

AL TO JILL MARCH 17, 1945

Darling Jill,

I am still shuddering from the effects of a dream about you. We seem to have one great trait in common, that our dreams about each other have a large element of at least partial frustration in them with a resulting overwhelming sadness and perhaps a saving sunniness when we awake to find the dull reality much preferable to the depressing sleep. I dreamt I had come home or at least was somewhere over there and was walking down the street, not thinking of meeting you at all, when, all of a sudden, I looked across the street and my heart almost tied itself into a sheepshank. For there you were, very tailored and shapely. I ran over and swept you into my arms. You were as happy as I was. Then a cloud came over you and you let me understand that this was the End, and then, much to my dismay, you disappeared. I searched frantically for you and finally found you in the company of some detestable boys and girls in the room of some house. I was told by the girls that you felt something had occurred which would make our relationship impossible -- this only a few minutes after a two-year separation. I felt very badly but got you out into the street again in order to get to the bottom of it all. At this point, you changed into a man and apparently I changed into you, because the man was now the person who was explaining why he was incapable of carrying on the affair -- but was half hoping that you would not believe him. He seemed to have various effects of wounds which he thought might be difficult for you to accept in the Brave New World. The final issue was undecided when I awakened. I'm not at all sure of the meaning of this dream or whether it has any sense. I believe that the principal fear of losing you to some unaccountable reason held me unconsciously long ago, in our pre-marital state. I loved you much more than I cared to admit even to myself. I think the war and separation elements are not too significant in the interpretation. They perhaps only increase the insecurity which fosters the dream. Nor does the change in identification mean much, except that I am you and you are me.

The main thing seems to be that there exists always this great love which I certainly can never abandon, neither to the obstacles of my dreams or of my real life, and which makes me unhappy only when I'm afraid that I'm losing it. And yet our characters are such that we have these nightmares that show the other person slipping away, and are never so sure of ourselves that we have only pleasant dreams à la fairy tales, without fear, since we have not only our difficult characters but our even more difficult environments of war, work, and society to face and conquer. That we sometimes lose in our dreams is not surprising. That we invariably win in real life is astounding. I never feel the slightest doubt when I sleep next to you, with my arm around you.

I'm glad that unpleasant dreams are not frequent with me (incidentally, the moment of meeting you was indescribably pleasant). The occasion last night was a late gathering of several officers at the expense of Lt. Pregre, a French officer with us. He had been on a trip South and had some fine cheese, sausage, wine and liquors to offer us, together with bread, butter and too much coffee. The variety of liquors was appalling and quite satisfactory -- mirabelle (toujours), quetsch (prune brandy), apricot brandy and whiskey. He had a fine bottle of Rhine wine from near Switzerland to boot. And I forgot to mention a hair-raising alcohol called tutti-frutti. We sat around a good long time talking of many things. We discussed whether one saw a country better in our present fashion or as a tourist. I believe the former, even though it is less complimentary to the country and one's impression of it is always below its true worth. I think it's better this way and then that afterwards, perhaps five years later, one should revisit the country to improve his balance & impressions. With better company, too. I'm sure you would charm the people of these little towns I've been through. Then we each talked lyrically of the beauties of the bay of Naples. We'll rent a villa someday looking down at it all, with great windows that let in the whole world at a satisfactory distance.

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The Hogs rooted

Their soldiers looted & booted

Their crowds hooted.

Men died

Women cried

(It ain't funny)

PWs eat in Pullman diners

(It ain't poetry either)

Conscientious Objectors behave with Shameless

Consciences

And we had C ration for supper.



Cartoon from the Stars & Stripes: The Occupying Forces.

But I was very annoyed to read about some COs kicking up in the States and about PWs being pampered. Instead of riding in Pullmans, they ought to have been walked the distance with cold C rations for their meals. And I think that the COs ought to be rounded up and sent overseas after the war to do some of the honest, constructive, unwarlike work of reconstruction. There ought to be some quid pro quo for the attitudes they get

by with. There has been too little sharing of the sacrifices among our people. The staggering discrepancy between what some people contribute and between what the soldier overseas does is almost criminal. And to then rub salt in the wounds by pampering our enemies. All that young manhood I've been hearing about in your letters. I know damn well that the Germans are fighting furiously with exactly that sort of material. And for those the army doesn't accept - what about the merchant marine, the Seebecs, and war work. How sad that one must retire to a big comfortable apartment to finish his parties after midnight. It is true that it is impossible to spread the sacrifice perfectly but at least honest attempts ought to be made constantly to do so. Why must people be rewarded because of their physical or mental weakness, their low cunning, or their good fortune in being beyond the pale of the law.

I hope that you won't think I mope about this always. But sometimes I have the feeling that you believe I don't realize what goes on and am "blindly optimistic" or don't "feel oppressed enough", ergo, don't feel terrible enough for not having you all this time.

I was happy to note in recent French newspaper dispatches considerable disapproval of De Gaulle's actions in international affairs. For example, Franc Tireur wrote: "We should prefer our country to brandish the torch of international democracy rather than to accept the leadership of the small powers as if out of spite at not being a Great Power." Again, "Why oppose the secret diplomacy of the Big Three with a still more secret French diplomacy? Why, in general, give the world the impression that France's foreign policy varies from one day to the next according to mortifying setback, a missed rendez-vous, or an unfortunate phrase?" And Combat writes: "We have no desire to play the oracle at a time when a policy inspired by the obvious French concern for security appears to have received a severe setback. We shall only repeat, however, what we have often said already, namely that it is vain to look for power when we have no force at our disposal and that the only realism which we could afford corresponded to the deep feeling of peoples

and that by expressing this we should have achieved real greatness". Thus, a great many French realize that the old French diplomacy of *sécurité* failed miserably before and it is a mistake for France to try it again.

I've finished reading Cannery Row, which I enjoyed very much and am passing around. Now that I think of it, I realize that what I dislike about Dos Passos and Steinbeck is that only infrequently in all of their realistic writing (this goes for Wolfe too) do they do any real "teaching" in the highest sense of the word. An ordinary, half-educated, prejudiced, vulgar man gets a great kick out of them but comes out with his personality hardly scratched. If anything, he is all the more convinced of what really fine characters bums and whores are, and therefore how much more nice he himself must be. Now I am reading a facetious book on Egypt which lambasts everyone unmercifully, with considerable truth but with unfortunate consequence, for the type of persons who read it for the most part were those who directly or indirectly were incriminated by it. But they lacked the self-knowledge to appreciate the fact.

With many a kiss to Kathy and to yourself, darling, I remain
always, your

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 18?, 1945

Darling --

Sunday

If you haven't heard from me for four days (today is Sunday and the last time I wrote was Thursday) let your fertile imagination play over the events transpiring in the intervening time. When I last wrote, I was fretting over my rebuff by United Airlines with what I thought was marvelous self-restraint. Well, that evening after I wrote you I took Kathy and bags (that made four of us) down to Northwestern Station. It was strictly do or die. I figured if I couldn't get a lower out that night I would never go. With

what amounted to some chagrin (by that time I really would have preferred to winter, spring and summer on Ridgewood Ct.). I got a lower on the Challenger, that darling little tourist train. We had to hang around the station for about three hours till I got it -- that after the long exciting trek to the airport that morning. Well, we finally got on the train. Kathy was good in the station. She ran around, I after her, ate a sandwich while I stocked up on awful station hamburgers and didn't ask to be picked up too much. When we got on the train we got into bed soon afterwards and slept fairly well that night. It was the first time I ever slept with her and it wasn't bad. But then, she was tired and didn't wake up all night.

But the next days ... Before I go on, let me tell you that on arrival I was greeted with the inestimable joy of four letters from you ranging from the 1st to the 7th. They all expressed concern and wonderment over whether I got there and oh brother, it was justified. Oh, before I forget, the bonds are lodged in the Fed. Res. Bank of Chicago -- I thought I told you that before. Not under Kathy's mattress. All except the 50-buck one. I have that hidden away round the apartment but will write Mom to take care of it.

As I was saying, oh brother, what a trip. All the imaginable horrors -- dirt, nay filth (it's an all tourist train, which means only uppers and lowers and coaches, all antiquated), only two meals a day and always lines. Kathy wasn't very happy. I did the most awful thing. I forgot her blue wool blanket that she is so much in love with. I had it with me when I went out to the airport but somehow forgot it in the rush to get to the station. She was rather frightened the first morning out and cried and would only stop when I held her standing up (she can't bear me to sit down). There were other kids in our car, about two years old, and the mothers kept hitting them while Kathy, the well-adjusted child, kept running up and down the aisles expressing herself. They were clean and she got dirty. They sat in their seats, she played in the aisles (when she wasn't crying). When we sat down at a table she banged all the silverware about and ate all the food in sight, leaving me none. The only bright light was

when we had an hour the second day out in Ogden, Utah. I took her for a walk and held her interminably on the station platform, for the fresh air. My arms are like steel pincers. She didn't sleep so well the next two nights, waking up in the middle and requiring considerable soothing to get back to sleep. And last night (the 3rd night) I hear a cry about three in the morning and looked for her and she had disappeared! I looked through the curtains into the aisle and there she was, sitting as calmly as you please. Somehow she's gotten out and God knows how long she'd been tramping around, swapping dirty stories with the conductor.

Well, there's no use in going into further sordid details. Needless to say I hardly had enough time to wee what with carrying, feeding and keeping her as much as I could out of other people's hair. What impressed me most was the way other people felt about children. I always thought that our child was unendurably charming and attractive but to other people she was just a pest and not nearly as nice as the beaten stepped-on two year olds. I was also impressed by the brutality of people to their children. And in turn, those children kept hitting Kathy, so that I was always soothing her on that account.

But here we are. The train got in at noon, several hours late and Paul and Ann and young Paul met us at the ferry stop (the ferry ride was nice and sunny and poor Kathy had a whale of a time running around in the sun, shouting at the gulls) and suddenly all the misery of the two days (no, three and a half) disappeared. They are all looking fine and little Paul is just wonderful, a giggly beautiful (if you can call a boy that) blonde child. The two of them regarded each other gravely at first but Ann said that when Paul got ready to take his nap this afternoon he said, yes, Kathy was very cute. Kathy didn't say anything. But then later on this afternoon, when Kathy and I had had a big refreshing bath together and after Ann had dug us a blue blanket, a reasonable facsimile of the one we left behind us, they had a mad sporting time together. They get along fine. Kathy plays with all the toys Paul is sick of -- he has millions --- and I doubt very much if he will feel displaced and fight with her.

He is a wonderful kid anyway, unstepped on and well-adjusted, I think. It will be fine for both of them, having each other's company. Both of them will get more unspoiled (at least Kathy is rather spoiled in the sense that she depends so much on me for the source of all her soys). Now that I'm here I'm very happy. We have a lovely big room together and Kathy has her own crib, which serves all around that she can reach up and get toys down from. I have the big double bed Ann and Paul used to have. The apartment is enormous, about five rooms downstairs and several more upstairs where they sleep. They've fixed it up wonderfully and originally, the way they always do. We had a big dinner and Kathy went to bed right after hers, which was somewhat early, at peace with the world and her blue blanket. Thank God she didn't pick up diseases on the train, though how I know not. And I am at peace with the world, knowing you love me and knowing that I love you as much. And also knowing that our little daughter is such a nice little girl, even if she doesn't sit on her fanny all day on a train. In fact, that's why she is nice.

I'm sorry darling is this is a terribly incoherent letter. This is an awful typewriter but borrowed. Tomorrow I'll write more and make more sense, I hope.

All my love,

Jill

JILL TO AL MARCH 19, 1945

Darling --

I still haven't gotten around to reading your four San Francisco letters for the third time, so that I may properly answer them, returning gibe for gibe, kiss for kiss, and then along comes another letter from you, March 11, and here it is March 19, so apparently the 2000 miles doesn't make so much difference in the mail time.

Small Paul is looking over my shoulder and keeps giggling in my ear. It is very distracting. Ah, his father has just removed him.

Well, I can't answer your first four, as I was saying, because they are hidden away in Kathy's room and sleep has just mercifully overtaken her but your letter today contained the cheerful, if obliquely presented news that you got the pen. And I do remember from the preceding ones that you want another Katherine Ann Porter book and also that you saw that picture, When Strangers Marry. Damn it, I can't remember if I told you first I saw it. Anyway I agree with you that it contained marvelous touches and was altogether good except for the ending. And to descend to the schoolgirl level of critique, the man who played the leading role was marvelous. Incidentally I'm sure there's never been another American picture that presented the phenomenon of the Black and Tan café.

We spent a very pleasant day. Kathy slept right through the night and I didn't because she coughs in her sleep. She is getting two more teeth, I think. her gums are quite swollen and once before the doctor had told me that teething makes them cough -- the mucus increases and slides down the throat or something. But she awoke about seven this morning and played merrily until I got up, in fear for my life. her crib is only separated from my bed and clever arrangements of shelves, upon which are lined an innumerable array of wicked wooden toys. After a while she got onto the idea that Mommy was resting on the other side and she started to hurl down the toys amiably upon me. At that point I got up. We ate huge breakfasts and then went shopping in the wonderful Ford convertible. The sun beat on our heads and the two kids leaned over the back of the seat and gawked at the traffic. Then we went to a little sandpile a couple of blocks from here and Kathy got her first look since she's come of age at dirt (the nice kind, not the Challenger kind) and sand. She didn't like getting her hands dirty at first *
[*footnote*: * although she ate a little, tentatively] -- God knows whence comes this sudden daintiness, and much preferred the damp grass patches at the side. Then we came home and ate

huge lunches and all napped some more. Kathy's appetite is suddenly out of this world, truly De Grazia, enormous and catholic. It is a joy to see her eat, that is, if it doesn't make you lose your appetite. But little Paul is less fastidious and her performance has stimulated him to great feeding feats too. he's not very big or hearty but very pretty and perfectly formed. Kathy is that too, except that she is so tall for her age. I guess I told you that everybody on the train thought she was at least a two-year-old and expected her to act like one.

This afternoon I did our laundry and helped Ann clean the house. Ann has a little washing machine which makes it a scratch easier to do the wash though not much because it doesn't have a ringer like the big one at home. Then I took the kids out. We could only play in about four square feet of pavement because the apartment is on another very precipitous hill and Kathy is still scared of them. So we stayed on the corner where it was level. Paul is at an age where he plays beautifully by himself. Kathy will get there soon. I've noticed the change already -- that she is more self-reliant and likes playing with toys better than she did at home, where I had to keep taking her outside for her amusement and where indoors she would just mess around with the books and bureau drawers. This is a much nicer house for children. The size alone makes it nice -- you can't notice the mess they make so much and there are all sorts of interesting nooks and crannies to explore. The bed in our room is practically at bug level and she climbs up and down with great gusto. Occasionally the kids hit one another. Kathy even is the aggressor once in a while though Paul is usually. I think her hitting is more caprice, that she doesn't yet understand the significance of force and that she should hit him back instead of yammering madly for me. But he apologizes routinely and even kissed her once today, to make up. Other than that they don't pay much overt attention to each other, except for joining one another in giggling fits, Paul is a great giggler, a merry child withal.

I realize I've said very little about the big folks. Well, they are both fine and look identically the way they did two years ago.

Ann better in fact. Paul is if anything more taciturn than he used to be. It's funny -- and I can talk so much when I get going. Ann and I get along fine so far. I can help around the house and she is anything but a compulsive housewife, which makes it fine for us all. And the food is divine. I hope that someday I'll be able to cook like her, which is the way you would want me to cook -- greatnesses of stews, both subtly and definitely flavored, huge salads and messes of noodles and spaghetti. The food is so much better here anyway. The vegetables are marvelous and for some reason their meat supply is better in quantity and quality than we get in Chicago. That I don't understand at all. Of course everything is more expensive. But the city is terribly crowded. It always was in this neighborhood anyway. I didn't realize the reason until this time. It's because this, the north beach section, gets sunlight most of the day whereas the newly built-up sections near the ocean are always cloudy and therefore less desirable. This is a very old building, as are most of them around here except the prohibitively priced ones. It's such a funny city -- houses literally piled up on top of one another and yet, until you start looking for someplace to park the kids, you don't realize how crowded it is because of the great vistas from the hills. And in between the houses, wherever there's the slightest patch of dirt, the plants grow luxuriantly. Ann and Paul are always diving into some little canyon which I've not yet seen, and coming up with reosemary or basilico.

And the weather is so wonderful (although I've never heard a San Franciscan yet admit it, not ever seen it rain here either) -- no freezes or chills. And it's even better in Marin County or Kerkeley. Those two places would be nice to live in, because there's much more space for house building and petty agriculture. Every time I come to the coast I fall in love with it again and realize what a bum deal we get in the Middle West so far as landscape and climate are concerned. The only trouble is that prices are terribly high out here now for everything -- land and labor. Ann's cleaning woman gets a dollar an hour! And Ann told a charming little story about some friend of Bernice's and Pete's who ended it all in her bathtub one day. They

immediately called some other friends to come take the apartment but they weren't successful. The man from the Coroner's office got it first.

God my fingers are tired. This typewriter belongs to a Mr. Saxe, who stays here temporarily. He's a friend of Paul's who travels and occasionally lights here. He's here now but out and I've only seen him once.

I'll write more tomorrow, darling. I should write Mom and tell her of our safe arrival, but like you, I'm only good for one a day, at least until I catch up on my sleep. But I love you, asleep or awake and wish to hell you would come home soon. Incidentally if you do I probably could fly back easier than I got out here. At least, that's what they tell me.

I love you darling,

Jill

Al, you'll be pleased to hear that Paul is just getting to work on your famous hot Bulova timepiece with one of my bobby pins. It stopped at 6:45, 15 minutes after he had bent the case so as to stop the guts from falling out. I never did wear it anyway because of that peculiar defect but brought it along on the trip, just so I would have something to do when we passed through the various time zones. My own I gave up long ago. It stopped being waterproof and also stopped, for all time.

AL TO JILL MARCH 19, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling,

Things seem to be on the move, don't they? The remaining Germans West of the Rhine are now being sliced up nicely and we'll soon be looking across the great blue beyond. It looks like you lose your bottle of booze. At least I lose my bets to soldiers. I should think he would be drunk with law cases by now. Anyone

getting a degree in Int Law really has my pity. I can't think of anything more useless than the tripe they deal with, especially as it is taught. Now a philosophy of Int' Law is something else, but I'm sure at Chi the Head of the Dept can't grasp anything more general than the single case. I can't remember what you said in your last letter which is tucked away in my bed roll somewhere, save that you wanted a bonny lock of my hair. Since I have nothing to offer save a half a dark inch at the deepest point of penetration, I must wait until they grow out a little more. The day has been beautiful, a day when one wants everything to stop and bask. I got a letter from Bill Evers dated Feb. 15, which is somewhat ominous, since he is with the 3rd Div., and that was just before Iwo. I hope it was a light wound - that's about the way I feel on his chances. I know what the CO of a rifle company has on his hands and though it's fun while it lasts, it has no pretensions of being lasting. He knows two officers in the div from the U of C who claim to know me but whom my failing memory cannot recall, Ray Ickes and a guy named Reid. He says Ickes, who is a platoon lt. in his co., is just the sort of guy he needs to talk things over with. That's a lucky break. I also got a letter from Herz who sends you his best. I've framed Kathy's beautiful pictures. Tell her I adore her dynamic beauty, even if she isn't house-broken. I may have a picture or two of myself to send you in a couple of days. I've practically abandoned the hope of taking any pictures of Europe with the little film I possess in the mad rush to send you a picture of myself now and then. I'm getting to be a regular "lens louse". No one can accuse you of that. You're simply a louse. Of course, this corny pic man we have, Fred Faas, can make a good cup of coffee and is a good housekeeper, but he ruined part of my last roll of film. I hope to find an intact German photo shop soon, and will send you one of myself draped over some German ruins. Then you can mount it beside the one I took with Buzz in Germany in 1938 alongside the big Nazi flag. My political comments on Germany will meanwhile reduce, I'm afraid. I'm seeing too many confidential plans to even talk about the subject any more. I keep shrivelling up as a correspondent, less and less to talk about. I wonder how much better my letters

would be if I didn't have to keep an eye cocked on the censorship regulations. Please believe that they might say a little more, anyway. By the way, when you think of academic life, why do you always think of people like the Shils or L. D. White? or the little loony boys & girls you run around with (e. g. Oliver & Dianna's expiration [?]) I wouldn't be at all like that. The only time I agreed wholeheartedly with M. Adler was when he said that five hours of solid thought a day is a full day's work. Can't you spare me for even that?

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 20, 1945

Darling Al --

Whew! I just got both babies to bed and now I know what it's like to have two babies instead of one. I might add before I got any further than I still would like two, three, nay four of them. Ann left about 4:30 this afternoon to meet Paul for ice skating. The kids hadn't been out all day because it's been raining and Kathy has a slight cold anyway. And there were innumerable dishes in the sink. I did them all, managed to keep the two from fighting and somehow got them to bed. I must say that if Paul acted anything like Kathy I wouldn't be here to tell the tale. I don't know whether it's his superior age or innate tractability, but he is infinitely easier to handle. Ann mentioned that Kathy is at an age where life is full of frustration and she may be right. Kathy is too little to do many things, she is always falling and getting bumped and her upright maneuverable position gives her new vistas which she unfortunately can't cope with as well as an older child. And everybody is older than she and able to thwart her and take things sway from her -- little Paul being the chief offender in the latter case. It's a miracle to me that she plays as well as she does. And mainly it is that she has always had me around to please her and play with her and now, suddenly, there are other people in her life.

I put her to bed first and ate and then put Paul to bed. All the while he was eating -- slowly and interminably. He is the sweetest little boy, utterly cuddlesome. I tend to be much more affectionate than either Paul or Ann to my child, and to him when they are away like tonight. On the other hand Ann is much more correct, or at least somewhat, in her treatment of him. I tend to get mad at Kathy sometimes and lose my temper momentarily. But Ann never does. And I also tend to pass off illness or accidents, which may not be good because suppose something awful happened and there was Jill, just calmly passing it off. Well, everybody has their inconsistencies, and while consistency is a virtue in making kids secure, the very fact that most kids have two parents supervising their upbringing would make for inconsistency. But I shouldn't try to excuse my temper, I know. And I'll try to control it henceforth, to the extent of not yelling shut up at her when her cries make the day hideous.

She coughs at night which makes the night hideous too. I called Ann's doctor and he suggested too it might be from teething and also to give her nose drops, which I did.

So far I haven't done much, you might gather. I just looked out the window on the rainy city and the lights are all dotting the hills. It is a testimony to the bullheadedness of man that they would try and succeed in building a city on these impossible hills and terrain. Tomorrow night I am going swimming in a genuine salt water pool nearby. That will be fun. But mostly I eat and play with the kids and help with the interminable dishes. We all eat so much. It's a good thing because I am damn thin and hope I can gain ten pounds or so before I leave. I still would like to get back to Chicago for the warm weather -- May I suppose. I miss the freedom of the lake but I fully realize that that freedom is only available four months or less of the year. Last summer I recall I took my first stunning dip around the middle of that month. And that was sheer exhibitionism.

I dreamt last night that I was taking a train to meet you in New York, sans Kathy for some mysterious reason, and suddenly

realized I had only brought two pairs of shoes, both of them immensely high-heeled. Oh God, I thought, we'll have to spend most of the time resting my feet in the hotel room. And then I remembered that wasn't a bad prospect, not bad at all.

I saw the pin you sent Ann and it's simply stunning. I like it even better than mine though I wear mine all the time with my red wool Peck and Peck dress, which incidentally shrank this winter, damn it.

I think I'll rest the old back now. Take care of yourself darling and come home to me soon.

All my love,

Jill

JILL TO AL MARCH 21, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling Al --

Not much of a letter because I don't think my nerves could *[stand]* that chattering loud-mouthed old typewriter. I didn't write yesterday because Kathy and I both have colds. However, it didn't deter me from going swimming in a huge nearby salt water pool with Paul last night. The air in the pool was damp and dank and the water, though warmed, dulled my bones. But we swam up and down and eventually I got used to it, though I find progress in salt water slow indeed.

Kathy is making love to a loaf of bread and acting very silly so I don't think she is awfully ill either. Yesterday was sunny at noon and I took her out on the front steps for a little while. The hill is like this \,, no, maybe thus \, and she was afraid to walk at first but caught on after holding my hand a while and then had a mad time running downhill. She had her carpet slippers on all the while too. Everybody is very afraid of catching our colds and we are slightly persona non grata. This is an awful letter. More

tomorrow. I just wanted to say anyway, that I love you and think of you always. I dream of you too. Oh, Kathy spilled that bread.

Love

Jill

JILL TO AL MARCH 23, 1945

Sweetheart --

I got two letters from you today, March 12 and 13, both long and full of wondrous discourses which made me very patty, particularly the news that you got the pictures of Kathy (were those the chewed-up semi-professional ones) and think she is so pretty. The poor little thing isn't so pretty tonight. Her face got all streaked with that nose stuff, argyrol, and it will take until the day you come home to wear off. We are all sad sacks. Little Paul, Kathy and I all have simple colds (to be distinguished from flu, beri berir or the yaws) and Paul and the boarder Lou lit off for a skiing weekend, leaving Ann, the one compos mentis) and I to carry on. It was probably a wise move though painful for Ann. For my part, I am beginning to associate men with dirty dishes and it can only take a peer of the sex, namely you, to break this unfortunate conditioning. You know how Ann cooks. Well, it is wonderful and satisfying but my goodness, it seems as if we are always doing dishes.

Darling, I think we still have the Barnaby book at home, or else Joan has it. There is a new one which I may send if I can find it here, along with the other books you requested. I ought to be able to get downtown sometime next week, when we all get over our various afflictions (aren't you bored with all this -- I am) and get them for you. Kathy has been acting up anyway -- it may be her cold, it may also be her strangeness and Ann is somewhat loathe to take on the two kids during the day. Tonight after I put Kathy to bed I took a long walk in the yellow light of the setting sun. It was the first time I'd been alone since I'd

gotten here and it is truly a wonderful feeling, walking alone in a strange and beautiful city. But how nice it would be to be invisible. I love to walk down by the docks and warehouses, then climbing back again to the fancy residential districts, but the spectacle of a woman walking alone at the dinner hour in the former location is usually an odd one to the passerby, particularly if the passerby happens to be an MP.

The kids have been alternately crying all night long. Kathy just got to sleep and now it's Paul's turn to be up, moaning the sad fate that befalls children with stuffed-up noses (not to mention adults). However, my typing seems to appease him.

I see what you mean about Gosnell's cliches. I think it's awfully dub* anyway to regard a man's army duties as "work", as if it were a career or something.

* the result of having a cold.

Oh, last night we went to see the oddest movie, an English picture called On Approval with Beatrice Lillie and Clive Brook. It was really very funny in an English bed-and-drawing-room-farce sort of way. I mean, the remarks and double entendres themselves weren't funny but the esprit of production and delivery made it so. Afterwards we had very good fudge sundaes someplace.

I wish Kathy had her tailor tot here. We are so limited. Mostly I sit on the stoop and watch them play and break up the clinches. And soothe Kathy, who is very temperamental. I am constantly apologizing for her fierce moods. But she is really very sweet and distinctly said thank mamma, nah, yah and thank you. I guess that makes six. I don't tell her to say thank you, incidentally. It's just that whenever she gives me anything, like an old zwieback, I always thank her.

God I'm sleepy. Darling, come home to me soon. I really love you. Kathy does too and needs you as much as I do.

Jill

JILL TO AL MARCH 25, 1945

Sweetheart --

I am getting as bad as Ann, who writes a letter one year and mails it the next. I have a letter on my bureau which I wrote Friday and here it is Sunday and I still haven't mailed it, despite the mailbox being situated only 10 feet from our front door. I can only attribute this sad defection to a) loss of memory (as of yesterday) and b) rain (as of today).

We've been in the house all day and for some reason, it's been the pleasantest yet. In fact this whole weekend has been very pleasant despite what on the surface would seem to be odds against it. As I told you Friday night, Paul and Lou went skiing, leaving this pest house in which 3 out of 4 have colds. Well, yesterday Ann kept Paul in bed and in the morning Kathy and I took the Ford and did her shopping. What fun it was driving around. I thought I would be scared on the hills but I wasn't and we did fine. Kathy sat in the car like an angel while I ran in and out, doing innumerable air -- errands (that's Freudian, why did I say air? Huh?). Then we had lunch and Ann ran downtown while I watched over the kids, a sleepy, asthmatic guardian angel.

Then both kids woke and played all afternoon in the front room, which is full of fascinating toys. Paul has modeling clay and a big easel with drawing paper and paints. Today Kathy took a hand at painting and really daubed about with amazing coordination, if not with aesthetic results. She is extremely apt at motor imitation, or whatever you would call it. And then we had big dinners and talked and turned in around 10. Everybody -- and Kathy and I got the habit immediately -- of awakening at seven here. When you recall the 2-hour time lapse between Chicago and here, we are really still waking at 9, m I guess.

This morning we had a big breakfast and returned to our comfortable posts in the living room where the kids played and this afternoon we're doing it again. Oh yes, we also washed our hair -- Ann and I did -- and in defiance of all laws of medicine

and hygiene, since my cold seems to have settled in my sinuses for the season. It has altogether been pleasant and restful and we are needed it badly. It really was inspired, leaving Ann and me alone. We are both of us prone to be nervous and nasty under tension, but when left to our own devices and the absence of a man who demands a superficially clean house at least, we are positively angelic. And Kathy is getting over all her old stews. She plays so nicely and is so happy all day long. Right now Paul is dragging a long line of cars and she is brining up the rear, giggling. Now they are fighting, since Kathy wants to play with the train. You're right. Kids are dragons, particularly as they get older and assert property rights. By fighting incidentally I mean Paul pushes or slaps Kathy and she cries. Occasionally she will pat or hit him but she always end up the loser because of his superior fire power. As a matter of fact we have to keep pretty close watch on them because altercations seem to be constantly flaring up and you never know whether he is going to remonstrate politely with her or bean her with a chair.

But poor Kathy and poor Jill. We had a hard week and poor Ann, I guess it was even worse, being hostess and watching her guests pour cold germs over her son.

We are also very happy over the big breakthrough on the Rhine. I'm a little hazy over the exact developments because I eschew S.F. papers like a plagues (and what a plaguey lot they are) and don't get to listen to the radio often unless we are sitting in the living room and conditions of quiet prevail, which is rare indeed.

God we've been eating like horses too. I'm getting a small pot in front from all this indulgence. An I shall duplicate every menu for you when you come home. You know, with a convertible and unlimited gas, S.F. would be quite a tolerable city to live in. You (one, not you) can get out of town instantly and I like occasionally rainy weather -- a good excuse to be lazy. And, as you gather from the tone of this later, laziness is my prevailing mood.

Darling -- I'd better end this before it just ends by itself in a series of indecipherable scrawls, the way my notes at school used to look when I commenced a classroom nap. Besides there are too many distractions -- Kathy wetting on the floor being the current one.

All my love, darling

March 25 Writ by hand

Jill

P. S. Ann sends love. So do Kathy who is trying to snatch the pen

AL TO JILL MARCH 26, 1945 (A) V-MAIL

Dearest and only Love,

Am I not quite profusive in my love now that I haven't written you a decent letter in several days. The whole thing, of course, must be completely evident to you from reading the news. We have been going like hell and your cher petit Alfred has been having a hard enough time keeping body and soul together in addition to the task of getting the company through the paces. But I love you, yes I love you. Your last letter is very ragged from the sweat and the dirt because the mail has not been coming in. I am most happy to know that you liked the scarves. I know you must look beautiful in them and am very very sorry that I couldn't have seen you try them on for the first time. But there will be many more. A colored scarf is a very appropriate gift for you, I think, gorgeous and informal to match you. As for draping them around your body, I don't think that anything can add anything there, but if it could, the scarves would do it.

I know you don't like my poetry, but I'm afraid you'll have to bear with me from time to time. I get to hate the sight of my written words, the mundane prose body. You asked whether it was the

Literary Guild that has it in for me. No, I believe it was the Book of the Month Club. Incidentally, I just picked up a beautiful leather-bound copy of Thackeray's Henry Esmond in the strangest of places, and have started to read that. How different its age from ours! And therefore how much more relaxing to read in. The difference between the primitive America of that day and today, also. I wish that everyone at home could stand along one of these roads and watch the American army move by. It is the gigantic spectacle of history, American to the core and absolutely awesome, unending, stretching on all the roads to the horizon, columns of the most mechanized force of all time, little tanks and big ones, ducks, six by sixes, darting jeeps, huge steel monsters that carry tanks or pull long artillery pieces with flashing lights and shrieking sirens, machines that take up two lanes in a roaring, blinding cloud of dust and that sometimes pull off the corners of buildings where the street is too narrow. No one walks. There is not a single horse. And the whole swiftly moving mass of metal is directed nonchalantly and gracefully by the GIS in the seats and the MPs with a flick of the wrist. We haven't given to this war our last gasping effort, but what we have given is like the slap of a bear's paw to the biting ant, iron blood worth more than the blood of millions of men towards winning the war, that in addition to the human effort, and our human lives. The weather has been fine for this war of movement. It rained this morning for the first time in a number of days. The winter seems to have gone for good, one of the shortest I can remember, since it began to thaw in mid February. I should be home holding you in my arms now that Spring is on its way, but I guess I can bear with another few weeks.

Love to Kathy and always my unadulterated passion to you.

Al

LURCHING over a ribbon of timbers that is lapped by the Saar River, he intrudes upon the Third Reich. The Army is on the march again. The Captain finds himself in a jeep driving through the destroyed town

of Kaiserslautern turning to look at a young German girl, apparently oblivious of the invaders, sweeping with deliberate movements the stone steps of a totally blasted house. What is she sweeping up, he wonders, and ponders too the German mentality; but he thinks, when you can't think of anything else to do, why not grab a broom and start sweeping? Actually ain't that like the Old Army of the USA, an hour before Retreat sounds. "Arms length! Pick up Butts. Route Step! Forward, March!" Or it may be that her sweeping is a pretext to find out what the invaders are like.

In search of targets of opportunity, he turns southward toward the Rhine River roads. Scott and he sleep in the open with the jeep against a wall at their back and an artillery blast hole in front; it is a habit he has developed. As night falls, they can see upstream the enormous fires of the city of Mannheim, set ablaze by the bombers. "God, Captain," says Scott, "it looks like a Hollywood Movie!" It does, and he reflects upon how in these days the media studios set up the scene for man and nature to imitate. Although there is not much information on what lies ahead, he guesses that they can drive a long stretch along the West Rhine road and perhaps find some engineers throwing a bridge across. Soon they come to where Ludwigshaven begins to stretch out on the other side of the River.

On their own side they encounter an American outpost. Apparently it had advanced from the South. They pull up a few yards from a couple of riflemen, and somebody he cannot see yells, "Hey, get that jeep out of there, we're catching fire." So he jumps off, sends it off to hide and skulks over to the river edge. There a rifleman tells him anxiously, Sir, there is somebody sneaking in and out of the warehouse across and he looks like a civilian but maybe he is observing fire. Should I shoot him? The Captain catches the scene and the man in his binoculars. A doubtful case. Might be some old coot scavenging. He queries himself: Should I take the rifle from his reluctant hands and fire at the man, or should I say, yes, and give him the imprimatur of authority to take a life or, even better from his point of view, an Order to shoot, or should he tell him to do what he thinks best under the circumstances. Surely he must have someone in command, who might even resent a seeming interference. The Captain tells him to do what he thinks best, adding, prejudicially, you have to protect your own

people, remember that too. And he leaves. Silly, isn't he? Given the unspeakably murderous war, the life of this geezer is a trivium. Yet shooting a person is by all canons of morality a decision of utmost gravity. So much for that. Then, too, consider this: as insufferably elaborate as all this reasoning is, might not there be another level of even more private reasoning, or, at least, motivation: that the Captain both did and didn't want to kill the man and rationalized himself out of the dilemma without permitting himself to believe that he did not want to kill.

Where is the Front? What is a Front? It is occasionally what is commonly imagined or played in films: a constant inferno surrounding bunkers or tunnels or holes into which men have dived. However, whatever and wherever it is, it must support the variable possibility that "all hell will break loose." The Front is wherever two patrols clash or where time after time violent exchanges occur, as at Cassino, where a belt of a quarter of a mile along the Rapido River was bloodied repeatedly. The Front is extended sometimes by "carpet bombing," as at the Abbey and Town of Montecassino, or upon the Second SS Panzer Division as it moved up to counterattack at Mortain against the Americans who were breaking out of Normandy. There we consider up to a couple of round miles as the Front. The Front is also where first friendly, then enemy, forces occupy or pass through an area, occasionally meeting. It is a moving border between retreating and pursuing forces, too, who may be in contact or running battle, or may be out of contact.

The Front is also wherever artillery can reach, up to several miles, up to thousands of miles by missiles nowadays, but, fifty years ago, only several miles. There is the Front for bombing aircraft, who could reach the line of troops, if such exists, or in any event long distances beyond the men on the ground, as in the costly battles over England and Germany. The Front can be a large region practically devoid of troops into which anyone might penetrate for days without hostile encounter. Then the Sea Front needs to be defined in terms of the bases available to the opposing forces and the likelihood of encounter on the high seas; the Front is a troopship being observed by an enemy submarine. The "Home Front" can be more than a rousing slogan; it can be disorderly, plagued by police and riotous troops, by

resistance groups, and a target for airplane attack or missiles. Often, when not in combat, German and Allied troops were gratified to be whiling away time far from the Home Front.

So, when you reach the nut of the matter, the Front is a quantitative concept: a more than "X" probability that in "Y" time a given space "Z" will become the aforesaid "inferno." Given this concept, you can calculate or guess at the chances of a given space becoming a Front, today, tomorrow or in ten years.

And, of course, while I am at it, I might add that each Front has its Maps, to which you become addicted insofar as you are confined to one or another Front and have to find your way solo around in it. You can imagine that in a Space War, the relevant map may be the Earth as seen from Space. More realistically, it may be the interior plan of a town hall in Belfort. Map-reading of all sorts up to global dimensions took up its hundreds of hours of the Soldier's time from Tennessee to Munich. He was embraced daily by the folds of World maps, Theater maps, Army Group maps, Corps maps, Division maps, Regimental maps, Battalion area maps, Company maps, Artillery maps, Platoon maps, Squad maps, and personal maps, the kind that is being drawn to show or be shown a nearby location not on any map -- where the command post is, where the entrance to the ammo dump is, where civilians are hiding, where the enemy fire is coming from. He never lacked maps of various kinds, as he never lacked a flashlight and a tin cup.

Ironically, the more detailed and closer to your spot the coverage of the map, the more unlikely that you can depend upon it for what you are after, because the stuff you are interested in, that was there before, has often been blown away explosively and the people in whom you are interested are doing their best not to be where your map says they are. And a lot of nasty human and mechanical surprises are lying in wait, unmapped. In this real sense, from one moment to the next, the Front changes.

Ironically, soldiers who were supposed to guide other people as well as themselves were, as often as not, lost. Since everyone wanted to hide, and at the same time be in touch with others, a nice contradiction blossomed. This accounted not only for their being lost

and unfindable, but also for their committing amicide all too frequently. Thus, coming upon friendlies unexpectedly is a likely way to die, yet if you announce yourself too visibly and audibly you are likely to get both yourself and them in trouble, and rile them up, as happened in the incident above at the River's edge. As the risk rises at a given spot, the danger thereabouts to anyone not of the immediate squad goes up also. Further, though the risk may not rise, the perceived risk -- panic, that is -- grows: raw troops slaughter themselves and their own, as the ack-acks off the Gela beaches in Sicily did to their airborne buddies.

The need for sensitive troop training regarding topography, demography, ekistics and cultures had always been, was, and still is, poignant and unsatisfied. He never heard of combat troops being taught, whether by lecture, print, film, or action scenarios, the physical contours of the settlements where they might well be dying within minutes or hours of arrival. The Arab, the Algerian, the Italian, French and German cultures and provincial sub-cultures, had their peculiar architecture, living habits, and neighborhood construction, their special by-ways, interiors, staircases, windows and shutters, cellars, barns and lofts. The North African desert was only halfway like the Mohave Desert. The French villages were not at all like the American: most Americans didn't know how to open and close a shutter. One warns here not only of delays, blunders, and deadly ignorance, but of the anxiety of ignorance added to the panic-potential always present in the soldier's breast. The next generation coined the term for this -- "culture-shock" -- but it was for tourists and immigrants.

Now begins his tour of the countryside and of Ludwigshaven, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Darmstadt, Stuttgart, and forty other cities and towns of the Rhineland and Bavaria, Munich, yes Dachau. In Darmstadt he is handed a fluegelhorn by a soldier, who has picked it up as combat pay in a burned out fire station and who admires his playing "Danny Boy," "Return to Sorrento," and "Stardust" upon it. It has sticky valves and a tiny mouthpiece.

In Heidelberg he bursts in with his three soldiers upon a university building that is sheltering displaced persons -- the pathetic D.P.'s -- and a few students. A distinguished-looking Polish army

officer has assumed command, and at first denies him admittance and warns against bringing in a company of troops. He says an American officer from Military Government has placed him in charge. The Captain is not to be put off, so the Pole pleads on behalf of his charges. The Captain is touched with this and pulls out some of his rations and schnapps. The Pole does likewise. A large party ensues, going far into the night, with the inevitable accordion playing Polish mazurkas and the Captain blowing his fleugelhorn for all it is worth, and dancers tromping and stomping all about. They all collapse toward morning and as early as he can manage, the Captain rouses his comrades to get out and on their way.

Heidelberg is practically undamaged, therefore crowded, beautiful, very few uniforms in evidence. He is happy about its preservation and considers again, as he gazes at the unsightly bands of freed slave workers, the German civilians, all guilty in some sense of outraging *die ganz Welt* that they expected to take over: what is the price of people relative to the price of culture, the Cassino dilemma, which proved to be a false dilemma at Cassino, where both art and people were destroyed to no avail? What is human life worth in terms of art? There is no avoiding the problem. Every time a shell smashes into a house, a poor woman's shack, a rich bourgeois' stately townhouse, the artifacts of man spiral like horrible genies out of the smoke, and the people scream and crumple in the dust. Is there a chart to be drawn, where people -- ranging in value from the soldier who must be killed (beautiful and talented a young specimen as he may be) through the ignorant ugly and useless up to the divine humans, the best, the kindest, the world citizens -- are given a score; and, then, a chart of the relative value of the cultural and natural beauties being destroyed -- ranging from the Cathedral of Nuremberg to a rusty scupper and bird nest in a spruce tree. What Mastermind of ethics and aesthetics is to be charged with assigning the charted values, what Genial Surveymaster with the inventorying of the human and natural units, what Mathematics Wizard with the instantaneous calculation of individual and collective sums before a cannon blasts off or a bomb-bay opens. God, of course, but God is so obviously away attending to other matters, without leaving instructions, compelling you to exclaim, "My God!" as you see the steeple fall, and "Oh, God!" as the shrapnel

comes to grips with your groin.

In Darmstadt, where he had set up the company on the grounds of a red brick factory, he confiscates a well-cared-for Opel automobile and drives it around for a while. Better still, they acquire free a magnificent convertible Mercedes, such as only top Nazis used, polish its black body, oil its seats and assign it to Tom Crowell, theoretically a civilian, and not quite subject to military orders; should some general take a liking to it, he can try refusing and at worst be thrown out by the General's aides. He takes his three visitors for a grand drive.

There had been in the hard past winter these three guys from the infantry replacement depot who were assigned to the Team. The Exec



Al in Heidelberg.



Al in Heidelberg.

couldn't understand why Roos had put in for them. They were not needed. They were strong, handsome boys, of the same background as Tom Crowell, and he took a liking to them. Then came the big battles and the retreat. The Army sent out a squeeze order, taxing each outfit to replace casualties of the German offensive. Tom spoke to the Exec on their behalf. They're good soldiers. Can't you keep them? Fine, then send back who? The other guys -- public opinion, yes, why not? -- wouldn't like it, even if he sent back Cook, the notorious fuck-up Private Cook. Back to the reppel-deppel they went. They hit it lucky,

maybe it was the reputation of the Team that did it and his recommendation, for they weren't sent into the killing slots. The three came back now to visit Tom. The Captain is glad they harbored no ill feelings toward him, and that they have survived without harm.

His taste for parties whetted in Heidelberg, he encouraged the bruited about of the conception of a big party in conjunction with the girls of various nationalities who had been slave-workers in a nearby factory. He had passed by a group of them and, pausing, had noticed in particular one beautiful brunette specimen, French from the Belgian border, straight out of an academic salon painting of the Nineteenth Century. He had her in mind for the party and more, and when the music (naturally the Team had the best amplifiers and records in Europe) and dancing (at which they were poorer than the average unit, the infantry being the best dancers) were in full swing, he sidled in upon the floor and, half-coaxing, half-compelling, absconded with her around the corner of the factory yard and up a staircase into his private room, where, again, without her saying much one way or another (for she generally was observed to say very little), whether "no" or "yes" was undefinable, but his lust was quite clear and pressing, until she felt that she might as well lend herself to importunity. Perhaps he was half-drunk, else he should (or so it would seem in retrospect) he should have made more of the occasion, for she was truly a superb creature; yet, for that matter, so should she have; but perhaps there was nothing deeper in her than appearances, nor in him than swinishness -- or lusty sex, if you will -- or did he awe her, and if so was she pleased or made helpless to do what she would not really have wanted to do, and what, then, is the meaning of rape, and the line between rape and seduction in 1945, for if you are not scintillatingly definite about it, you ought be let into an interminable discourse that could begin with this particular situation alone, complicated not only by the many circumstances that complicate and befoul such judgements, but too by the laws of war and the compulsions of the war zone -- and need I warn you of the intricate vagaries of Americana where "no" and "not now" were not ordinarily deemed to mean such, rather thought to be normal responses of women who were aiming at guaranteeing their reputations thereafter as normally abstemious sexually and "hard to get." I leave you merely with these paltry considerations in mind, for to carry on my story I

must go on to report, that he may or may not also have implanted a hostage upon the French Republic, given the lack of precautions they took, and that he returned her, unruffled, Jeanine was her name, unobtrusively and courteously, to the festivities, from which he soon disappeared, and he heard the trucks with their gay enough loads take off down the road to the ladies' dormitory, with Jeanine in one of the cabs, her prestige enhanced withal, whatever your opinion or mine of the proceedings.

AL TO JILL MARCH 26, 1945 (B) V-MAIL

Dearest Darling,

Only a few words to let you know that I am well and love you as much as ever. Everything is going fast and furious, and I can't find more than a minute to send you love and a big kiss. I've a couple photos of myself that I'm sending you. I hope you are completely over your cold, and GIS. Sorry to hear of Juni's trouble. But think of the troubles she's missed.

Anyway, I'm all yours, albeit in a rather ragged state and hope that I'll be able to kiss you to a pleasant death shortly.

Love to Kathy.

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 27, 1945

My only sweetheart --

I am positively a dog, skipping a whole day in writing you when there is so much to say. I could infinitely elaborate on the theme of how much I love you, and, incidentally, your bull-like little daughter. And yesterday

I got a letter from you, March 15, and today another, March 9 --

all long, worthy and evoking a thousand retorts and comments from this end.

And why do I not write daily? The answer is not flu, not overwhelming household tasks, not excursions, either rural or urban, not even lassitude strictly speaking (since that implies illness or a vile indifference) but a sheer delightful laziness, originating from too much good food and a kind of purring fellowship with my good sister-in-law and our sprightly offspring. Witness how we spend the evenings: we dine until 8 or 8:30 (it is a monumental task getting both children to bed) and clean up for a half hour or so afterwards, and then we all collapse on comfortable chairs afterwards and take our shoes off and examine our feet. Conversation flows apace, the tempo being set by Paul, so you can guess how that is -- a series of grunts interspersed with long ruminative silences. Then it is ten o'clock and we all dive for bathroom and bed. I read in bed for a few minutes and then the great book I am reading falls to my chest and if there are no bones broken I go to sleep. Oh yes, I am reading, with my right eye, The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle by Tobias Smollet, whom you may recall from English 000, and with my left, A Primer of Modern Art. The former is a long picaresque novel on the order of Tom Jones. It started out to be amusing but the hero is now growing up and is turning out to be the worst smart alec in history, and I am not the least bit fond of him, the way I was of those Li'l Abnerish characters Jones and Joseph Andrews. As for the modern art book, it is interesting but elementary and I am pleased to note that the few scraps of previous knowledge, or more likely, insights (beware of a woman's intuition) I had on the subject put me in a position to dispute with the author at several points.

Today is one of those days in the history of this war that stand out for civilians because the city is buzzing with peace rumors. You don't even have to turn on the radio to get the drift. We were shopping this morning (and what a joy it is to shop with a car and with two little people who can stand on their own two feet - I mean four - and take pleasure in wandering about on their own steam). Anyway, we were shopping and heard several

persons give out with the Word. I try my best to keep an "I'm from Missouri" attitude in face of it, but one can't help but become slightly infected and today, for me, the temperamental San Francisco air is full of hope and love and you.

I hope you don't think me presumptuous but last night I made a date -- and you might call it a hot one. No, it isn't for me with Humphrey Bogart (that pallid imitation of the Compleat Man) but it's for us both, for the first winter you are home, with Paul and Ann in Sun Valley. Consider the joys and advantages. It's midway between Chicago and San Francisco, you get there just by hopping a Southern Pacific train out of Northwestern Station, the costs of vacationing there are fantastically little because the whole thing is a promotional stunt by the railroads, and when you get there, there is everything -- skiing, climbing, swimming in an outdoor heated pool and wonderful food. The kids can stay with their respective grandparents and we four big folk can titillate our various sensibilities to exhaustion. Anyway it sounds good. And it is one thing more to add to our post-war itinerary, damn, how do you spell that word, which, if only for the sake of what the neighbors think, should consist of more than one kiss lasting for all eternity. Though I'm not sure that we'll ever get beyond that.

We are trying very hard to get film here with no success so far. I agree with you that pictures should be taken -- you'd be amazed at how little difference there is in the two kids' sizes, by the way. But I disagree with your saying that I once said Paul knew my character so well. In the first place, I never thought Paul was such a great character analyst. (Maybe I said I knew his character so well.) And in the second place, nobody knows my character so well (she said, batting her four-inch eyelashes behind which lies all the mystery of the inscrutable East), except maybe you. Maybe. But that is neither hence nor thence. Oh, and in reply to another canard hurled my way, do you know (no, how could you) I've sort of gotten out of the habit of swearing since I got out here. I guess it's partly just dropping a habit when the environment is changed. The other part is that one can't very well swear around a boy Paul's age. The most I let go

with is a mild "darn" or "doughnut" -- Joey's interpretation. Ann told me that Paul had started to say, to their horror, "Turn out the fuck," in abbreviated imitation of his father's request for darkness, to wit, "Turn out the blanking light." And so you see why my language is improved.

I'm awfully glad you got the package and the salami in good condition. Apparently the method of waxing them is foolproof. I got a card from Woodworth's this morning that they had Mahogany for you and I just wrote them to send it out here since I'm sure I'll be here for another month and it wouldn't do to let it lie around in Chicago for so long, even though I paid for it before I left. I'm sure they'd sell it anyway. I'm really enjoying myself very much here. The city is so lovely, the auto rides so nice, the kids so cute and my family so congenial, even though we don't do much else than the above. That's really all I need anyway -- just rest, food and not too many people hounding me. Kathy is so wonderful these days. She is learning to play and walk so nicely by herself and is getting somewhat out of the habit, which she mostly picked up on the train and in her days of intestinal flu before that, of yammering to be picked up all the time. She and Paul occasionally run and scream with laughter together and last night he gave her a big sweet kiss, as he calls it, and she kept coming back for more until I finally had to break it up to put her to bed. She is so pathetically grateful for affection on his side, since most of the time he is enjoining her sternly to "go away Kathy". He is a funny, pensive little boy and probably feels a little displaced by this new big baby. He is not nearly as extroverted as she but has his own little private games and thoughts. He sits in his high chair with his chin resting on his hand in perfect silence sometimes. I really believe, as you do, in the work of some hereditary factors in personality. Else how would Kathy be the way she is, and Paul the way he is (he is really very much like my brother) -- and both children given a great deal of love and good care. Ann is, I think, very wise and calm and consistent in her treatment of him. She says she tends to be hysterical but she never shows it to Paul II -- I think she is overanxious too -- but she certainly doesn't take it out on

him. Perhaps if I had not been alone and had free rein in handling Kathy I might have been overanxious too. As it was, there was nobody around to criticize or worry with, so I had a lucky fairly easy time. I must admit that last week, when Kathy was acting up and we all felt so miserable I had terrible guilt feelings about bringing her out here. But now my highest hope - - that she would become less dependent on me in the presence of other people -- has been justified.

This cousin of mine, Teddy DuMoulin, who is in the coast guard, just called. His ship just got in and since this is his first visit to S.F., he called Paul. He is the one who is the younger son of the terrible Cousin Adele but very nice in an ignorant sort of way. He is coming up later this afternoon. He is probably glad I'm here because we are just the same age (although I always think of him as being a little boy) and have slightly more in common than Paul and he. We used to play together when we were little and my family had a house down on Long Island. He is about ten times nicer than all the rest of that side of the family since he is the only one who has no pretensions. Me and my shoddy family affairs, as you once said, or at least hinted.

Sweetie pie, it is awfully hot in the kitchen where I am writing this -- Ann and the children are all napping -- so I think I shall stop, though were it not for the heat and this terrible machine I could drool on forever. Oh yesterday I did a big wash over at Priscilla Kane's, do you recall her -- she and her husband accompanied us to the ballet that night. She has a big machine which empties into her bathroom, only while it was emptying, Kathy pulled the hose and all the water proceeded to pour on the floor instead of into the can, creating confusion, embarrassment and hysterics all around. Now we have snagged diaper service so life will be easier. And also another high chair so feeding won't go on so frantically in shifts.

Anyway I love you.

Jill

The funniest thing -- the V-mail I got from you yesterday, March 15, was unphotographed and contained the enclosed V-mail to Lt. Zemo from person or persons unknown to me. I don't know what to do so am sending it back to you.

JILL TO AL MARCH 28, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling --

I'm awfully sorry to tell you this -- that I just heard from Liz that Bill was killed Feb. 26 on Iwo. (And in the same mail came a letter from you - March 19 - saying you'd heard from him with premonitions). I feel terrible -- worse because I've gotten to know and be so fond of Liz. She's more than equal to this -- I'll send you the letter she wrote tomorrow, when I'll write you a longer one. (Somehow it doesn't look or feel right to include with news like this an account of my daily routine.) But it is a terrible thing for her.

I don't know what else to say except I'm sad and mad and will be a lot madder a year or two or ten from now if things aren't a lot better than they are now -- the old died in vain stuff.

Liz's address is - Mrs. Wm. C. Evers, 8 West Hill Place, Boston, Mass. - if you feel like writing her. I wish to hell there were something I could do for her. I feel so damned selfish and guilty, having you and a happy family left out here. Maybe when I come back she will visit me.

Love to you --

Jill

LETTER MARCH 21, 1945, FROM "LIZ"

Dearest Jill,

I hate like anything to inflict this on you, but of course I must tell you - Bill was killed on Iwo on Feb. 26. I heard it today. This is like a ripple on the water when a pebble falls. One would like to contain within oneself the whole sense of loss, but of course so many people are affected. And I know how you will grieve for me because I have felt it for others. Don't take it too hard. I'm bearing up pretty well, wondering what sort of future I can make for Louise. Needless to say you & Al will always seem very close to me, for reasons that right now are painful to recall. I hope you & Kathy are enjoying sunny California.

With all love,

Liz

AL TO JILL MARCH 28, 1945 V-MAIL

Dearest Jill,

As if I didn't have enough to worry about moving myself and the whole ensemble, you present me with a completely nerve-chilling serial on your own movements, Kathy's, two suitcases & the dangling diaper bag. You ask "Can you stand the suspense?" I answer, "Not very well". It's getting me down. I wish to hell I get a letter telling me once and for all that you have arrived in SF. I think that only would make me happy. If, after everything, you didn't go I might be still more enraged! I was glad to know, at any rate, that you and Kathy are feeling well again. I have been bad about writing letters lately, but c'est la guerre. Nothing is describable at all well. As you say, leisure is a condition of art. We are, of course, in Germany now and we feel fine about that. The civilians are surprised they aren't being killed off and are still half-convinced they will be sent to Siberia. Some of them ought to be, I'm sure. Their standard of living,

save where the AAF struck, is higher than anywhere else, but the AAF struck everywhere in the cities & many towns. It is so obvious to all the soldiers that the Germans had no reason to start a war. More description to follow this eve.

All my love and a thousand tender kisses.

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 29, 1945

Darling --

I just finished a huge stack of dishes -- we'd been eating and not washing all day and Ann got tired and went to bed after a couple of old fashioned. So I have the feeling of virtue that comes from Good Works but it is still hard, and understandably so, to shake off the depression that comes from the sad news about Bill. It is odd - you must be pretty used to the idea of death at close hand and certainly should be, with the experience of my parents not so far away (yet far enough); yet it is almost a different thing about Bill. He obviously wasn't very close to me but I had gotten accustomed to a whole set of expectations about him and his future, from hearing you talk and writing to Liz. And then, I am so damned fond of Liz. It's almost an abstract thing there, too. I never got to know her well enough even to find fault, the way one crabbedly does about women friends. But from a distance she seems to be a completely admirable person, one whom I admire and whose circumstances, at least of education, marriage and child-bearing have been similar enough to mine so that I identify strongly with her. Of all the persons I know she is the least deserving of deprivation and tragedy. Maybe that's why she got it, because she could bear it best (not that there really is any logic in events like these). I wish you could be here to help me work out some sort of rationale. I feel so resentful, and guilty too, because my lot is so much better and easier.

Today, as yesterday, was spent peaceably in the sun and in the pleasant expanses of this vast apartment. We took the kids to the doctor this aft. and he pronounced them both fine, despite post-nasal drips (a cute expression that) from their colds. He showed me, hidden in the recesses of her vast mouth, two huge a-borning upper molars. My how they must hurt. No wonder she mutters and turns in her bed at night! That makes 10 teeth in all. She also gained 2 1/2 pounds in the 3 weeks since she saw her doctor in Chicago. Unbelievable, isn't it. But if you saw her eat, you'd know why. She sits in her high chair (did I tell you we borrowed one from Priscilla Kane - so the kitchen now looks like a nursery school with both of them eating at once) and feeds herself completely, even to drinking milk out of a glass, frequently tipped. I am very proud of her, eating alone so well, even if she still leaves puddles all over Telegraph Hill. We drove up to Coit Tower tonight before supper - it was a lovely sunny evening and showed the kids the view. Kathy was more interested in the ants. I wonder whom she takes after.

Then we got cracked crabs at Fisherman's Wharf and brought them home and Paul made excellent old-fashioned and that's how the evening was spent. Paul just said to send you his love, and so staggered off to bed, it being the late hour of 10 PM.

I had a haircut yesterday morning and look less shaggy than usual. I also bought some blue jeans, girl's model, which fit and which I wear continuously in the first flush of newness.

You must be in Germany by now, darling. Please take care of yourself for Kathy and me. We love you so much.

Jill

AL TO JILL MARCH 29, 1945

Dearest Jill,

I sent off to you this morning a little tin box containing a great

number of your charming letters to me. Please let me know when they arrive. When they do, you should be in possession of all your letters ever written me up until the second or third week of March. As a result, I feel my burden considerably lightened and I can go on to accumulate more letters, pictures, and things. Yesterday was an easy day and last night I got lots of sleep. Before going to bed I ate a can of pressed ham Mom sent me for Christmas and some bread with a bottle of very good Champagne the krauts had thoughtfully transported to Germany to await our coming. Now it is the next mid-morning and despite a heavy breakfast, I am famished. The trouble lies in the hectic days we have been having when meals were irregular and scanty. Oh for the days in my own home when I could eat ad infinitum (et ad absurdum)! I will never grown at you, no matter how evil the morning and how vigorously you insist on having your bacon done properly. I'll back you up with the moral strength gained from years of excruciating experience with bad bacon.

At the moment we are living in fine comfort, every last man of us, and we intend to continue this way as long as there are houses to be found. I have cast aside my bedding roll and camp chair in favor of a day bed much like the one we used to have at 5479 and a soft, expensive seat. I thought I would have to go to Paris again to find a toilet seat some short time ago, but we have that too now.

The Nazi flag at the moment is any sort of white cloth. Sheets and pillow cases wave in the conquerors of the Third Reich. Hitler is unpopular among many civilians now that they are completely crushed. It took all this to make them change their minds. There isn't much difficulty getting things done by the civilians. They will do anything they're told. Unfortunately we don't tell them nearly enough. There just isn't enough that the American Army needs. I imagine the Russians must be doing a much more thorough job of gathering in German local resources. A considerable number of people try to be friendly but so far without any success. The American soldiers are almost unanimous in their support of non-fraternization

regulations, even though they are very difficult for the individual to observe. Thing that one does most naturally if he has been taught good manners are forbidden. So most offenses against the regulation will be through lack of self-control rather than deliberate non-participation in the spirit of them.

Today, I've come to the conclusion that the end is very near over here. If the PW count is maintained, and there seems little likelihood of its dropping, the Germans will lose a million men within the month on the Western Front alone. The universal blackout, save on the Canadian front, points also to sweeping gains. Best of all, quick advances may prevent the Nazis from employing their redoubt to its full capacity. Thereafter, the transfer of only a portion of our striking power in Europe to the Pacific should bring relatively quick results against already hard-pressed Japan. The Germans appear to me to be not sick of war, but only sick at losing this one. I don't believe they object to the principle at all, even now. I mention this in order to state that our victory over Japan may be of the same type. Let them want to carry on as long as we have the means to crush them physically.

I've received some pictures of Kathy from you, all very cute but too small. And it's very typical of your exasperating photographic habits that the one picture of you is just lots of dark hair and a dark coat, no face, no body and no legs. It's a good thing I carried off with me the family camera so that someone in the family is taking half-way decent pictures.

You asked whether Jim Clark has gone home. Yes he has after two years here, and he can't get back because his blood pressure is some stupendous figure. Adams is still being sued for a divorce by his wife and I sympathize with her, sight unseen. He is well liked but very hare-brained and I'm sure hardly of any good to a woman.

I know even less about taxes than you. I assume your missing paying them means

1) that your income alone wasn't enough to pay a tax.

or 2) I don't have to worry, being a soldier just now.

or 3) that your not filing your own return means that ultimately we can file a joint

return for that period.

(a) If (3) then: Do we lose or gain by the delay?

or 4) We shall be behind the bars jointly.

Search me, too, but I'd like to know. Incidentally, would you please let me know where you are keeping all our bonds, even if the rest of your financial system defies specification?

Sometimes I would as like bite your ear as kiss you.

All my love,

Al

AL TO JILL MARCH 30, 1945 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

This is a German typewriter so that I am not responsible for any illegibilities. You will no doubt be thrilled to know (at a safe distance) that one of the boys presented me with a cornet yesterday. It is awkward and the mouthpiece is not to my liking, but it has a nice tone, and all in all I am very pleased with it. My lip of course is terrible, and I am generally very rusty, but with a month or so of practice I should be able to dazzle you with my hot lips once more. I suppose, now that you're in SF, you don't care much about the Western Front, but for your information, it is falling to pieces. That is the most important thing I can think of at the moment, apart from the fact that I found a nice picture frame of Kath's picture with the little chair. I sent a letter to Mom this morning, a thing I don't do often enough. I received a letter

from Johnny Hess a couple of days ago wherein he described receiving a letter from you. He seems as depressed and resigned as one might expect, in fact, a little on the bitter side. Or perhaps he has always been those things and I have never realized it. But then I have hardly seen him at all since he went into the army several years ago.

I have just had a bad lunch of noodles, carrots, and beets, made palatable by a bottle of champagne in a gold-rimmed, paper-thin goblet. We must get a permanent residence when I return if for no other reason in order to have a full cellar. I am thinking of investing a few rocks in a wine company, both to have wine and to profit by the increased demand for wine by the returning soldiers. On the other hand, I so love milk which has been unobtainable, that I won't know what to drink. The two don't mix.

I haven't heard yet what the nature of Buzz's work will be at the U of C. I suppose, however, that he has arrived in Chicago in time to save Vic from a career at Le Jazz Hot. I really don't mind Vic being a musician as long as he becomes a good one. If he can take a four-year university course in music and is still entranced by only the possibilities of jazz I would tell him to go to it. But I doubt that. I think simply that he ought to cut himself out an adequate beachhead before he goes knifing off in any one direction.

Do you think Kathy's speechlessness may be partly a result of your own intelligence. She probably doesn't feel it worthwhile learning the proper symbols so long as you seem to know exactly what she wants anyway. Like the butler we had once in Catania. It wasn't necessary to know a word of Italian, because before you could open your mouth he anticipated what you were going to ask for.

I'm thankful I don't have to move anywhere today. The weather is cold and damp, with occasional showers. What a day for bed and you. We'll leave Kathy up North with Mom, after I've convinced her that I love her too.

Always your

Al

JILL TO AL MARCH 31, 1945

Sweetheart --

I have a whole Saturday night alone to write you in. Paul and Ann went out and I just put the kids to bed and made myself some supper and am enjoying the solitude for a change. We had a busy day. We took the kids to Golden Gate Park this morning and left Ann while Paul and I took a three-hour ride on some crummy nags. But it was fun. We rode through the park and then on to the beach, where we met the family again. Little Paul took a spin around on his dad's lap but Kathy was a little frightened of the horse, especially since he snagged a Graham cracker she was eating. The beach is really marvelous here, don't you think? I decided I was more moved emotionally by mountains and liked them, but I feel most at home on a beach with a pounding surf. It's so restful or something.

Yesterday I took the kids and went shopping and then loosed them in the sandpile nearby while Ann did the housework. I don't know why, maybe because we spent so much time eating, but I find myself skipping days writing to you, out of sheer inability to find time to do it. Also, this typewriter is very discouraging.

We all have good sunburns on our faces from today's and yesterday's sun. Kathy is the darkest of all, needless to say. She really looks marvelous. She is much more rugged than Paul anyway. Her legs are about five times as big around. I hope they will stretch out to movie star daintiness some day. Kathy and I have a game now, of calling daddy. She loves to use the toy telephone and gets on it and I say, let's call daddy, and she proceeds to mumble into the phone, with many a "yah, yah," and "go'bye". I am also beginning to tell her to limit her calls to

five minutes please. That reminds me. I'll try calling Mom tomorrow, it being Easter Sunday. I haven't heard from any of the family yet but then, I've only written them one letter. As you say, it's a damned nuisance to write anybody but your very own loved one -- you.

And I got a letter from you yesterday, March 17. I agree with you perfectly about inequality of sacrifice. That's what always got me so mad about the people around school and some of the 4-F German refugees, many of whom, I suspect, feel that they did their part by merely participating in the historical movement of flight, and by adhering to impeccable internationalistic political views all the while. And now that our one admirable friend Bill has died, it will be difficult for me to ever find them even mildly tolerable again.

And as for your dreams of losing me, don't worry, darling. In your waking life I'm here to stay, with a persistence that some day may amaze and even dismay you. Ask Kathy -- she knows my innermost sentiments on the subject.

My knees are so stiff I wonder if I shall ever walk again. Ann kept bobbing up in the car next to the bridle path while we were riding today and every time she did, Kathy would set up a terrific howl. I wonder if the sight of a horse will traumatize her from here on in. She must have thought it very odd, seeing mother on the big beast, and also very distressing, when said beast carried me away from her. What a momma's baby she is. When I finally showed up for good and got in the car with her she threw her arms around my neck, gave me a big, non-biting kiss and then almost immediately thereafter fell asleep. The ducks, sheep, beach and ocean had been too much for her. She was still sleeping when I took her into the house and for the first time in her life was put to bed without any lunch. Of course those kids eat all day long anyway. You can find either one of them by merely tracing the Graham cracker crumbs and banana peels through the house. Kathy is a great fancier of that fruit now to be distinguished from her early life when they made her ill with sheer disgust. Kathy is also a great fancier of Paul the elder,

proving that she is just ripe for a father image. She shouts when he comes in at night and drags herself along on his pants legs. She screeches so damn much anyway. I wish she would stop it. It's even worse -- her screeches of delight than those of pain. I told Paul today that sometimes I shuddered with the picture of my postwar life with two great eating, laughing, dark-skinned De Grazias, while I probably would get thinner and paler by the minute. He said yes, he could just see it, the room full of the two of you while over in the corner, there would be a skeleton, rattling around with the pots and pans. The picture still makes me laugh.

Sweetie, I simply must take a bath and iron the kinks out of my legs. We've been busy all day since the ride because Ann went on strike and Paul and I cleaned the joint. Ann is funny, humorous I mean. Every once in a while she decides she is over worked, which is far from the truth since she does about one tenth of the cleaning I do at home, Chicago being the dirty city it is, and just balks. She does it, admittedly to me, for propagandistic reasons, her theory being that if she doesn't complain about the housework first, Paul will complain that she doesn't do it. And then she said she was mad because she didn't ride today although she hates riding. It was just the principle of the thing. Maybe I shouldn't tell you these things since I may find it necessary to adopt similar tactics someday myself. The thing is, granted Ann is a lousy housekeeper, although a marvelous cook and seamstress, which are almost sufficient virtues in themselves, anyway, granted that, it is still hard to have a lot of fun with your kid and get him or her out in the air most of the day and still keep a tidy house and not be tired by the end of the day. At home I find myself doing a lot of the housework at night just because I don't have the time during the day, having fun with Kathy. So I guess the man ought to help a little, which of course Paul does. Search me, now that I come to the end of it I don't know what the argument was about. I like Ann very much now but I think she is rather spoiled, but then I might have been too if I hadn't had to do it alone. Well, it's a silly topic. I still have to bathe.

