

JILL TO AL OCTOBER 1, 1944

My darling Al -- Monday

Chicago, Illinois?

After yesterday's badly typed offering, I feel I should offer you something fancier in the way of script and paper but I cannot find the nice, white, airmail paper -- probably Kathy ate it -- and I am too sleepy, having just awakened from the tossing and turning that comprises my afternoon nap, to write by hand. But my spirits in re you are of the best. If I thought an MS engraved on the head of a golden pin would be a better assurance of my love for you than just these ordinary letters I send, I would rush right out for a microscope, chisel and a new pair of glasses and start scribbling away. But knowing (and thanking god) that you're not much impressed by such esoterica, like that described above, as well as castles made of matchsticks or my body limned in three colors on the sands of Atlantic City, or Kathy's first pair of shoes cast in bronze, I shall stick to my ordinary offerings of typed letters and fruit cakes.

Did I tell you I made the cake Saturday, which is why you didn't get a letter from me that day? It is a little early to tell how it came out. I made a fairly big one for you and a little one for me for sampling purposes. However, I have not yet sampled because of a currently immutable prejudice against fruit cakes, derived from having eaten a half of one one night last winter, shortly after Kathy was born. My then tender frame was unable to stand the twin agonies of casting forth a Kathy baby and digesting a fruit cake and as I recall, I was violently ill on both occasions.

Anyway, I'll send the fruit cake when I get around to finding a box. Kathy and I have been having a very gay time lately. We were at Sunday afternoon tea at the Ollendorff's yesterday. I am very fond of Mrs. O. and she always addresses me vivaciously and kindly. The only trouble is that it is in German. Then when everybody laughs at her and explains that Jill doesn't understand German she says, "But Jill looks so intelligent and always smiles so kindly at me, I'm sure she understands." Your

realistic and not always kind eyes probably have the true picture already -- me standing there, a silly smile frozen on my lips, mumbling "Ja, ja" while edging furtively towards the door.

Kathy always has a good time at these gatherings, upsetting tea cups, wetting the floor, screaming in happy terror as dozens of large shrill-voiced emigres pounce on her and bounce her ceiling-wards. Then we came home and she threw (1) a tennis ball, (2) a package of Chesterfields, and (3) a red beret which ran blood, in the toilet, while I was making her bed and supper. I was very mad, needless to say.

Klaus and a friend are taking me to see The Voice of the Turtle tonight. It is the first night in Chicago and the first time I've been to the theater in Chicago since you took me to see Lady in the Dark a couple of years ago. I have to go out now and find somebody to stay with Kathy.

I ought to line up a sitter anyway for all the wild evenings you and I are going to spend together when you come home.

And the news of the big drive opening in the West makes that possibility a little closer again.

Darling, I love you with all my heart. Keep well and accept these many kisses from Kathy and me. 000XXX --> (Is that the sign for infinity? If not, what is?)

[Alfred Einstein DeGrazia]

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 2, 1944

Dear Love,

Today is the second and I realize I have avoided treating with the new month so far by not writing you on the first. But escapism can't last more than a day in this business, and it is time to dismiss September with a passing curse and hope again

that this new month will take great strides towards bringing us together, a function which is really the only significant one time has for me. I am in a new dingy room again, writing by candlelight but fortunately possessed of a little stove which throws a modicum of heat, about one per cent of the heat wasted in an ordinary day in a steam-heated apartment in America. I am reasonably happy under the circumstances, the day having been graced with the acquisition of a mackinaw that was sorely needed. I must start looking for a bath again. I do not smell sweet, no, not even to you, you great indulger of my bathless state. You may as well know, though it rips the veil from my campaign of love, that I have given long and careful thought to the question of being cleaned up to meet you. I have decided that no matter what the conditions I shall scrub myself with a brush from head to foot every day for a week beforehand. Then you will be helpless to resist me.

At this distance you can scarcely be affected by my physical presence no matter what it be, though you may be completely bored by my letters. Our love was never founded on a narrow basis and yet here it is, proceeding along as if the only form of communication were the written word, and the lips, speech, the hands, the eyes, the body, and the actions counted for nothing. I often feel sad that I must give you only this, because I know that you respond to tenderness and care, too, and the black word against white can never stroke your hair or kiss your skin, nor can it whisper, sing or breathe. It can't splash at you from the shower, cover you at night, make you coffee in the morning, wash your back, find your eyeglasses, hold your baby, help you shop, cook, drink, swear, admire your figure and cause you to have a magnificent cuisine. All this I can do, darling; but there seems to be a delay about letting me do it. The world is jealous, you see.

My room is in a tumble-down neighborhood. It is a real shantytown, little frame houses scattered over a flat piece of land under a grey sky. My host is a railroad engineer. I knew that by looking at him even before his wife pointed it out proudly when he was doing a workmanlike job of building a fire in my

little stove. The whole neighborhood is built up from like houses; there are lots of yards with rickety fences and scraggly patches of humble drooping vegetables. The children are dressed in tams, old rough wool coats and heavy shoes. Outside each door are two or three pairs of wooden shoes, the pattering slippers of the French rural proletariat. I like my room better than several others I saw because it is barer. I think my experiences have influenced my taste in furnishings. I dislike moving into rooms where the backsides of unknown generations have made their impress on the seat cushions; I don't care for other people's beds, or for thick, strange rugs. I like bareness, because I can see it all and do not have to adjust to foreign objects. But there again, I don't like Spam but I eat it, and even this room is an ugly dispiriting thing. One must eat and one must live.

I found a copy of the American Mercury last evening and read, among other things, a good article by Cerf which attacked the Alex Woolcott myth. I always detested that man.

Just a moment ago I had the great good fortune to borrow two brand new books from Jim. One is Brighton Rock by Graham Greene, author of a fine spy story I wrote you about once before the title of which I have forgotten, and Go She Must by David Garnett. So now I think I'll read a little and go to sleep. All my love to you and my darling daughter.

Always yours,

Al

THE new American troops have not had much training; or some vital functions are absent from their training. They are not very good: what in the hell have they been doing all this time? They are no match for even the bad divisions of the enemy, not yet at least, but there are a lot of them and they are physically in good shape; they probably believed that they would never get up front in time to see combat; now they are

hoping that the tempo of war would slow down until they feel ready to die.

The proportion of small-armored soldiers, those who take most of the casualties, actually is diminishing in proportion to the total men in uniform. The American Army is over-specialized and over-manned. With headquarters the size of thinned-out divisions. Every little inspiration of a Washington Congressman finds someone detailed to look after it, like a medal for Joe Glotzi from the 6th Congressional District -- the officers can parcel out mutually their own medals. Grave-digging companies leaning on their shovels. Visitors by the thousands eating off the rationed board. There are millions of people under arms or working upon the war or living in the romance of others at war, who find war comfortable, are at minimal risk, and do not want it to end. On paper and in fact, millions of uniformed men in the various theaters of operations are permitted to make the same demands on the Army that a combat unit makes while in combat, more or less, which is owing to a great pretense, a myth, bucked up by the Press, Congress, and Home Front.

His Team keeps getting new personnel and many visitors (official and unofficial, with and without orders), yet it has almost no losses by enemy action, disease, accidents, and home leave. ("Home leave" does not exist; only First Sergeant Annunziata gets it, but it is really because he was wounded and mentally becoming quite irascible.) Here comes Lt. Chester Oseieki. A cheerful sort, lean, chummy, affable, untrained by any visible standard for anything except perhaps in basic infantry processes. Who knows where he came from? Perhaps as Major Roos sits in his corner sucking his bottle, he thinks of sending pleas for reinforcements to the rear echelons.

The Team has a fantastic Table of Organization. This TO, made in Washington and Algiers, calls for the most complicated, specialized over-equipped aggregate of supernumeraries in the whole Army, not excluding the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF). Fortunately only half the requests are shoved upon the Team. Our Lieutenant, while still such, is filling a Lieutenant-Colonel's slot. The Commanding Officer of the Company is supposed to be a Chicken Colonel. Actually since Alfred is doing Roos's job for

him, he is an Acting Colonel; lest you scoff at this, consult the proverb that says the First Sergeant runs the Battery, that's four levels below the Captain, who is supposed to be managing the Battery.

JILL TO AL OCTOBER 3, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Another letter from you today, September 12, which was a long time in getting here. I don't know if I mentioned it before -- god knows I was grateful but I've also been dismally tired and ergo forgetful this past week -- but the package of pipes and perfume came a few days ago, preceding your letter of course. I brought all the pipes up north but there is hope of rescuing the oval-shaped bowl one from the boys yet. And I'll be glad to give the perfume to Mom. I adore the stuff you sent first and shall never want to use anything else, I'm sure. The boys were much impressed by the pipes and even to my untutored eye they looked excellent, of fine grain and not varnished, which Bill Steinbrecher told me was one criterion for judging pipes.

I'm sorry as hell everything is so snafu in your outfit. Your letter yesterday told of driving endlessly in a jeep and it makes me mad that you have to be so overworked and tired. God knows we both could use some stable home-life. I'm so tired of jitterbugging around, of dinner here and there -- I ate with the Kerners tonight with Kathy wetting all over their floor -- or worse yet, eating alone. Kathy remains the one bright spot on the horizon, though occasionally a source of annoyance to her weary mother. Today she astonished Diane and me by engaging in a spirited game of ball. She really did take up this tennis ball we have, throw it down, wait for me to pick it up and roll it back to her. She did this about ten times. I noticed carefully that each time that she'd pick it up, she would transfer it to her left hand if it wasn't there already before throwing it again. I've often thought she would be a southpaw because she always sucks her left thumb and reaches for her bottle or cup

with that hand and this all the more confirms my suspicion. I wonder why some people are left-handed. My brother is but he's the only one in the family I know of. Rather, he was before his accident.

Ed left yesterday for the Army, down to the University of Illinois. The family feels pretty bad about it, not that he's going into the Army especially but that he's gone at all. It must be particularly hard on Vic though perhaps beneficial in the long run. I can see how Mom feels too, watching all you kids grow up and go away. She knows it's inevitable but still it hurts when it comes. And in Ed's case particularly, the years between his being a child and becoming a man in the eye of the Army, anyway, have been so short. I can remember when I first saw you two together at Int House and what a little boy he was.

Oh, I got to see the Voice of the Turtle last night after all. Virginia looked after the baby and I sailed out like a society matron, of which the audience was full, it being the opening night in Chicago. It was a very nice little play, well written, acted and directed, better than most although I still think it's easier to go to the movies. Klaus and his friend took me, since I most certainly would never had the initiative to get tickets and get out myself. But it would have been more fun to go with you.

And here it is the end of the page and time to say I love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 3, 1944

Jill, My darling imp,

Out of the cold I come stuttering to write you. I wrote you yesterday, and there is a little to do yet tonight, so that this won't be the longest letter you've ever received. I am a little hoarse now and in need of a strong stimulant and throat medicine, since I've been yelling over a field telephone for the last half

hour at some gent with a faint, faint voice. I'm trying to solve the mystery of some lost shells. If I don't find them someone may be mildly shocked when he sees what he's fired, a sensation akin to the little prize package one gets one out of a dozen times in a booth on a fair-ground. Not that artillerymen care especially. As long as a thing goes "boom", a flame jets out, and there is a good whistle, he is happy. It needn't even whistle.

I'm disappointed in my little stove. It has such a furious roar that I was taken in at first. I didn't sleep too well last night. The bed is too large. I'm used to a narrow thing like a cot. Today in the mail, I got two good New Yorkers, my absentee ballot, and a nice letter of yours from Sept. 6. The latter described some sort of political activity, but was very unspecific, with the result that I shall undoubtedly vote in a half-informed fashion, and against the candidates you've laboriously gotten to know. What can I do? I can't wait now for you to answer this letter with a filled-out sample ballot. Therefore I must take the fateful step without your helping hand. Since you are my only darling wife, I'll tell all. I have just scratched the ballot for our true and good F. D. Roosevelt, and nice, conscientious Truman, for Lucas because he still votes right and Lyons is no good at all, for Courtney because Green has been a drab failure and Courtney will be at least a glamorous failure, for Hunter, Barrett, Vicars, Merritt and Johnson because without his own party in office the governor can't do a thing, and inactivity and internal squabbling is worse than a Republican slate any time. I know nothing about the candidates for clerk of the Supreme Court save that the office shouldn't be elective, but Cassie gets my vote to keep perhaps a little more the Supreme Court from paying too much attention to nefarious interests antagonistic to mob rule. The University trustees are Republican for my money to keep the party in power from having an opening wedge into the educational system. Emily gets my vote senz'altro. Govier and Rowan also tally with me. After that, everything becomes dark. Berman gets three from me (Lee is a jerk), and all the rest are Republican save Szumnarski.

Do you still love me and are we pals? I still love you, very much,

and Kathy too.

Your,

Al

Copy of letter:

Dear Sirs,

I would greatly appreciate it if you would supply me with a statement of length of service in your organization for my husband, now serving in the Army overseas. His name is Alfred J. DeGrazia, 1st Lt. CAC(AA), PWB, Seventh Army, APO 758 c/o PM New York. He served in the 106th Cavalry, Band, Chicago 111 during the general period of September 1939 to August 1940. The reason that he wants this information is that he would like to apply for the pay increase due a soldier after three years of Army service, National Guard included.

Thank you for your courtesy in attending to this matter.

Yours truly,

JILL TO AL OCTOBER 5, 1944

My darling Al --

Three fine long letters from you yesterday, the 19th, 20th and 23rd. The middle one had the distinction of being possibly the best-written gripe to come out of any soldier in any war. I don't mean that facetiously either, dearest. Christ how I would like to do something to ease the wetness, the inefficiency and the monotony of your existence. But your complaints are so literary as well as appealing that I don't know whether to cry or call in an author's agent.

Here is a copy of the letter I'm sending into the Guard, which I'll get off today too. If I have some time later today I'll look around

for your Order. I know I have those papers. It's just a matter of finding them. Everything is in a mess and just ripe for fall housecleaning. It hardly seems that a year has passed since I last sweated it out, painting, papering shelves and striving for an optimum use of space. I hate like hell to start doing it all over again. Why can't things stay neat by themselves anyway? Why do you have to clean out pantries monthly (which I don't) if you want them to stay neat, dust every day if you want things to stay dustless (which I don't), make formula every two days if you want baby to eat (which I do)?

I just came down from a nice luncheon upstairs with a girl named Claire Oppenheim. I am waiting now for Kathy to arise from her afternoon nap. Usually I sleep at this time too, all the more because I slept very badly last night for some reason or other, but I labored mightily and managed to stay awake through lunch with Claire and this other girl.

I've been foully busy the past few days. The maid only comes in every other week so by Wednesday and Thursday of the odd weeks I get so hopelessly involved in a morass of dirty clothes and dusty floors. Yesterday I did the wash and also finally got off this little biography of a candidate for IVI. Wednesday I did something like that too -- I forget what now -- anyway I didn't have time to write.

And in between I feel it my duty to take Kathy for long walks to savor of the lovely October sun and breezes. So there is really never much time for anything during the day, and then I seem to be busy at night so much. Last night Laura came over for dinner and after cleaning up, we had a couple of beers apiece at Roy's and discussed the campaign. She's doing publicity for Emily Taft Douglas, who is running against Day for Congressman at large. Tonight I have to go out and do some canvassing in the neighborhood. I won't have any time for learning Italian until after the elections, I'm sure.

I read Man's Fate several years ago when I was living with Liz Johns. It is a hard book to read in English too. Oh yes, I gave up

Pamela willingly after the two weeks' lending period was up, rushing it back to Harper as if it were an emergency case of appendicitis.

How come all these guys like Dystal et al get to come back. Are they all civilians. Is there any chance of you coming home at all, please God (yes I know, if there were, you'd tell me). Is Roberts a civilian too. Damn all civilians anyway. There are more damn 4-Fs around here. It's amazing how little it takes to keep a man out of the Army because they all look OK from the outside. It's a dishonest fate that makes a man sacrifice everything just because he's healthy.

Kathy has been rather fussy lately. I don't know what it is. Maybe she is getting teeth finally. I find I have this functional backache, really. You know, I've been troubled with backache since I was pregnant but there really isn't any reason for me to have one now and I discovered why I did, or rather when. Every time she starts hollering, particularly in impatience as when I am fixing her dinner, my back starts to hurt. I guess it's just the way I react to mental pressure, now. Damned annoying. I'll probably be one of these women who take to their beds when they're 35 and never get up again, and all the kids and the husband have to tiptoe around the house and cater to her whims and the husband has a mistress to whom the audience is very sympathetic but they can't get married on account of the baggy old wife, etc. etc.

Even my typewriter ribbon can't stand the pathos of the situation.

It's funny because I'm really very healthy and strong, only nervous, as Mom likes to describe herself as being. I guess we are rather alike in that respect -- i.e. we're healthy as cows only we keep saying we don't sleep (whether we do or not). But remember, Pam saying this to you in the privacy of a letter & if you say it back to me you are violating a confidence. So remember to treat me as if I were fragile, helpless, dependent, underweight, and wan. And also sexy.

Goody, a man just fell off a ladder in front of my window.
Everything nice happens to me.

Including you. All my love to you, dearest one.

Your loving wife,

Jill

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 5, 1944

Dearest Jill,

I have a lot to say or feel as if I do, since I must have gotten at least five letters from you in the past three days, plus one from Buzz, one from Dad and one from Harold Gosnell. I didn't get any sleep the night before last and therefore could neither write you then or last night which found me irresistibly attracted towards my bed. I have been very busy these last days and will probably continue that way. I haven't had time to read the slightest thing, and feel positively ravenous tonight to get at the two New Yorkers I haven't read yet, plus the three books I have on hand. I just glanced over your letters and see that there is nothing specific to answer. It seems that you don't need anything but love, baby.

I'm sorry in a way that Buzz and Gosy answered me so soon for I was feeling almost as if I had no current obligations in letter-writing. I think I wrote Ann recently. I must write Daisy, though. Buzz says "You should see your daughter Kathy. She is absolutely magnificent ... etc. Jill too is looking wonderful, better than I've ever seen her." Well, I drool. I myself am uglier than ever, as you will see in a bad photograph I'm sending you. But I still have a certain frayed charm, when I'm not snarling. Gad, how dirty I am, too. I am at my wits' end to find a means. Doesn't Abercrombie & Fitch have something to suggest. (I should write "Ha, ha" in here to be sure that you won't leap at the opportunity to send me some awful thing.)

I have a dead-ringer for Brian Donlevy working in my crew now. He is sergeant Becker and even his personality is that of Donlevy in the Great McGinty, taciturn, small-eyed, big-muscled and jut-jawed. He's a fine worker and the whole crew worked like dogs for a straight twenty-fours the other night. We made a bonfire from ammo box wood inside a gutted house we use and kept a pot of coffee going. The night was bitter cold twelve feet from the fire and I worked with a field jacket and a mackinaw over that. We used candles and flashlights to help illuminate the work. I went off to get some rations, since no one had had anything to eat for seven or eight hours, and got lost in a lot of country trails. Nothing will fray the temper quicker than getting lost when hungry and cold. When I did get back, everyone fell on the food like a pack of wolves.

I don't feel I have much to write tonight, though I want to give you thousands of kisses. Please give my most affectionate condolences to Kathy on her unmentionable infant's illness of a month ago. We men in the army know just what she went through. I don't think I told you that I sent home the furry knapsacks for the boys, and those French picture books for Kathy. Maybe I should have sent her some cement that the medics give out, instead.

Always all my love,

Al

JILL TO AL OCTOBER 7, 1944 V-MAIL

Angel --

I started to lie down and take a nap this afternoon but I discovered I wasn't sleepy and was only getting hideously sexy so I got up and started this letter to you, a fine form of sublimation I must say, recommended by all the best Women's magazines. I had a good night's sleep last night and apparently it's a good thing that I don't get more of them. The people

upstairs, whom I don't like anyway, sent their rugs out to the cleaners and their stern Teutonic footfalls have been playing hob with my nerves all week. But last night they went to bed early and so did I, seizing the day, or rather, night. And so here I am, after a morning's labor, which included ironing, fixing Kathy up to get her picture taken in seven beautiful colors by another refugee upstairs, getting her picture taken, and dashing out to the bank to get some money for shopping and then shopping. You'd think I'd be too tired for fleshly thoughts but no. Oh yes, and I washed my hair too. This should just give you an idea of what you'll have to contend with when you come home. And I don't mean housework.

The sweet mailman brought me two letters from you today, the 17th and the 25th. I don't see why your House of the Future can't be achieved, easily. I too am in favor of large rooms, lots of them, an enormous kitchen where everybody can be seated comfortably and watch Momma make formula or do the dishes and a cozy bedroom with lots of windows, harboring an enormous double bed always ready for use. There shall be no beds coming out of the wall, no couches convertible into beds (after an expenditure of 100 man hours and 300 hp) no tables unraveling out of desks or desks unraveling out of tables. Everything shall be exactly as it is supposed to be, every room with but a single function. The children shall sleep on one side of the house, us on the other and there will be soundproofing in-between. And no refugees upstairs. The attic shall be mildew proof and have lots of cupboards to put your crap in. The basement shall be mildew proof and have an automatic washing machine to put my crap in. Everywhere there shall be heat, light, freedom from damp and insects and guests. You can put your wine barrels next to my washing machine and I shall spend most of my time in the double bed.

I must have overstepped myself, making that afternoon at the Leddy's sound so appealing. I must be very much in love with you and also respect you mightily, for we can come to absolutely opposite emotions about people and yet I don't mind and can see your point. Actually Mir's family has always filled

me with an extreme of ennui and I think they are frightfully dumb and positively anal in their neatness yet I can see where you'd think they were warm and nice. It just depends on what quality you want most in people or rather, what qualities you value least. Anna Jean incidentally has turned into a great flash of a girl -- she models and dresses to suit her calling -- but is nonetheless a great appalling cow of a girl in my book. But she looks all right and I suppose that's all you beastly men want. [Continued ole bean.]

Now I like amusing people like Klaus or Rosable, no matter how neurotic or freakish they are, as long as I can keep on secondary terms with them. I like people with snide senses of humor, even if they bitch me behind my back. And I like great wholesome creatures like the Berquists (or like myself, for that matter) whose wholesomeness has somehow turned through the years and after considerable kicking around, so that they resemble a dish of soured milk. But that's as far as I go in achieving for myself or my friends a semblance of the All-American Ideal. And I don't like football players, women who wash the kitchen floor every day, people who go to church suppers and play Keno, women members of the labor movement except Joan Kelly, people with social consciences and no sense of humor, people with a sense of humor and no social conscience.

Why the hell I got started on that dreary little paragraph is beyond me. I'm sure you're not interested. But I thought I'd bring up the question of women in the labor movement because I got cornered on a street corner the other day by a girl who had been at my house at one of the IVI neighborhood meetings. After very few preliminaries she asked me if I were a member of the CPA (and I don't mean certified public accountant). I said "no (eyebrows raised) why?" She said, "well, the books you have in your apartment indicate that you must have very strong leanings in that direction." I said, "That's rich. I must tell my husband" -- which I am doing this very minute. Now my problem is, Mr. DeG., which books should I throw away?

So you see, sweetie pie, you have to go a long way before you can get away from sex and politics.

Kathy was very sweet this morning, getting her picture took. Mr. Rosenthal posed her and his kid Bobby, who is six months old and lives across the court (and whose father currently has a 20-day furlough, causing me to spit through my teeth every time I see him) together. Bobby kept toppling over in her lap to her great amazement because he doesn't sit very well until Kathy got a firm grip on the back of his T-shirt, inadvertently but effectively. Then they got into a tepid dispute over the keys Kathy was holding. Bobby took them away from Kathy and Kathy tried to get them back and, upon falling, grinned imbecililly, I thought. But it was only a momentary shot of defeatism. She is usually just the way you'd want your daughter (as long as you don't have to take care of her) -- bold, reacting to frustration with rage, and optimistic. And no teeth.

I want to congratulate you on having such a charming wife and daughter.

I heard the most sordid news the other day -- Hubby Stern has been elevated to a chicken colonel. I figure it's this way -- for every inch you are below average size, the Army ups you a rank, just to keep everyone happy.

Darling, I give you a great voluptuous hug and kiss and the promise of a variety of fleshly pleasures when you get home, including filet mignon.

Always your loving Jill

JILL TO AL OCTOBER [UNDATED] 9?, 1944

[Envelope is postmarked October 10, 1944]

My darling --

I am fit to bust. It's a gloomy lonely Sunday and I got Kathy off to bed with difficulty so I decided to console myself with a mid-day

meal like the white folks are used to eating. I had the two lamb chops I was saving for dinner (except Joan in coming so two wouldn't be enough anyway, French fried potatoes, my first venture into deep fat frying and the burns are no worse than second degree), tomato juice and a banana, which I am now working on with difficulty. Since my usual lunch consists of soup and a lot of bread and milk, you can see why I would be impressed. Or expressed, if you want to look at it another way.

I feel both virtuous and silly. Last night instead of going to the movies or horsing around with another girl or going to one of Klaus's innumerable parties, I stayed home and waxed a salami. I know that sounds odd, certainly no odder than I felt. But it seems I had this salami for you and it started getting very funny on the outside so I took it back to Nudelman and he said, etc. etc. So that was why I was waxing a salami. The wax is paraffin, not Johnson's Floor, in case you ever get said salami. I am having a terrible time getting the barest essentials of scotch tape and other wherewithal to wrap your package to the taste of the PO.

I also spent the evening sauterne-ing a fruit cake which is just the way it sounds.

Saturday nights may be an artificial construct but there is still something very funny about spending them at home alone. As a matter of fact I could have gone to this party given for IVI workers in the neighborhood, a dollar a throw, but that kind of thing appalls me. I see no reason why one should have to socialize with the people you are united to by ideology. Anyway, I have contributed my share of fund through the innumerable phone calls I made for them last month. But that isn't the point. The dullness of these functions, of course, is.

Bill is coming down this afternoon to go bike riding. I really need some exercise. Since you've probably wondered at the dearth of references to my bike in my recent letters, I guess I'd better tell you, though please don't be mad at me. I had the curse a couple of weeks ago and felt awful and left the bike outside the

door without locking it, since I felt so awful, and somebody took it. I told the police and they questioned some boys and even found a bike like mine but it wasn't. I think they rather expected me to claim it anyway and get the damn thing off their minds, but you can't do that, can you? Anyway, my first impulse always is to be honest. I felt badly about it then but when you think of all the things you have to wait for until the war's end, like you and more babies and a house to live in, it's really not so bad having to wait for a bike too. I'm just mad at myself for being so dumb but now I have learned for all time not to trust Chicagoans. But please don't be mad at me or say "I told you so".

Anyway Bill and I are renting some bikes and going riding in Jackson Park. I'm leaving Kathy with Marilyn Morgan, whom you may remember as a sexy extremely small blonde girl from around Goff's. Did you know Helen Pierce (now Baker), Lee Pierce's sister? She has a baby and we went buggy-walking the other day. She's also of that group that included Ruthie Schwartz (now married to Lee) et al. Anyway, the publicity people from the downtown headquarters want to take pictures of three representatives and photogenic young women with babies for "Why I'm going to Vote for Roosevelt" or something. So I rounded up Helen and Diane and some time next week we'll lead our lambs to slaughter. I think Kathy is supposed to hold a sign saying, "No World War III for Me. Momma is going to vote for Roosevelt." So you see, your guess that she would be wearing a bib inscribed "Drooling for Roosevelt" wasn't so far wrong after all.

Bill came and we just got back from a nice long bike ride. We went down along the lake to 39th and then took the viaduct over to that rather declass  and colorful neighborhood around Oakwood and Kenwood. We went through the barbed wire fence surrounding a thoroughly ruined old castle and inspected the mess. Apparently it had been a private museum featuring the Egyptian influence and had stone mummy cases and everything, all broken up. Maybe you've seen it from the IC tracks at one time or another, if you can remember that far back. We're waiting around for Joan to come now, having

prepared a very exotic feast, all out of cans. Clam bisque (made from canned clams), deviled crab meat (made from canned crab meat), salad and coffee. The bisque is a soup made with milk in case you haven't had it yet in France. It doesn't taste very good, the one I made, anyway.

Christ, I love to cook. If only someone would do the dishes. I've never thought of you as being the kind of man who would holler "I want a girl just like the girl who married dear old Dad" -- you're a singularly un-mother dominated soul -- but I have to agree with you that I'm like your mother in several respects -- the wild irrational search for the bargain, the genial contempt for one's friends, the love of the stew-pot.

Kathy seemed to have survived her afternoon with sexy Marilyn fairly well. I found her sitting in Marilyn's room at Goff house surrounded by several Beta's -- there really are some left in civilian dress -- murmuring "How droll".

Bill told me about Willkie this afternoon. I hadn't known because of the way news gets loused up on Sunday. I really feel pretty badly. Most people die after they've done as much as they ever would or before they've started to give any promise at all of doing anything, but he got his both too late and too soon. I think he might have had a place in history, if not as a great progressive force -- though he had promise of that as a great dissenter.

The next morning -- upon which I am very weary. Joan stayed late and we talked interminably, of our pasts, futures and politics. She claims you are responsible, indirectly, for Tom's going into the Army because the time we saw them on our way from Cal. to Washington you spoke so disparagingly of civilians that Tom went out and enlisted shortly thereafter. I do remember that you were always very hard on civilians, the poor dears, once you got in, though I doubt your involvement in the case of Tom K.

I got two letters from you this morning, the 24th and 27th, in

which the memorable experience of cat meat was described. Also you say you're reading Menchen -- do you mean Menken? Or Mencken (I guess that's the correct spelling). Because I don't know who you do mean if you don't mean him.

I bashed my pinkie against a rough lamppost biking yesterday and it makes typing difficult. So more tomorrow.

All my love -

Jill

P.S. Did you ever get the package of shoes and lipstick for your friend in Rome?

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 9, 1944(A) V-MAIL

Dear Love,

Gone goes another dreary day, full of bad thoughts against humanity and our weaknesses and just plain ennui. I wrote you a gloomy little note this morning, and when I happened to mention it to Tom Crowell, he ventured the suggestion that gloomy predictions about the war should not reach your sheltered ears. I told him that my wife may be sensitive but that does not mean she is weak. Anyhow, I am a little less gloomy, perhaps because of a certain quality that injects a humorous viewpoint into the situation just before it gets too serious to tolerate. After a while, I just sit back and fiddle while Rome burns. It is a good thing to do; when the great world gets out of hand and goes blundering by beyond all control, sit aside from it and gaze at it with diffidence. The actual causes or "reasons" for anger were little things like a tank running over fifty powder charges which aren't too plentiful, the unexplainable loss of my mess kit when I needed it for breakfast and such stuff. Tonight someone said that the Allies had made another landing in Holland, a piece of good news to keep the war going. Also today came your big package of cigarettes and candies. You

are a very sweet girl to have spent so much time buying packages of cigarettes and I wish I could give you the proper amount of kisses in return. They came in good time; we rarely get Luckies now and today didn't get any issue. These supply lines are no figment of the imagination. The smaller bottle of coffee was mostly empty and in a lump and some of the candy was smashed, but the big bottle was OK. Thanks again and [if] I could only see you now I would make you a dozen martinis and put you to bed. Mom's sausage hasn't arrived yet; I'm beginning to think some of my friends still with the Fifth are consuming it for old times' sake.

I'd like to recommend to you a quaint, simple and delightful book in the Penguin series called Go She Must, by David Garnett. It is a book like a faint Spring breeze, out of this world. I finished it just now and have turned to other things. It's a good night for reading. I have a faint electric light bulb burning in my room and the night out is pitch black and raining. I wonder at these eyes of mine, at how scholars should take such good care of their eyes and at how I go around driving in blackouts and dust clouds and reading by flashlight and candles. I suppose the eyes recover from strain just like any other muscles.

How is Kathy, I wonder? She must take more care than ever, the way she runs around everywhere. Your descriptions of her locomotive ability are very effective, and I can picture her very well scuttering around. I think for her Christmas present, I'll have you give her one of my more precious books to tear up. Fatherly love is a wonderful thing.

I'll bet you don't love me as much as I love you.

Always your,

Al

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 9, 1944(B)

Dearest,

I don't intend this to be my letter for the day. I'll write more later, but want to get something off in the mail with these dull enclosures. I'm in a dirty, sullen mood today. I got in late last night after a lot of black-out driving where we nearly had a couple of accidents and the strain was very tiring on top of the cold. Today is a dark, gloomy thing that makes the war seem as long as infinity, inspiring a great bitterness against everything in it - nations, soldiers, machines and the specks of stain on one's mess kit. It's very complete - complete to feeling jealous fury against those who see you when I don't. We

men are punished because we are healthy; we're punished more if we are conscientious; it is thrice bad if the breaks are not our way. That's the history of justice.

I do not foresee victory before Spring, nor do I like to contemplate the Pacific War in its duration. I can't even contemplate how much I love you. It hurts so.

Always,

Al

JILL TO AL OCTOBER 10, 1944

Darling -

I started to type this but remembered I have a sore finger, from patting a stone lamppost too warmly when I was bike riding the other day. I haven't been able to write you the past couple of days for another reason, however. The decorators came in unexpectedly yesterday morning while I was lying abed, comfortably contemplating a houseworkless day, and all has been chaos ever since. They painted everything a becoming shade of pink -- becoming to Kathy, anyway -- and it is she who

tries to climb the walls, not I (tho I felt like it today, there being no place else where there wasn't disjointed furniture, people & cans of paint. But all has been restored to peace & quiet by tonight, thanks to the labors of Flossie the cleaning woman. I've been too weak to do anything but contemplate the mess. In the melee my glasses got broken and Kathy's hair got painted pink.

I managed to get away yesterday afternoon, Priscilla staying with Kathy, and do some work downtown at IVI headquarters. I did some typing & pasting-up for them & it was fun getting out & do some work for reasonably grateful & nice people. I wish I could get out in the afternoons more often. Then, yesterday being the last day of registration, I went out last night & visited some people the regular Dem. precinct captain didn't have time to see. One old lady was sure she couldn't register for some reason or other but I gave her some fraudulent story to give the registration officials, got her out of the house, promising to keep watch for her visitors, just like a regular old wardheeler. Of course I made sure she was a Roosevelt girl first.

But now that all the excitement is over I find it not much fun to bask alone in all this spotless roseate glory. Winter nights are no better than spring or summer to be alone in. And going out to visit friends or see a movie or drink a beer doesn't help. Because one's frequently too tired and what you really want is just somebody to stay home with. I'm depressed but resigned, which in a way is psychologically worse than being depressed & rebellious.

Kathy saw the maid chewing gum today and has been chewing on her gums ever since. It's very funny to watch. We went out with Janice this afternoon. Her husband's ugly Kerry Blue had pups (in their Windermere room of all places) & we saw them. They are a day old & about the size of the palm of your hand. No wonder dogs have easy labor. They just popped out, Janice said. They are ugly but have pretty coats already.

This isn't a very inspired letter, sweetheart. I guess I miss you & family life too damn much for much frivolity.

All my love, tho -

Jill

P.S. The State of Ill. answered my request very promptly, don't you think. Must be near election time. (See encl.)

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 10, 1944

Darling Jill,

I hadn't meant to write you tonight, it being so late an hour, but as I stumbled up the dark stairs out of the rain into my dismal little hovel, I thought of how hellishly lonely it was and how dreary, and then I thought of how alone you too must be, sleeping these countless nights without me and facing the same blank rooms on the strength of vague, distant love, and I thought I might at least write you a note for you to know I appreciate the depths of loneliness and the value of a love that must now be intangible, invisible wings beating themselves against the barriers of space. I sometimes feel, since I know what fear of the unknown is, that you must occasionally be afraid of the world around you or to be alone in it. I also wonder at times why I am not in a perpetual fright over you, so precious are you and so grave a loss would any accident to you be. So much for my essay on fear. I'm sure you won't think it strange. It would take me many times eighteen months to obscure your being in my every fibre. When you say you misplaced your glasses in Chicago I'm inclined to look for them in my bedding roll in France.

Always,

Al

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 12, 1944

Darling Jill,

I have time to start a letter while waiting for Martin Herz, of all people. He turned up this afternoon and is off again in the early morning, so we want to talk for a while tonight. He's out somewhere just now.

I got a letter from Aunt Anna yesterday, one from Ed and Three from you today. Yours were especially good, V-mails of the 25th and 26th and a long one from Sept. 18. I can only say amen to your discouraged thoughts about homecoming, but I'm sure we're too old hands at this cursed game of separation to be defeated by it. We'll last it out, we'll make up for it, and we'll profit from it, so don't you worry your little head. And damn all the bad nights; we'll have countless hours to lie together and stare happily into darkness.

Your comments on third parties now are very good, and the association of them with civilian attitudes is correct. "Business as usual" is a slogan that suits some psychological radicals more aptly than the businessmen it was intended for. At a time when I must give up all of my precious liberty, the cry of an unregimented civilian for more liberty fills me with disgust and contempt. While I must struggle for a crumb of freedom, they want icing on their cake. Not only do they accept the right to have their family, their private jobs, to dress as they like, eat as they like, move as they like and a thousand other things, but they clamor for the right to shout opinions that 99% of the people find displeasing. To my mind, there is little difference between that and going to Miami on vacation despite the OPA, the WTB and everyone else. God knows what the country would do if it depended on such spoiled children for its survival.

Martin came in and we talked until about 2 A.M. before he went to bed for an hour or two before leaving. He sent you his regards. The landlady's little girl has a little black kitten which is put out at night and which cries loudly. Last night I took her in, but she clamored just as loudly in my room and wouldn't let us

talk in peace. I thought she might be hungry and started to look through my musette bag for some crumbs when I found myself face to face with a little mouse with large eyes and a long tail. He hopped nimbly under the bed leaving a partially chewed Hershey bar, one that you had sent me and which I was conserving and the nibbled portion of which I turned over to the kitten who devoured it and went to sleep by the stove. She was all right until about six this morning when she climbed up the bed and started stomping on me, so I threw her out.

We talked about the same thing you brought up in your Sept. 18 letter, what to do with the Germans. It will be immensely difficult. I can't see our several nations agreeing together on social planning on a scale they have individually been incapable of doing in their own countries. If we don't even teach American children American government and democracy properly, it is difficult to see how we can teach the children and adults of Germany the immutable principles of democracy. Anyone knows that historical examples are very weak in teaching democracy and yet we are determined not to treat the Germans as democratic equals. One way out might be to abandon all pretext of being severe with them and forget about the war. That is not only impossibly impractical but also serves as a confession to the Germans of our own weakness and their own justified conduct until Hitler. The other extreme of brutal oppression over a period of years is likewise almost impossible, because it is a vicious circle and requires constantly increasing stringent disciplining. I myself am in favor of executing offhand all of the Gestapo, the SS, the Parachute Corps, the General Staff and the state hierarchy, despite the fact that some five or ten percent may be "innocent". But there is your root and there is your example. Then, despite the fact that everyone shares a little guilt, treat the rest of the population as in a certain sense victims and as being capable of creating a democracy with our help, abandoning all severely repressive measures.

I'll write more later, darling. I have a few things to do yet this morning, nothing very interesting. Many, many kisses to you and Kathy, sweetheart. I look towards seeing you both as the

resurrection.

Always your Al

THE Exec has become stony hard on the "German problem." When Martin Herz arrives one day, only to leave the next day at dawn, they talk until two in the morning, according to one of his letters, "about what to do with the Germans."

Herz will not accept the plan, but he has none of his own, and, after returning to Paris and thinking it over for a while, he writes Alfred that he agrees with it. Since Alfred repeats this idea time after time in correspondence and conversation, he must have developed confidence and assurance with it. Something approaching it actually occurred, except, as will be recalled, the punitive actions taken were transformed into the forms of trial and punishment under international law in an attempt to make law. (This is not to object to the making of such law, but to recall, also, that the American Government under Truman then embarked upon a program of crystallizing "sovereignty" of national states: sovereign states and a world law are a contradiction.)

With Herz gone, he talks to Lt. Hans Wallenberg. The two should be closer; they are, in fact, together almost daily, but Hans is not witty, nor imaginative, very Prussian-like indeed, a small dumpy man with a deep bark. Businesslike, serious, he regards the Exec as cavalier, even reproaches him once for spending too much time with Tom Crowell, the low-brow cheerful printer. Hans lives in a dingy room a couple of doors down the one street of the Lorraine Village where they bivouac. He catches the flu and the Exec visits him, taking him an article just received, written by Brother Sebastian on the propaganda values buried (but discoverable) in Shostakovich's "Leningrad Symphony."

Both he and Hans read as much as anyone else in the Company. His latest favorite has been Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*: "I find it the finest book I've ever read on war on the level it's pitched at. It's much better than Remarque [*All Quiet on the Western Front*],

for example." Hans is reading the letters of Frederick the Great and quotes from them, showing them to the Exec; how apparent in them is the deep-rooted German sense of duty. There are even startling parallels to Hitler's evident present thinking to be found in Frederick's thoughts at a particularly rough time in his career, when about to give up to the coalition of nations fighting him, but hangs on, and suddenly finds reprieve with the death of the Russian Empress.

Alfred and Wallenberg, and, too, Herz, Mann, Habe, Langendorf, and those who come to visit, are continually struggling for a logical, just, practical policy toward the Germans. There is a lot of cursing and railing at the foe from the Army and the home press and population: these men are more knowing and experienced and thoughtful -- you might think that they would reach a consensus. They do not. The arguments drift off into drunkenness, their work at hand, departures, trivia.

The Exec, beholden to his educational masters at the University, tries to be as precise as possible. How separate the population from the elite; how re-educate them. Yet who are we to re-educate the most educated people in the world? Well, they have terrible flaws: what are they, where lodged in their mind and their society? It is an impossible problem and yet there must be a policy and the young officers, operational, at the nodes of action, have as much to say as anybody, and what the generals say, and what Churchill and Roosevelt and the oppressed peoples say, is to some degree what these young men say, because they are opinion leaders, and also they have some control over the apparatus of propaganda, the press, radio and film, and the selection of the crucial second-level liberators and occupiers.

They talk unceasingly of the key ideas, argue them, these men in the age group between 24 and 34, in the grades from Sergeant to Major. The issues are unconditional surrender; war criminals; reparations; the new constitution of Germany; the treatment of collaborators in the rest of Europe -- the Fascists of Italy and everywhere, the Petainists, the millions of crushed souls and wicked ones and turn-coats; the support of Governments in Exile of Eastern Europe that had fled West and their reconciliation with the Communist Governments installed by the advancing Soviet forces. His ideas take

shape on each of these points, as the troops suffer the worst winter in memory of Alsace and Lorraine.

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 13, 1944

Dearest Jill,

I sat down a few minutes ago to write someone besides yourself and finished by having a list of some six or seven names, none of them managing to influence my letter-writing salivaries. That makes you more interesting to me than the whole bunch together which is not a strange thing. Today was a very dull day, weather and all. I am once more turning my eyes towards the East where the Russians are making ready to sweep down the Hungarian plain. It is pleasant sometimes to know that we are not possessed of a monopoly for cracking the German defenses open.

Tom Crowell, Harold Adams, Earl Pittman, a French officer and myself have a big feast planned for late this evening. The Frenchman bought some fresh meat and red wine today and we're going to eat it tonight around eleven. Now that I think of it, the affair will have something of the atmosphere accredited to those pagan groups who continued their rituals around sacrifices in dark byways long after Christianity had swept the world. This evening we had luncheon pork for the hundredth time in France. A dripping piece of meat is beginning to have an unholy fascination for us. Lunch is almost invariably hash or meat and beans, a mixture which tastes like neither.

In your letter of Sept. 18, you mentioned the execution of six men of the militia and, in my estimation, came out of the argument with your friend Klaus in front of him. Incidentally, you seem to have changed intellectual prompters; first it was Bill and now it is Klaus. I'm sure it was a change for the worst, though it does make your own intellectual attacks more devastating in contrast. But I, your correspondent, am already bored with Klaus' ideas and wish you would get back to quoting

Bill or someone else. Now I must tell you about the execution. I was there.

One day, I came driving back to a school where we had our quarters to get Galitzine, a captain in British Intelligence. He had just been to a trial of militiamen and was upset about the proceedings. A number of youths had been tried and, without the taking of a great deal of evidence and without much formality, they had been sentenced to death. The main fact that was brought out in court was that they were members of the Pétain militia. I remarked to him that I was glad that the FFI had already taken matters into their hands and were dispensing speedy justice. He protested, however, saying that, though he had nothing against the death penalty for traitors, these were mere boys who didn't know what they were doing and who had not committed any atrocity that was proven or done any real harm. They were just small fry. He thought the justice was too summary. I replied that I had no illusions about the individual justice being meted out. Perhaps their delinquency was more a matter of their environment than sheer will on their part. Undoubtedly, those more guilty would escape in large numbers. But who is responsible for anything in this world that he is brought into, warped, according to, and punished for? No eternal law justifies punishment. It is a social act that people often indulge in to expiate their own sins of thought and deed as much as to protect themselves from the criminal in the future. Galitzine didn't agree. He felt the sentence and the weakness of the convicts as a blow to his innards, a threat to his personal integrity, so great is the myth of personal responsibility, and so great the revulsion against punishment as a social policy (though it has always been unknowingly that).

But let's go from him to the French. He said he was invited to attend the executions and asked whether I would like to go also. I was apathetic at first, uninterested and as usual disliking to move when it wasn't necessary, but finally decided to go. We put on our raincoats and left for the scene of the execution. The rain was coming down steadily by the time we got there. It fell onto the hard ground of a factory yard where the stakes were

driven. A great, unruly crowd had already gathered there, with numbers of the FFI and the town police. We moved to the very front of the space that had been cleared of people by a line of sweating police and French soldiers. From there we could turn back and watch the crowd, growing rapidly and talking loudly to their keepers who strained mightily to keep them from bursting into the open space where we were. There was a movement about everything. The balconies of the buildings affording a view of the yard were packed with people. Men clung to the big chimneys of the slant-roofed houses. Umbrella poked this way and that way in the crowd. Now and then someone would break through the cordon and the police would chase him, cursing and swinging clubs. There they were, all united as French patriots to see the deaths of traitors and yet it seemed as if the mob were angry at itself, and everyone could feel an actual danger to themselves. Death was in the air and the human animals stirred restlessly under the feeling. Something in their innards was going to be expelled. The rain and wind gave motion to everything, darkening the late afternoon to the grey that should color the world through the masked eyes of the hangman. A lonely, drunk GI, who felt the need for his kind came up to me saluting, his pistol in one hand. He was an Indian from the infantry and conceived it his duty to discipline the crowd. He told me he would take care of everything, seriously, as though he realized the crowd was a formidable opponent, and went back to mad charging wherever some bulge, or noise, or color in the crowd would move him. Then he would brandish his pistol as he stumbled over the shouting French soldiers, and swear in American and Chickadee at the people. Shortly afterwards, there was a great burst of mixed shouting and cheering and a closed van broke through the people and stopped in the space off to the side. One by one, the men inside were dragged out by two guards and hustled over to a stake where they were manacled. Finally they stood there and the crowd subsided. The condemned men were for the most part pale and determined looking, one had a broad forced smile on his face, another an anxious frown. By the way they were manacled, back to the stake, they couldn't help but

look as if they were deliberately thrusting their chests at their executors. The band of some sixty Maquis who were to form the firing squad stopped fidgeting and moved over between the prisoners and the crowd in single file. An officer with a sword led them. He halted, turned about, and gave the signals. "Ready," "Aim," and "Fire". The volley leapt out of the guns without hesitation and the men dropped, some simply and neatly, another thrusting himself against his bonds, the smiling one without the smile. One looked as if he might still be alive and the officer rushed over and fired his pistol into his head. Part of the crowd rushed up for a closer view. One old man spit on a body. Others merely gaped. The bodies were hurried away and the cold rain began to be felt. Within a few minutes, the crowd had broken up and disappeared, satiated, content with its pitiless justice, and the pain of years of submergence assuaged. Who knew or who cared who the men were as individuals, what their own compulsions were, or how satisfactorily their guilt had been defined. War is a policy which justifies the murder of innocents. This was no more than that and even something less, for the selection was a little more sophisticated.

It is time to go now. All my love to you, darling, and kisses to Kathy.

Always your

Al

JILL TO AL OCTOBER 15, 1944

My dearest darling -

In the great outpouring of good will, fellowship, passion & longing that has suddenly enveloped me, and of which you are the object, naturally, I must use the medium of pen & ink. The hunched position over the page, as if I were washing your head, the tender yet firm grip on the fountain pen, is a much more

appropriate position for describing tender sentiments than my cool efficient form poised over a typewriter, nimbly pounding out X's when I mean C's.

This is a bright beautiful Sunday afternoon. The Fiend is asleep, the Philharmonic is on the radio (Shostakovich, singularly out of time with my mood, but then, I am tone-deaf) and since I always declare a moratorium on housework on Sundays, I have nothing to do but write you. This morning I went back to sleep after Kathy's breakfast and slept like a babe, with the aid of 10 grains of phenobarbital.

It would be a perfect day for us & it makes me mad we can't have it together. As a matter of fact I am pretty discouraged about when we'll see each other again but I still get moods like this when the depressing reality is obscured by a general sense of well-being. Mostly it's the other way around, however. Anyway I'm sure I love you no matter how long we have to wait & God knows that's something.

You would be surprised & perhaps dismayed to know that, with the help of your Machiavellian mamma, I am plotting to abandon our child. It's like the dream about the black dress -- I have a dream & then it becomes an *idée fixe*. Anyway, I dreamt I went to NY & now I want to go. I'm trying to convince Mom she should take Kathy for a week & I'll go sometime after election. Kathy's rather a trial (& will continue to be so till she's two probably and/or till you get home). You know -- crash, bang, wah & other assorted sounds of mayhem & vandalism. For the first time I'm beginning to get fed [*up*] with the routine of mostly all baby and no husband, rather, I might have been fed before but rather enjoyed (in the winter & early spring months -- this summer was fun) the martyrdom of her complete dependence on me. But now she's growing up & a lot of her dependence on me is the result of the imposition of her will on mine, rather than physiological dependence. She is just like you in personality as I may have said before & it's rather a trial occasionally in a baby, not to mention in a man. God knows what I'll do with the two of you, both beating your heads in against a world you never

made. (Although I do credit you with great flexibility -- more than I'll ever have.) It's just that you two are so un-bovine.

Anyway I'd like to go to NY for a week & eat lunches downtown & go to the museum & trade hypocrisies with Aunt Renee & otherwise fulfill my salmon-like urge to hurl myself annually up against the be-jewelled superficialities of my family. Anyway, telling you this, even if I never go, is a good excuse for further elaboration on the miracle that is your child.

Poor Mom certainly admitted she couldn't cope with her herself. Friday she came down & stayed with Kathy in the afternoon while I went downtown to IVI h.q. & indulged my peculiar notion of fun -- typing, pasting & writing. God, I guess I never had a job where people were generally nice & I felt I was doing something I believed in. I wish I could work full time for them for about a month, anyway.

My poor little mitt is getting tired. Anyway, while I was downtown Mom got locked out of the house and had to roam the streets for a couple of hours with baby and buggy and that kind of discouraged her for her role of substitute mother, even for a few days. I guess there is something to having your babies while you are young. Even I get bushed like yesterday, when we went to breakfast in the morning at the Windermere and then for a walk along the lake front. Kathy was an angel at the hotel. They brought her a high chair and she sat there munching toast like a grownup. We were invited thither by Klaus who felt in need of the cheer furnished by a cute baby because he had approached his draft board for the fourth time and they threw him the hell out. He threw his knee out in 1934, ironically enough running in an exhibition foot race when Hitler visited his town, and now nobody wants him although he apparently quite sincerely had wanted to get in.

Anyway, I left my purse at the Windermere so had to run the circuit again that afternoon to pick it up and was utterly bushed from all the walking so I crept into the doubtful comfort of a silly movie last night and thus didn't get a chance to write you

yesterday. I was supposed to go to a cocktail party given by a young thing from school but didn't, figuring nobody of interest would be there. She is Stud's current girl friend and also a friend of Georgia Dish's (I still can't believe that name) and took a great shine to me because I was polite to her when we were introduced one day. I suppose I should have gone to get the latest word on Georgia but that in itself was a deterrent.

While I was hiking around yesterday afternoon, accompanied at the time by Mac and Jane Berry, we ran into a guy named Andy Park whom you might have known from school. He is a great drunk and the grandson of the sociology Park. He had just come back from Alaska and had tied a large one on and was rolling down the street with a rum bottle in one hand and his arm entwined around another disreputable male character. They pounced upon us with great cheers, as if we were the first white women this side of the Mississippi and while we embarrassedly fought off their alcoholic embraces, the other drunk lifted Kathy up and embraced her. Then they turned their joint alcoholic attention to her and offered her a drink out of the bottle. I said she didn't drink and Andy said, "What do you mean she doesn't drink. She's drunk already." And they rolled off down the street mumbling about drunken babies. It was sort of funny at the time, mostly because in my sheltered environment I don't get to see many drunks.

I just spoke to Ed on the phone. He's in for the weekend which he has been spending busman fashion, playing football. He really enjoys the Army scholastic routine very much although it sounds almost as hard as OCS to me. Mom said he looked awfully well and not at all tired so I guess the Army knows what it's doing. He's certainly superb Army material, well adjusted psychologically and hardy physically and of course, intelligent. At the rate they are pushing him he ought to have his bachelor's degree by Christmas.

Oh I forgot to say, Dad was down Friday night too, coming for dinner from his school on the south side. He asked me to ask you if you could pick up a low pitch (I think) buffet clarinet in

France for him, that they are impossible to get here. Oh, I also forgot to tell you I got your little card for their anniversary and will get them something with it.

Kathy is waking up with a squawk. I think she is getting a tooth. She sends you a big kiss nonetheless and I send you a million.

Always with love your --

Jill

AL TO JILL OCTOBER 15, 1944 V-MAIL

My dearest,

An unusually bright Sunday was made more bright by two letters from you, Sept. 28 and 30. I am always happy to hear that you have ground away another couple of days from this wall of time that separates us without unpleasantness. I myself did a lot of driving today, but it was pleasant and the roads I took were almost empty. My present driving habit is woolen underwear, wool shirt, scarf, field jacket and mackinaw. I wonder what else I can add when winter comes. But this winter I don't do as much driving as last winter, I believe, even if the Germans do not surrender, and if they do surrender, I shall hibernate until they hand me my steamship ticket to home and love. Last night, my love, I had my second steak dinner in two nights. It was the same group of Tom, Harold and a couple of others that I mentioned the first time. I actually felt as if I had red blood in my veins this morning. It is interesting how I can eat that fourth meal and think nothing of it. It shows that the three are not enough, I think. I wish I could do it all the time. There were a couple of bottles of red wine too which went beautifully with the steak. I missed you also while I was enjoying the food, because I would have liked you to enjoy it too.

I have almost finished a book of short stories by Ambrose Bierce in the last several days. He writes beautifully, but strains

badly after impossible coincidences in his plots, part of the time in order to get the then modish surprise ending. Did I tell you to read Brighton Rock by Graham Greene, the author of The Ministry of Fear? It's in the Albatross edition. He has two of the best portrayals of female characters in all of literature. I've got hold of Harper's for August which is pretty barren, and a Swiss weekly something like Life called L'Illustré. It is elegantly done and these days I am sure only comparable to magazines in the States. How fortunate the Swiss are. Right in the middle of the most ghastly chaos and yet in peace and well being. The three-way split between France, Germany and Italy has had no effect on the peaceful relations between the three parts of Switzerland. They have a fine press and a good radio service. Incidentally I saw a couple of copies of Goebbels' Das Reich the other day and it is still a beautifully put out job, perhaps the best presented newspaper in the world. It certainly has the largest clean margins of any newspaper anywhere, which goes a long way to frame the type stylishly.

I should be sending you all Christmas presents soon, but the very thought is repulsive to my profound desire to wrap myself as your gift. I despair of finding anything to send you. In the last weeks I haven't seen a thing that I could send you. I am glad, by the way, that you like the perfume. You should get four bottles, I believe.

All my love today & always.

Al

End of October (first of two parts) 1944 letters

