubwoman, be she from the right or the left. Well, it wasn't really such a hard night. I just didn't get enough sleep. Kathy has been fussy lately. I think her formula doesn't agree with her and am waiting for a call from the doctor now for The Word. I got two letters from you today, Aug. 20 and 24. In reply to your comment on Dieter, oh yes I forgot to mention, he was in the Army but has a medical discharge because he's half blind. That's a fact, you have to crawl right up under his nose to have him see you. So he is quite kosher, Peck just isn't.



Cathy, Jill.

I was down at the beach this morning with Kathy and Marilyn Morgan, that voluptuous little blonde from around 57th St. You may remember her. She is a nice girl, however. I went in the water and it was ice cold. It's a shame the season for swimming is so short around here. Hardly labor day yet you really can't go in the water any more. I cleaned the house yesterday morning and went to the Midway yesterday afternoon, which is why I didn't get around to writing you, what with meeting that girl last nite.

I haven't heard any more from Walter about borrowing money after I wrote him to the effect that I wrote you. However, I've gotten very cordial letters from him and Day since so I guess I wasn't too tactless, God know what fate preserving me from that.

Kathy's sort of fussy and I think I'd better continue this tomorrow, much as I hate leaving such large blank spaces. Oh well, here's one way of filling them up rapidly --

[in large script letters]:

I L O V E Y O U
(signed)

Jill

Kathy (*her mark*) [*bottle with x*]

AL TO JILL SEPTEMBER 2 OR 3, 1944

Dearest Jill,

Sunday

Excuse the pencil, darling, I left my ink bottle in some place between here and there. I found a mail-box this afternoon & therefore am writing you a letter.

I showed the pictures of Kathy to a woman I bought some tomatoes from this morning, &, sure enough, the price was much lower. Her looks are already my fortune, if not hers.

Things are going very well, though we are moving too fast for anything, including the human frame. The guys that are really winning this campaign are the truck drivers, white and colored. They are worked beyond all reasonable standards of endurance, driving up the gas and rations. I suppose the papers are saying it's an easy campaign. The only way it's easy is in the number of our casualties. Otherwise, it's very hard. The physical work of moving the army and its supplies is indescribable.

Signal companies are going mad with the pace of the communications. There are loose Germans all over the place, most of them, fortunately, well dealt with by a whipping military fatigue and the FFI. I think my backbone has worn itself off a couple of inches where I slump into the wheeled torture chamber.

Late news has the Americans almost in Germany. We've certainly come into our own in this campaign of all of France. No army in the world could move as fast as us. I would have to see the latest Russian advance to believe they are actually doing 60 miles a day as one newscast said. And if our army were shaken down by a costlier war, we could even do a lot better. I haven't starved and gone without sleep like I could have and still have been in good fighting condition.

Speaking of sleep, I guess I don't dream as much as you do. Two evenings ago, however, I had some sour wine and a piece of candy before going to bed and in consequence had a rough dream of dodging an air raid in which they were tossing a lot of those damned butterfly bombs down. They're anti-personnel bombs which explode in the air & on the ground, and are more disliked than the big one-piece jobs. Undoubtedly the mosquitoes found locally precipitated the dream.

Some mail came a little while ago with someone from down South but there was none for me. My patience will last me out; the news is like a daily letter, saying "I'll see you soon" and meaning it.

Our food for the last several days has been slightly augmented (but well) by potatoes from a bumper crop the French have pulled in. We bought them at farmhouses to help the c-rations down. There are lots of tomatoes around that come almost with the asking. Yesterday Harold Adams & myself were scrounging for some rations and met a small boy and his father, who is Polish by origin. He had made friends with an American sergeant (probably of Polish origin) who was speaking glibly to him in Polish. (It is remarkable the linguistic resources we have

in the American army). But I spoke to him in my poor French and we went off to his home where he gave us some tomatoes to bring with us and invited us to have a cup of tea. We took the tea and then he brought on a wonderfully-fried egg, my first in France and bread and country cheese in addition to the tea. The little boy who was thirteen was one of the most charming young gentleman I have ever met. The man is a furrier in Paris and they are all going back there as soon as possible. Such hospitality is fairly general here. The French farmer is a most hospitable, upstanding fellow. The difference in the living standard between France and Southern Italy, especially since the latter has suffered the ruin of war, is most striking. I suppose when I return to America, I will be even more amazed at the wealth there. Imagine what an American restaurant will do to me when I am surprised here to be able to buy some fried potatoes and salad.

As for you, I'll probably be afraid of you, you city slicker, and insist you go bare-footed, to feel at ease.

Many kisses, Gate, from your lover,

Al

AL TO JILL SEPTEMBER 4?, 1944

[undated note]

Darling,

On my last trip to Paris, Pittman gave me the enclosed pictures & drawings which recall very well the period spent this time last year in Italy with the Fifth Army. I described at the time, you may remember, the cellar pictured, and the several parties we had there. I wasn't in any of the pictures, unfortunately, since I missed a couple of them. Incidentally, the very nurse pictured took care of Joe Ferla when he was later on so badly wounded at Anzio.

All my love.

Al

JILL TO AL SEPTEMBER 5, 1944

Darling --

Tuesday

I have three fine letters from you -- the 17, 25 and 26 -- all detailed, graphic, optimistic and affectionate (and what more could one ask) and all making me feel all the more ashamed that I haven't written you for two days now. But although the war is going incredibly well, particularly over this weekend, Jill and Kathy have been stewing disconsolately. It seems that Kathy has one of those little things that plague babies -- diarrhea again. It wouldn't have been so bad except that she got terribly chafed and sore from it and cried most of Saturday night. I went out for a while to a party at Klaus, leaving Va. with Kathy, and when I came home the noise woke her up and she cried on and off all night. Sunday was hot and equally unsuccessful, as was Monday and Monday night. Today she is feeling somewhat better, the chafe having been mostly dissipated, so now her chief complaint is hunger, because I haven't been able to give her much except milk and mashed potato and jello. And then I had lots of people dropping in, which didn't add to the fun any.

Klaus's party wasn't much to mention. George Huzzar was there and I talked to him mostly, and was brilliantly witty. I decided that George gets the reputation for being such a scream because he evokes such Spenglerian wit from the people who talk to him. I corned a small bottle of bourbon -- liquor does not exactly flow as the oceans at Klaus's parties -- and drank a large part of it, which made me all the more ill-equipped for my night's vigil with Kathy. The awful part of it was that I didn't know what was wrong with her until the next day. She would wake up and scream and scream and when I picked her up and patted her back, she would scream all the more because her poor little

butt was being held. Sunday morning I could get a good look at her and immediately applied zinc ointment to her.

We went to the lake both days, there being no more reason to stay at home and suffer than to go there. Marilyn Morgan came over for dinner Sunday night and we ate an exceedingly effervescent jar of pickled herring and have been waiting around for botulus poisoning to set in ever since. Maxine was over last night and so it goes.

I am, of course, on passionately intimate terms with the parts of France in which you now do battle, through the works of M. Fabre. Never again derogate my bugseye view of the world (of which I have been getting aplenty these past few days. A dragonfly affectionately attached itself to my clothed bosom this morning and did not leave for an hour, there is a cricket in the bathroom this very minute, a mouse under the ice box, not to mention that other mouse -- or it may be the same one -- that was in the bathtub Saturday). I am as cognoscenti as the next one with the cicadas and mantises of the Provence.

It must be a beautiful wonderful thing to see the French come into their own again. I think you're right about not having a Big Four Rulership of the world, although it will be harder to put into effect some kind of world organization where all the deserving are represented. In any case we can't have Dewey and Dulles represent us. I'm all the more convinced now that they will louse things up. I have to go out now and ring some doorbells, seeking some honest faces that will do battle against them this fall. Anyway, Kathy is crawling around my feet, impeding my thought processes no end.

More tomorrow, sweetheart. I pray that you'll be home soon, so that I can give you all the love and comforts you deserve. I'll even stamp out wine in the bathtub, removing the mouse first of course, so that you shan't miss any of the continental delights you may have found.

All of my love and Kathy's to you -- Jill

AL TO JILL SEPTEMBER 5, 1944

Jill, darling,

I've found some ink and can write you the quick way, today. Now that Allied troops have entered Germany, the end should come rapidly. I'll say no more so as not to appear as stupid as Maj. Fielding Eliot, one of whose vacuous masterpieces fell into my hands today. I'm feeling well today, am about to take a much needed bath, you will be happy to know, and plan to look into a new book I bought in my brief glimpse of Marseilles, where I also got a free haircut & shampoo because I was the first American in the shop. The book is a study of public opinion by a Frenchman and was published in 1943. I'll bet that no copy has reached America yet. It cites American sources profusely and looks like it might accomplish something, tying up our empirical work in the field with the French classical, analytical ability. Maybe I can junk my work on representation. I don't know what Gosnell has done with it anyway. I'm amenable to anything he does with it, either if he decides to put it out in a book under his own authorship or give it back to me for what I might do with it. You are probably right now thinking "Well, what the hell are you going to do afterwards.

I confess I am just a planless soldier, darling, with so many nice things to contemplate that I don't feel at all like depriving myself of the pleasure of thinking of any one of them. There is the matter of the Ph.D. which I could probably handle in a fairly short time and without great monetary expenditure. There is secondly a possibility of immediate teaching or research, which would also be pleasant. There is thirdly the possibility that you suggested recently of going into some productive business venture. Perhaps to your surprise, I've been leaning strongly in the last couple of months toward the third. The reasons are various. An important one is that I've seen so much poor judgement and inefficiency in these past several years that I would like to give my own judgement and initiative a chance to operate and work a little more freely than it has been. Whatever work I select will be, I'm sure, as interesting to you as to me,

and, it goes without saying, I wouldn't attempt it without your liking it.

But do you think we'll have time for anything else, considering the possibilities there are in love? I doubt whether the world will ever be much else but you. It will be a strange, wonderful world.

Many kisses to you both.

Al

JILL TO AL SEPTEMBER 6, 1944

(Yesterday's letter dated a day early - {late})

Darling --

Taking advantage of the momentary lull in the day's activities -- Miss Kathryn is taking her afternoon nap -- I decided to sort your past month's letters and they are all over the desk. Then I decided it would be more fun to write you than read, for the moment, so here I am. Actually, I started the sorting process this morning but got side-tracked. Just to show you what kind of girl you married, I think I'll detail the track. First I pulled the letters out of the desk, then I climbed to the upper reaches of the closet to find the boxes I usually put them in. Three loose light bulbs fell on my head so I rearranged them. Then, underneath the light bulbs I found a small toilet seat, to be used in those dim distant days when Kathy will get trained. I got off the chair I was perilously wavering on and started to put it together, which took quite a while. Then it seemed like a good idea to put Kathy on it and, as she was conveniently located in the bathroom, standing up and peering into the bathtub, her favorite occupation when she is allowed to crawl freely around the house, I did so. She seemed amused but unresponsive, but anyway, there was no way of telling what she did as I hadn't bothered to take her pants off. Then I paid a call on Virginia, made formula and suddenly it was lunch time and your letters

are still scattered about the desk, which is where you came in.

Kathy still has diarrhea but seems to be feeling better. I put some stuff in her formula that the doctor told me to use when she was three months old and had it, so I think she will be all right by tomorrow. After a while you get to know what to do without calling the doctor every five minutes. There is really very little difference among infants so far as their diet and formula goes. At first I thought formula was something very secret and special, that only the doctor had the key to, but apparently what they do is give every infant the same or approximately the same formula and then make variations on the theme according to how the baby thrives.

It's another one of those nasty cold days which will ruin the lake for swimming until next summer. I was in the lake this weekend when it was hot but the water was unbearably cold from just the day or two of raw weather we had the week before. It makes me mad to see the summer go so fast. Actually Chicago has very little summer. You can count on just about eight weeks of warm water and that's all, even though June is a hot month.

I did some more work last night with this gal in the building, sending out postcards and getting in touch with people to get them to come to a meeting Sunday. Very dull and possibly ineffectual, but you have to look at it this way: any kind of political activity is a good thing, if only because it is contrasted with political apathy, which is bad. I'm not sure that if all the people who had disliked Hitler in 1933 had written postcards and made phone calls, there would have been no Hitler, but at least they would have been absolved from personal responsibility for him. It's sort of like physics. As long as the molecules of an object are active, it's hot. It may not change into gold, but at least it isn't cold. Well, you take it from there.

Christ I'm cold. I think I'll go to bed until Kathy wakes up. The news is swell. I really do think I'll see you by Christmas.

All my love to you, baby. Jill

JILL TO AL SEPTEMBER 8, 1944

My darling --

It's odd, but when I've skipped a day in writing you as I did yesterday, I feel positively estranged, as one does when one meets an old friend one hasn't seen for ages and has to pick up the long threads in the intervening past. Actually, not much has happened -- certainly nothing to estrange us in fact. I've been very busy -- yesterday with laundry and shopping and last night, with getting out the final notification cards for that probably silly little meeting we're having on Sunday for the Independent Voters. I also had dinner with some neighbors, some people named Bloom, the male of which is an instructor in education over at school. In between I tended Kathy, which probably kept me busier than anything. She still has diarrhea (which I've spelled correctly for positively the first time in my career and I assure you it was purely accidental [*note from Julia: wrong!*] but is feeling otherwise and certainly acting very chipper. However, it means more work than otherwise. I have to prepare special foods -- a constant succession of jello, mashed baked potatoes, rice pudding and junket. My version of rice pudding, that is, a nauseating mixture of strained rice and water so don't come home clamoring for the horrid stuff as if I were an expert. And an endless array of variations on her formula. I called the doctor and discovered I was doing all the right things on my own hook. And then there are the diapers to be changed and the zinc ointment to be applied to her wiggly protesting butt. Anyway, today she seems a lot better and I'm sure by tomorrow the malaise will be cleared up. I know you think it's silly that so much time and energy should be devoted to the description and conquest of an affliction which in adults is generally overlooked and always unmentionable, but it is a very serious and puzzling thing in infants.

While ironing tonight I listened to Dewey's second (and I hope last, for me) campaign speech concerning foreign policy. If I were an editorial writer I would liberally intersperse my critique with such words and phrases as "immature", "startling

Republican amnesia concerning the facts and causes of the last depression", "vague", etc. etc. The only concrete thing one could get out of the speech was an un-Christian, Republican unwillingness to do anything about future international relations except stand by with pious neighborly smiles as if to say, "Uncle Sam is watching you and wishes you all the luck in the world." He openly deprecated the idea that we could be of economic aid to depressed nations or that we have any kind of economic intercourse with anybody except of the cutthroat 19th-century variety. There's certainly no doubt in my mind now that his administration, if he were elected, would be a bad one.

We're not getting much news now of the battle for Germany except that the Germans are finally putting up stiff resistance. Last night late there was a broadcast that new Allied landings had been made in Yugoslavia but there was nothing about it in today's papers.

I'm getting to sound so terribly club-womanly, aren't I, albeit on a fairly high level. But I'm the first to admit that all this externalizing of interest is just a pallid substitute for an interesting home life, to put it both broadly and euphemistically. Which leads me to conclude, as I may have in the past, that many of these busy busy little women must have very uninteresting sex lives. I mean the women with young children anyway. obviously you would have the time and plenty left over for these things if you didn't. I'm having a fine time too getting pregnant all over again vicariously because two girls I know -- Bea Neugarten and a gal from across the street -- are just entering that happy state. Bea promptly contracted for my buggy and sterilizer, which I promised her qualifiedly since who knows when I'll be pregnant again. (Answer -- you do, or rather, will).

God my feet are cold. You wouldn't like it at all. This is the most unseasonably cool September, or maybe that's the way September is supposed to be.

Well old thing, I'll be writing you tomorrow again. I love you

more than anybody -- more than I love anybody else and more than anybody else loves anybody. Lots of bug hugs and kisses to you --

Jill

AL TO JILL SEPTEMBER 8, 1944 (A)

Dearest Jill,

I must get off a good letter to you this morning, so I have started early. Several of your letters came yesterday via Italy, all of them antecedent to the one of August 21 I got about a week ago. I got the studio pictures of Kathy in the new lot and think they are very fine but inferior to the snapshots of her taken by our neighbor. Those are absolutely tops. The finished ones are too toney for a baby somehow, who no matter what other impression she may create, doesn't give the appearance of a finished product. Even though you may hate me for saying so, I should add. But what varied moods she can show!

What else should I bring out in your letters. They were all so very nice that I thought my own efforts must be getting to look pretty vacuous alongside, barren of detail, etc. Whereas yours are always written so fluently and connectedly, mine always are written on the verge of something else, and seem to consist mainly of half-told secrets and confusing references, with some desperate but trite expressions of love worked in whenever the thought strikes me while writing, which can be anywhere or everywhere. Don't think that the pace of this campaign interferes in any way with my desire for you. It increases it a great deal, I find, so that a couple of letters on top of all the excitement and anticipation puts me on the verge of the chills.

Now that we are in the mountains a good deal, I shall certainly be precipitated into the chills, for the coming of fall is obvious. It is already field jacket time, and the nights are two-blankets cold. The rains have been coming in spurts and I have been good

and wet a couple of times already. A week or so will show whether we will spend any more winter in a campaign, or whether we shall be at least warmly billeted for the duration overseas. The country is very beautiful. We should certainly spend some time travelling or resting in this part of France in the future. I drove around all day the day before yesterday with a Canadian Captain Beaudry who pointed out the fine points of the country for skiing. There are magnificent slopes everywhere, the kind that run throughout Northern Italy, Switzerland, and Austria, too. At the present, the mountains and valleys are green and brown and the clouds are blue and grey. There are mists and clouds that sweep in and out of the gaps, now filming the sun, now letting it through to make the green of the fields brilliant. There are many forests of small pine and tree-shaded highways that curve smoothly around the sides of the mountain. The people are all working. There is very little damage and they are very optimistic about the country's future. The Germans were generally disliked though they behaved better in most of the country, better than they behaved in any other part of Europe. There are strange and ghastly exceptions. A battalion of German parachutists came down from the sky in gliders in one peaceful valley that had been a center of Maquis activity and completely destroyed it. They marched from one village to another, burning them to the ground and massacring the inhabitants, men, women and children. They raped and looted everywhere in the execution of that strange, twisted German conviction that orderly and complete brutality is a part of permanent government. The empty houses, walls that point with jagged black fingers at the blue sky and green mountains, and rows of graves are all that is left. Many of the young men were hiding in the mountains at the time and they are some of the people who have to say what to do with the Germans. Maybe that will give you some background for understanding the Mauldin cartoon I am putting in the envelope. The kid is really a genius at catching a tremendous situation and putting it in a humorous form without being cheap or calloused. The French, for example, think this one very funny as do we all. And a French commandant the other day laughed like hell when I

showed him the Mauldin cartoon of the American soldier with bristly short hair and spectacles who was saying to G. I. Joe as they walked through the streets of a French town full of pedestrians who looked exactly like him, "This is the town my father used to talk about," with a completely naive and uncomprehending air.

Finally, I have been able to satisfy, I think, your months-old request for perfume. Two days ago, I mailed you a fairly large bottle of Schiaparelli's Sleeping and a bottle of perfume, equally good I understand and more masculine, whose name I forget. I have two more bottles to send you today, one of Renoir, Messenger, and a Lucian LeLong Impromptu. I hope you like them. I was very happy to buy them. There is nothing in the way of silk goods that is worthwhile buying and it is all very expensive. Nor is there much of anything else. The trinkets are nice but you would never wear them. I thought of face creams and such but figure that American ones are as good or better. If I am wrong, tell me.

I am sending you forthwith the check that arrived yesterday. Thank you very much for being so thoughtful, darling, but I can manage on what I get and we can use it later in America. However, it is very nice to see a good American bank check for a change. That alone was worth your sending it.

The other day I bought several pipes at Cogolin which is a world-famous pipe producing center. I think I'll send one each to the boys, one to Buzz, and one to Bill who is a perceiving pipe-smoker. Perhaps I'll send them in one package to you, letting you distribute the goods. Maybe Walter ought to have one, come to think of it. I'll think of him when I make my next purchase.

Harold Adams had to leave with his typewriter so I'm back to the primordial script. Speaking of script, I haven't seen any of Vic's horrible scrawl in a long time. How is the big guy these days? What's he turning into? Tell him I'd appreciate a letter from him very much even though his handwriting is one of the horrors of

war I must bear. I am very sorry not to be seeing him and Ed during all this time, though I don't think much of it alongside the immeasurably greater sorrow of not seeing you.

Just this moment I got the first half of your V-mail of August 13 which began to describe a very gay party, the finale of which I read several days ago. It seems funny that no wine was drunk - I'm all twisted around alcoholically. Life is a succession of vino bottles. The other day, I bought a shot of Black & White for \$1.20 and it was worth it. Liquor is expensive here, too much so to drink much. Yet wine is the best thing in the world to wash down c-rations & corned beef. Which brings up another Mauldin cartoon of G. I. Joe crawling up to Willie who is boredly firing his rifle at a farmhouse. Joe says, "They won't give up. They heard we feed them c-rations."

I suddenly realize after the many references to a cottage in Michigan, that I ought to say something about it. I am repelled by any thought of cottage colonies, of other people's beds and kitchen utensils, of forced neighborliness and a wide variety of other things that are suggested by the idea. I don't understand whether you want to go there alone or with me when I come or both. In any and all cases, I don't see it. I think I know that type of crowded rusticity and I think it's pathetic. I can see, of course, your reasons for not liking 5436 too much, though I've never seen the place. I would like to see it myself because you've had free play for all your decorative & furnitive faculties within the limits of the environment. It's what you made it. About Elizabeth, don't keep the poor girl in an already-established insecure state by your indecision about living with her. Decide one way or the other. Provided the apartment or house is large enough and I can escape into the shadows, I have no objection to her living with us after I return. She would be very welcome.

I'm very sad indeed about Bob's loss of hearing. Is it irrevocable, a fossilization of the bone or something? I'm sure he'll survive the ordeal well. He's got enough guts & self-control, and can do really excellent intellectual work, too.

Many kisses to you and Kathy. I hope I'll be home soon enough after the perfume to enjoy it at very close quarters, even if my lips taste bitter after kissing it from your neck.

Always,

Al

AL TO JILL SEPTEMBER 8, 1944 (B)

Dearest Jill,

Since I wrote you at length this morning, four letters from you have arrived. They made a lazy day more enjoyable. They were from the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, bountiful manna. They contained your thoughts on V-day, well-collected and well-expressed. I agree with you. In general I find you an indisputable correspondent. Half the time I give insufficient thanks for your intelligence and skill. You may find consolation in imagining how unbearably uninterested I would be if the opposite were true and how critical also, even if I didn't say so. And your comments on conferences & meetings were very good too, even if your flattering quotation of me would naturally lead me to saying that. And all that in your letter that you said was "dull".

This letter must heap on compliments, I suppose. You are right, I believe, when you wrote, on the 21st, that a trip to the West Coast wouldn't serve much purpose & might be very uncomfortable. The latest of your ideas on Liz sound pretty good, too, to remain together for the election period -- and almost incredible and unprecedented basis for social planning, now that I think of it and one that is the ultimate perfection of liberated womanhood.

(more follows).

[drawing of a raft surrounding by water] Caption: Jill, all naked, under a raft at Glen Park. (I can draw, too).

The radio today spoke of the War Dept.'s plan to demobilize a million or two men after Germany is licked on the basis of length of service, time overseas, no. of campaigns, and dependency. I think I have lots of points and perhaps .. that the program is very reasonable.

Tom Crowell showed up today and he moved into my room with me. It'll only be for a day or two more, and is in what was formerly the École pour Jeunes Filles, full of douche bowls, wash-basins and beds. My room must have belonged to the headmistress and later to the German commander here. It has a little stove I can burn paper in to get rid of the chilled air and copies of the Münchner Nueste Nachrichten strewn about.

Tom is a product of old New York, brought up by an old Irishman who saw all the stage shows & knew all the dance steps. I've told you about him before. He is a master printer and a damn good man. Oscar Dystal was around too and he and I had dinner together last night at a small French restaurant. We finished off lots of wine, some fish, some cheese, and beaucoup fried potatoes. He expects to be home soon & will look you up without fail.

I can't write another address this very moment. Bite Kathy's toe for me.

Al

JILL TO AL SEPTEMBER 9, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Saturday

I'm half-dead from hunger but think I'll start writing to you while dinner is cooking. I'm having spareribs and Klaus Ollendorff, the latter because I'm absolutely desperate for someone to cook for besides myself. I'm also very tired, from sitting up until one last night with Syb Farreter and another girl. Sybil is leaving permanently for the East today and we had to make our

farewells. We drank sauterne and discussed the ethics of the behavior of an Italian Josephine knows named Spinelli, who enlisted in our Army so that he could go to Italy and help out there. Instead they insisted on sending him to the Pacific because he had been a radical in Italy. So he deserted, went to Mexico, changed his mind, came back and again they said they would send him to the Pacific. At last heard from, he was contemplating deserting again and had drawn up a long statement, of which he had made a thousand copies, criticizing the army, our war effort, etc. etc. Sybil protested against such anti-authoritarian behavior, Josephine defended it and I stayed by quietly, mildly putting in a word or two on Jay's side.

So today, which is a day later, Sunday, I am still rather fatigued from all these social exertions. Klaus left early but I read late. Then today I took Kathy to the warm sunny Midway in the morning, where I sat and thought beautiful thoughts of you. It made me mad too. I could remember walking along the Midway with you the first summer we met, and the second, and then that lonely third summer when you were at OCS and, living there, I used to take gloomy bike rides alone. It doesn't seem right that so many summers have gone by and we've seen so little of each other. But next summer we'll sit there and watch Kathy who, even if she is no further developed than she is now, will be very amusing. She watches the bigger kids play ball and chortles with joy, as if it were all done for her special amusement. Then she crawls over to me with a wicked leer and boosts herself up to a standing position on any portion of my anatomy that happens to be available, usually my hair. She is feeling very well today although she still goes messily to the bathroom twice a day. But she has a marvelous appetite during and between meals -- at the latter she will eat toast, cake or paper, or anything else available. She is very anxious to get going with feeding herself and handles food very well, but the poor little snipe is at a disadvantage. She is still toothless as a frog. She really is awfully late getting teeth, most of the babies around here producing them at five or six months, if not earlier, but then, she is so far ahead every way else that I still can point

boastfully at her in the presence of other mothers, equally boastful, the poor deluded creatures. Kathy also drank a whole bottle yesterday without any assistance from me, even in handing it to her. I put her to bed for her afternoon nap and as she hadn't wanted her bottle at lunch time, put it into bed with her. When I picked her up at three it was empty, so I presume she cleverly maneuvered it into her mouth. Wonderful, simply wonderful. This afternoon I attended that meeting we'd been working on for so long. About fifteen people showed up, five of them regular Democratic precinct captains. It wasn't much of a turnout since we have to organize workers in the 13 precincts in our area but it was still a fair start since everybody wanted to work. The independents will be working very closely with the regular captains since they know more about their precincts than anybody else and anyway, welcome aid, even from party irregular sources. I elected to go out of my precinct and serve under a gent named Nudelman, an enchanting name, don't you think: it was what decided me. There is also a delicatessen and liquor store named Nudelman's at the corner which I always patronize, despite their high prices and insouciance -- such as slapping me on the back when I have a fresh sunburn and saying "Whaddeya know, kid", just because of the fatal fascination of the Name, as it will heretofore be known. I found, though, at this meeting today, that it is a lot more interesting to meet like that when you are discussing a specific plan of action rather than just listening to peppy speeches. I am very glad now that I'm getting started in this work. At the precinct level politics is damned interesting and it's one of the places where it should be studied. Nudelman was telling me how he didn't do any work in his precinct for six months because Hodes instead of Eichner was elected committeeman and he was sore about it. Now he's patched up his difficulties, though. He also said that the Republicans in his precinct would help us because they have a fight on too within the ranks. We simply must write a book when you get home.

And all this activity is of course very good mental hygiene. I find I'm not nearly so depressed as I was a month ago when

summer was ending and there didn't seem to be anything to take its place.

I'm going up to Mom's tomorrow for the day. I'll probably leave Kathy with her and return to the Loop, where I simply must satisfy partially my yearning for some new clothes. Just a single dress will bolster me and see me through the winter.

Oh, I nearly forgot. Your mother's day gift of candy arrived yesterday and I have been eating it and feeling terrible ever since. Thanks very much, darling. It is good candy too -- a Whitman sampler as it is known in the trade. And I think Mother's Day in September is charmingly unique and wouldn't have the war department do otherwise.

My, I'm sleepy. I think I'll say goodbye for now and with all my love too. Kathy sends you a wet kiss, or bite -- I can't figure out whether she really loves me or is just using my face to teethe on. Anyway -- [[graz164]

000XXX

Jill



Cathy

JILL TO AL SEPTEMBER 11, 1944 V-MAIL

Al darling --

I was up north today and got back to your wonderful long letter

of the 31st - worth waiting for after a good 3 hours of travelling. Yes, I said 3. One up, one down, and one in between, since the main purpose of my visit was to ditch Kathy so I could go back to the Loop and shop. I bought a couple of cute dresses but had to leave them at Mom's because I couldn't carry the box, the bottle and Kathy too. You see, when I go north I always have to lug 3 bottles of her formula along. While running to make the train pulling in at 53rd today I dropped the bag on the platform. I recovered and got in and sat down, breathing heavily. Then I noticed the eyes of my fellow-passengers turned not Kathy-ward, but floor-ward, where a widening stream of milk kept sloshing back and forth down the aisle depending on whether the train was stopping or starting. They all looked so superior, as if such an occurrence wouldn't happen to them and if it did, they'd know what to do about it. But all I could do was sit there miserably with squirming Kathy in my lap, occasionally lifting my bag off the floor to see if all the milk hadn't run out yet. Fortunately, by Randolph St., it had, saving me the embarrassment of leaving a trail of white drops from the IC station to the bus stop. (Continued)

Page 2 dated September 12, 1944

Anyway, it was a harrowing day (was yesterday. This letter is, as usual, continued because I went to bed exhausted last night, with the Stineway Symphonic hour buzzing in my ear). Mom was putting up peaches with the aid of Aunt Anna, Rosina, Willy and a few other assorted kibitzers. Joe and a little girl from next door were running around, Cooney ran over Kathy and everybody generally was shouting, crying, bleeding or dropping things. I got out quickly for the comparative quiet of the Loop and of course it was awful down there. Was it always that bad? I can't remember. Let's do our playing and eating on the near north side when you come home. I don't think that even the Berghoff beer is worth the torture. And let's do our shopping for clothes in New York or San Francisco. Chicago has awful clothes anyway. Well, finally I left the Loop, got Kathy, left my clothes at Mom's for I could not carry everything and came home, where I have been glued ever since. Today's morning is

rainy and if all goes well, maybe I will get started with Italian today. Bussy brought back the little books and as I have another grammar from somewhere -- I guess you have the one from the Linguaphone set, I'm all set. I guess I'm like the nouveau riche sportsman who substitutes a fancy riding outfit for the will and ability to ride.

I sent Paul a real little blackboard to draw on, for his birthday which is some time this month. Yes, it's true that they worked faster than we did but then, we got married a lot later. I think we met almost a year before they did but then, they are both a lot older than we and so the incentives to marrying early were greater. Anyway, my will to get going with a family compares favorably to both Mir's and Ann's, since I'd most certainly be pregnant again with your permission, if you were here.

It's funny how one gets into the news habit. I think I buy regularly two papers a day, as well as listen to innumerable broadcasts. news becomes a drug, something quite apart from the events it is supposed to represent. In my case, it is the rungs of the ladder, at the top of which is you. And Christ, how tired I am of waiting. Now they say that there may be no real V-day -- that Germany will surrender piecemeal and continue to fight in some areas for a very long time.

I just spoke to Jane Cates. She's been at Ritchie for a month, visiting her husband who is a student officer in the French section. She said the joint is badly run -- the CO is so dopey. She saw Jerry Zorthian who is doing a mural at the officer's club that ought to keep him busy for the duration and six months, at least. He's a sergeant now and they are living on top of some mountain for the summer season. The lake at the officer's club is functioning well -- they fixed up a nice beach. Altogether it sounds like paradise compared to the old days. There are a lot of old hags around for the summer session, however. What happened to the IMRBC and have there been any others, anyway? Or was it just a big administrative flop?

It's lunchtime and the end of the page. I love you and miss you

infinitely.

Jill

AL TO JILL SEPTEMBER 12, 1944

Dearest Jill,

I'll just write this one page to you now. It's been a rather unsuccessful day, speaking from my minute interests in the total war, and I don't feel like exposing the stormy currents of the libido to your innocent and sensitive gaze. I detest so great a part of the grotesque set-up for propaganda that when I can't get away from it to doing things that are more useful and therefore more interesting, I can work myself up into a fine rage. The number of bums, hacks, and turds that OWI mustered up in this war is something awful to behold. I am beginning to wish long and often to get into some decent artillery unit where there isn't such hopeless incapacity. The menagerie is enough to drive an angel to drink and distraction. Jim Clark now is hopelessly confused and can't make up mind enough to take the simplest decision. He's turned out to be a much better follower than a leader. No one has the experience in the field or in a military organization that he ought to have, and some of them are like babies when it comes to treating with the men. The bastards are all making at least a couple more thousand bucks a year than I am and yet it is a class that could never make non-coms in the army, nor good privates, either. And they infect the military, too.

Oh yes, there are the compensations, and the exceptions too, but today I'm in no mood to think about them. I think they ought to round up all objectors, conscientious or otherwise, all 3As and 4Fs, etc., and make them do for a couple years everything they don't want to do. There won't be any question of their having to fight or physical fitness or anything. But that will do them fair.

On a happier theme, I got the letters from you today, July 22 and August 9, both relatively old. They had a lot to say about Kathy whom I am sure that I'll never be able to handle properly, not after the subtle handling you've been giving her. However, she will probably be able to handle me which is the same thing from the opposite end.

Now I have nothing more to say. It may make you feel better to know that I just finished writing a letter on that war bond situation to the guy who wrote you on it, and this same vein of pleasantry runs through that letter, too.

But one way or another, I am always your Al.

P.S. Lest I forget I mailed you two days ago, two more packages -- a little one, containing a Renoir Messenger perfume and another, containing a can with a bottle of perfume in it plus three pipes. They are good ones from Cogolin, which is world-famous for them. The one with the oval cup () is the most expensive. (\$8.00, much more in America). Give the other two to Ed and Vic. Hold that one in the house until I decide what to do with it. You might give Mom a bottle of the perfume too. She'll love it & it'll raise the green dragon in Aunt Lilly.

JILL TO AL SEPTEMBER 13, 1944

Al darling --

It seems like I am always trying to write letters when your pesky child is playing around my feet, tugging at the light cord and pulling the curtains, doing her best to bring the house down on our unprotected heads. I think the best thing to do would be to whittle your battle helmet down to size and then let her run loose. She simply won't stay in her playpen without fussing late in the afternoon, the very time when I am least willing to cope with her little foibles, since by then I would like to turn my attention to other things, like reading the paper or writing letters or making dinner.

And I guess if I want to learn Italian, I'll have to get up in the middle of the night to do so. I've been one or two abortive efforts, the past two days which have been rainy and conducive to cerebration, to get a line on the life and loves of the famiglia Bianchi, where molto pace e harmonia reigns. Even if I didn't want to learn Italian, I'd like to see more of that atypical brood.

I'm sending you some horrid little pictures taken a couple of weeks ago down at the lake. The other children are the Bredindick girls and Sandy Liveright's kid Mike.

I guess I'll have to study Italian during Kathy's nap time and the grammar at night before I go to bed -- if only I can restrain my impulses to go to sleep at those two fatal times.

As usual, this letter had to be put off until the next day. The clogged-up quality of my life will never cease to amaze me. Joan was supposed to come to dinner and spend the night but couldn't make it, but who should turn up but Mac who ate the dinner and spent the night in her stead. We went to see Bing Crosby's recent picture, Going My Way, all about Catholics. After an hour and a half people were still acting like Types (most of them coy) and the problem of the church mortgage still hadn't been solved so we left and had a sundae instead. Then we sat up till all hours doing the dishes and drinking beer and then finally Kathy woke up in a snit.

Damnit, she still has diarrhea and a painful chafe and it took some time to soothe her. Then she insisted on playing and murmuring in her bed for the next three hours. This morning I was in a snit from lack of sleep as you can well imagine. I've just done the family wash and have a few moments left in this morning before she wakes up from her second nap. Maybe I'll try the famiglia Bianchi when I get through with this letter.

The night before last, I saw a rather sweet picture called Home in Indiana, about horses and Indiana and Home. I love pictures like that -- no message except Good Sportsmanship and great pictorial beauty. I don't know why I've broken out into this rash

of movie-going since I haven't been in months and shan't go again for months I'm sure.

I've been reading the most ridiculous news dispatches from Knickerbocker of the Sun about the quote bewildered frightened people of occupied Germany. Jesus, we take five miles of territory and already the German are poor misguided folksy folk, losing their monsterhood overnight as it were. So we shower them with K-rations and candy (according to this dispatch). Balls I say.

I wonder where you are and what you are doing, not having heard for several days again. And that eternal question mark, when I shall see you again. I wonder if you have as many reveries on that subject as I do -- about the moment, the place, and what we shall say to each other. Maybe it will be like starting in all over again with our love affair. Despite the continuity that our letters have afforded (by the way I got both little packages of letters and pictures from you) it will probably be a little strange at first. I know that you can't just plunge in after a separation of two years with some usual domestic homily, like "Dear, do you know the toilet is stopped up again?"

Not that I'm the least bit worried about what we'll say -- even if we are both tongue-tied for a week I shall be deliriously happy just to sit by your side and hold your hand. And look at you goggle-eyed, like Bette Davis.

All my love, darling,

Jill

AL TO JILL SEPTEMBER 13, 1944

Dearest Jill,

It's a little late to be starting a letter, about ten-thirty, but something may come of it. Maybe it doesn't seem late to you,

but for those who live close to nature, there isn't that artificial extension of the twilight you find at home. It's late when it's dark. After dark, it's many times more difficult to do things. It took some effort on my part to find two candles, a table, a typewriter and a place out of the rain to write this letter. There isn't much new. I'm well -- occupied and well fed. We are at the moment the only unit in a little French village of one main drag and a little side street where we are well received and the subject of universal attention. The officers are farmed out to families to sleep, we started our mess in the rooms of one of the two village cafés, and at all hours there is a throng of little children frolicking around the cluster of tents we've set up.

The rainy season is beginning. Every day sees some sort of rain and lots of threatening clouds. It will soon be worse. How I wish it finishes before the cold weather sets in. I dread the thought of another winter like the last, mud and slippery roads, permanent chills, and half our life wasted trying to become a little more comfortable. Not to mention the greater bitterness of not seeing you for more months. You and I, I'm sure, will come through all right, but it's not as nice as being together, to put it mildly.

George Glade, my ebullient private, and several other drivers are gathered on the tent floor now brewing coffee in a tin can which they have over a flaming can of gasoline and sand. I have a cup of coffee coming up which is pleasant to contemplate before turning in. George is the typical kinetic American boy. He's always talking but manages to do a great deal of work at the same time and he is very intelligent. Mike Annunziata is there too, a very remarkable young guy who handles the assortment of enlisted men very well as a sort of first sergeant, supply sergeant, mess and motor sergeant combined. Karakes, a driver, is now describing his symptoms which make him feel low. They have something to do with his kidneys, he thinks, but he doesn't want to go to a doctor because he thinks he will be told not to drive a truck anymore. Interesting characters, aren't they? There are so many interesting people. But I find you very interesting, too, and don't find myself very much appeased by such amusement. And from what you write, Kathy must reach a

new high in interest. So I'm left as dissatisfied as before, without even saying that there was always your capacity for making love which I put with my greatest pleasures. Enough said. These are certain flaming things that just can't take form in ink. But they're all still there.

Your,

Al

FOR many weeks, the reduction of the German resistance in the Belfort Gap and Alsace was a problem of the French troops. The Lieutenant, who had considered the French masters of the sharp, savage relentless attack, now could wonder. Were they reluctant to shoot up France? Were they not so dashing when the composition of their infantry had fewer of the sacrificial Africans? Were they learning American habits? Did they long to stay alive for the Victory celebration, now near at hand? Were they preoccupied with quarreling amongst themselves about who was guilty for the Fall of France, who was author of the resurgence of France, who would control France now?

The Combat Propaganda Team did its bit to help the French army in their efforts to break through the Belfort Gap, the most difficult part of the operation, extending into winter, skirting Switzerland, and cutting through the Vosges Mountains into Alsace, where the German army began to resist the Allied advance more stubbornly. A number of them were trapped with their backs to Switzerland and the Swiss did not want to take them. A special leaflet operation was prepared for them, with the usual accent on how to surrender.

The procedure here, now that the First French Army had been created, under the general supervision of U.S. Seventh Army and ultimately Sixth Army Group, was for somebody to get the idea of the need (which occurred through the two Jacques being in liaison with the French forces at the Gap), and hustling the need to the Team; the

Team had the means of drawing up the propaganda message, printing it in large numbers rapidly, and loading it into shells for the French forces' American howitzers -- then finally, of supervising the cannon firing.

The operation was deemed a success and the two Jacques, Pregre and Villanave, who were looking for an American medal, no doubt, arranged with the First French Army (Army B's new name) to give a couple of Croix de Guerre's to Roos and the Exec. Whether this ever came about is uncertain. Months later, special orders of the French Army were supposed to have contained the commendations, and, when informed by the two Jacques that such was the case, Major Roos promptly pinned the medal on himself, urging the Exec to do likewise, which he did, but with a lingering suspicion that was never set to rest, that some kind of a deal had been cut to which he would not want to be party.

The French divisions are also experiencing a new foe, an anti-communist army composed of Cossacks, deserters, traitors, and ideological opponents of the Soviet Stalinist regime. They are softer targets and there is no problem getting intelligence material from the first prisoners and the media translated into Russian and printed in the cyrillic alphabet to fire upon them and distribute by patrol. The Soviet defectors when they are reached are told that they will not be turned over to the mercies of the Soviet Government, which the French, more casual than the Americans, let themselves say.

Actually Roosevelt and Churchill acceded to Stalin's demand that all Soviet Citizens except some thousands of Armenians be returned to the USSR following the surrender of Germany. But the French enlist some of the fresh prisoners here; they are treated as French soldiers.

Patrols who scout out and test the enemy positions are good media for distributing propaganda. They leave their literature and the enemy patrol finds it. However, a returning enemy patrol is not likely to admit that it has been collecting enemy propaganda. American soldiers, protected, you might say, by the First Amendment, save German leaflets as they would postage stamps. One series, which his fellows called the "Sam Series," caricatures a Jewish war profiteer

named Sam who is having enjoyable rendezvous with "Bob's girl friend" while poor Bob is slogging away in the mud. They were distributed by plane and patrol or left behind when retreating from a position.

With perhaps too ready a contempt for the enemy's rhetoric, and too much confidence in the proper attitudes of their troops, the Team dismissed their effect. Never were the troops, in all the action from Africa to Germany, warned against harkening to Nazi propaganda: it was just as well. The Germans, by contrast, had strict rules for dealing with enemy arguments and punishing their circulation in any form; there was no sign that the *landser* resented such suppression; given everything else in the way of constraint, this was small enough; from a command standpoint, the censorship was effective because it kept discussion of the tabooed subjects of losing the War, desertion and *Gefangenschaft* to a minimum.

JILL TO AL SEPTEMBER 15, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Something happened today which, if it becomes a precedent and it probably will, should make you take to your sidearms and declare a vendetta. Diane and I went downtown for an afternoon's shopping (no, that doesn't sound so terrible but wait until you hear the rest) and we left Oliver in charge of the babies. Ghastly, isn't it? And if your blood hasn't already turned to jelly, both babies cried in unison most of the afternoon. Now do you want to come home?

We really had quite a pleasant time, mostly gawking at clothes, neither of us having enough energy and initiative to get the superior salespeople to wait on us. We also had a polite tea at George's and came home to a shambles at my place, where Oliver and his demonic little charges were holding forth. Kathy was crawling on the floor, the telephone was ringing, Oliver was rushing about frantically, etc. etc. But he was damned decent about it, I thought. You should see little Liza. She's a tiny little

baby, three and a half months old now, as perfectly formed and dainty as a porcelain doll. None of us can get over the fact that she's so tiny and they so big, or that Kathy is such a bold horse of a child whereas we're so medium in stature.

I bought a fairly decent album of hot jazz today, jam sessions by people like Jimmy Noone and Jack Teagarten. I'm not very sure of what to get -- all I know is that I crave to hear something else besides all the sweet stuff you get on the radio. Anyway, Kathy likes it.

I've been frightfully busy the last couple of days, sewing, ironing and God knows what else. People have been dropping in like flies too -- Ruth Shils last night. She's still waiting for Ed to come back. Dad paid us a visit yesterday afternoon -- I had left a package up north and the dear sweet man brought it by on his way to a lesson. He thinks he's going to get another school up in Evanston to teach at but it still has to clear through the Mother Superior. He also said Ed had been sworn in the AAF so it's just a matter of waiting to go now.

I got a remarkably sweet letter from Renee today, expressing great and apparently genuine solicitude for us all. I think that now that Jerry's away and his wife Ann too -- of whom Renee is very fond and who is with London OWI now -- the old girl is getting lonely and sentimental. It might be nice to see her under those circumstances -- I mean, nice to get along with her, not nice to see her suffer.

I wish to hell the war would get over with. I know it's going quickly but not enough for me. I woke up in the middle of last night, struck with the awful realization that the year was almost over and nothing had happened yet. And now it's time to send Christmas presents again -- it's all very depressing. Has anybody said anything to you about rotation? It seems to me that that's the one chance I have of seeing you before next spring, lugubrious soul that I am. Well, that isn't a very cheerful note to end on. I just love you so damned much.

Kisses from Kathy too -- Always, Jill

End of September (first of two parts) 1944 letters

