

JILL TO AL APRIL 15, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

This has been rather a manic-depressive day for us all. Kathy veers between ecstatic clutchings at her new toy, a sort of trapeze with red rings dangling from it, strung across her bed, and screams of anguish from bellyache. She has some kind of indigestion and I called the doctor again about it today. He weakened her formula even more (and after I made enough on the old one to last till Monday) and told me to give her weak tea. She doesn't have temperature and is in a wonderful mood when she isn't crying. As for me, the high point of the day was getting four V-mails from you, the 2nd (first half), the third and the 5th. They all have you in Naples, which makes me glad, but with the imminence of a no doubt perilous journey, which makes me sad. In any case, I am having some difficulty answering you because my finger on the left hand is getting more and more swollen every minute. When I go out to mail this I'm going to get something from the druggist for it. But while I am typing I have to substitute my middle finger for it, which plays hell with my already faulty knowledge of the touch system. Our joint malaise, however, saves us from tomorrow's planned Christening and a horde of hungry DeGrazia's. Mom still wants to come down but I shall try to stave her off, as I am very weary. Every time I've started to nap today Kathy has decided to shriek. Such is the life of the mother. Irmie helps but the baby still cries. And guess who came over today for a nice chat. Our old Rose, who is still as young and pretty as ever, and who thinks you are the handsomest guy extant.* Since I think her husband is very attractive, and since we are both very much in love with our husbands, we spend a great deal of time in that sort of purring over the happy states of matrimony and motherhood which unite women of all classes and colors. * So do I.

Fritz Neugarten is also very much in evidence, since Bernice is still at her home in Nebraska comforting her bereaved mother (did I tell you her father died. Well he did. Irmie also brings word that Renee's husband Ben died but I have yet to have it

confirmed by anybody in the family. Maybe it's true since Day hasn't written for just ages. Ouch my finger.) Fritz still thinks you should get the 87 dollars back you paid on your 1942 income and thinks we made a big fiscal mistake, paying it in full. He is going to consult a tax man about it. He is very smart about these matters, being an auditor for a big insurance company himself. I think I am supposed to file an estimated return for this year myself, deadline being tonight, but I am just going to overlook the matter, on the strength of the government taking pity on a woman with a sassy baby and a sore finger. Darling, you steadfastly avoid all references to your damned old insurance policy, which I think about every time I start trying to get our finances in order. I am going to send you a card Monday from the University bank so we can make that account joint also. I hadn't bothered before when we only had 100 in it -- I had kept that amount there to cover cashing Riggs checks so I wouldn't have to pay clearance charges for cashing out-of-town checks. But now that we have some 3000 in the bank I naturally want it in your name too. Money money money. Ouch my finger. Well I love you very much but I think you are mean about your policy, & making me feel like a stinker for reminding you to do something you should have thought of yourself.

Jill

JILL TO AL APRIL 17, 1944

Dearest Darling --

Your pictures came today and the one of you is really wonderful even if you do look grubby and saturnine (I have yet to learn the exact meaning of that word) all at the same time. The scenery is so pretty and you do look marvelously healthy and I'm sure I could love you even in such a bathless and bearded state. I wish you'd come home soon [so] I could prove to you to what lengths my love can go. We could experiment -- you could arise with a full beard one morning, a hangover the second, poison

ivy the third, asking me each time to treat you with single-minded devotion and gentleness. And I would, truly.

Right now I am much in need of such care. My finger is still horrid looking and I'd do something about it if I knew what to do or who to go to. Instead I'm just waiting for nature to take its course and nature rarely does in cases like these. At three this morning Kathy woke up and went to the john and then I woke up and whoopsed, for no special reason, and then she demanded and got a bottle. She is feeling a bit better -- at least she doesn't have dysentery today -- so the doctor just told me to go back on the old formula. But she has been crying a lot and I haven't gotten much sleep. That combined with my mal-de-mer feeling today puts me in a bitch of a mood. Poor Irmie. What a vacation for her. She has been very helpful but she talks a lot and I don't feel like talking. We went to the promontory today for her first view of the Chicago skyline. Naturally, nothing is so good as New York to adopted New Yorkers, and to most natives, for that matter. (Except me)

Oh I'm so happy. Kathy just took a whole bottle of her old formula and a little cereal to boot, which she hasn't done in just ages, and didn't spit up one little bit. Isn't that wonderful? You know, I have such guilt feelings when she isn't feeling well because I know it's usually my fault. I think the thing that's been wrong with her is that I've overfed her in my zeal to have a fat happy child. Well, she has been fat and happy but her stomach just couldn't take it. Isn't it awful to make mistakes like that? I think that the only mistakes I've ever made & regretted were those concerning Kathy.

Jeepers, my finger started to come apart -- a good sign but disgusting. Now I don't have to go to a doctor & have it lanced but my stomach now feels terrible from watching it. I have it immersed in a cup of hot water now while I'm writing. Everybody has disgusting things wrong with them these days. The north side branch of the family all have dysentery. Mom called me a little while ago & related a Dostoevsky-like dream she had which she thinks caused her dysentery. Something about

Cooney biting a man & the man, infuriated, biting Cooney back & Cooney, in pain, biting Mom who cried out for Dad who didn't come. And I had a dream about you carrying about a little incubus in Naples & my thinking "How funny. I have to take care of Kathy here & Al has this little baby to take care of in Italy." And Dad called up last night about 10:30 to report on Mom's (now vanished) condition, & I guess he had walked away from the phone by the time I got there, so that our conversation began with an inconclusive & alarming series of "hellos", during which I was seized by the sudden, & not entirely irrational (considering the hour of the call & the fact that Dad rarely ever calls me directly) conviction that something had happened to you or Mom. So that in the middle of what Dad thought to be a friendly conversation from his end, I burst into tears of relief (& also horror at this specter of fear that occasionally descends to haunt me) dismaying the poor gentleman no end. Yes, it's been a funny week, full of omens & minor catastrophes. Sunspots, no doubt.

But your letters (the 6th 7th & 7th??) comfort us all & I think you are a darling to write so much so well. I'll get more bookcases for your books if they come, dear. Don't worry about them. And please sign encl. card where it is marked & return -- I'll fill in the rest. Dad still wants to know about his sister from you & wonders why you've never written him directly about her?? Search me Pop.

I did have some fun yesterday, come to think of it. Mac & Syb came over & we beat a hot trail to the U.T., leaving Irmie with the baby. We bulled around for a couple of hours, then came here, had a cold cut supper (during which mac got sick) & then took a dark cold walk down to the Promontory to brace mac up for her ride home to Flossmoor. [*note with arrow*: That spot is from stuff my finger's in. Do not take internally.] But I honestly don't think that the drinking has anything to do with our being sick. I think it's drinking lake water or the vernal equinox or something.

Gosh it's hard to write when you're used to typing. More

tomorrow. This has been a rather ghastly recital all told. Makes you glad you're not a civilian doesn't it. Irmie asks to be remembered. [*signed: Irmie*].

I love you with all my heart.

Jill

P.S. And the Kerners & I, who share Dotty, discover she's been snitching the silver. I repeat, aren't you glad you're a soldier? Poor Oliver has to take the matter up with her tomorrow.

AL TO JILL APRIL 17, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest love,

I woke up this morning realizing that I haven't had a letter from you in about a week because of my changing around. However, I still have your letter of March 28 which is fairly recent and can read that over. I worked until fairly late last night banging out a report which went off on a plane this morning. Then I went down to a little bar in the billet and had a glass of Monica wine, which is red and sweet, not much to my liking but the only thing available. I read a few more chapters of Dos Passos' trilogy before going to sleep beneath my net. I ought to finish the book shortly and can then say how much I dislike it. I think he is a stinking neurotic, myself, and feel ashamed that he could be considered such a great American author. This morning, while coming over to this hole of an office, I stopped in a woodworker's shop and opened the preliminary discussions for a cigarette box fit for my Jill to take dainty cigarettes out of in an elegant manner. I must think of some suitable simple design and see if it can be produced on the box.

I like the inhabitants here better than most. They don't make such a buzzing confusion of life, and the politicians I've talked with seem to have a great deal of ability. Of course, there is still the disorganization and destruction produced by war. Food is

always the paramount issue. Cigarettes disappear like magic. Our own mess is fair to middling, barely any fresh vegetables. And as one officer cracked, "Pity the poor folks at home, having to break their eggs and peel their potatoes." The weather here has been windy and cool the last several days. Last night there was a real scream to the wind and I enjoyed it, recalling many like nights in the Windy City. It felt more like Autumn than spring. If I were awakened last night at 2 AM and asked what I wanted most, I would say you because there is nothing better than lying in bed with you and letting the wind blow. Dammit, I want to do that for years and perhaps reach over for a K ration (full of vitamins and energy) every once in a while. But instead of abusing your make-up I must contemplate all this Mediterranean beauty alone and observe all this world-wretchedness and read a lot of s-t in silence. But then again there is always the inadequate consolation of thinking that so many others are in a worst state. That helps keep a certain kind of balance against all the racketeers, draft-dodgers, incompetents and neo-Fascists.

What a shock I got just now! My new assistant just brought me in some fresh eggs! I kept insisting that I couldn't accept them but he wouldn't listen to reason. I told him the civilians needed them but he said that they had a lot of chickens in the country. What a joy they will be to eat! How white and lovely they are. I wish you could be here to scramble them for me in your peerless fashion.

All my love and a kiss to Kathy.

Al

GENERALLY, Alfred is dismayed and disgusted by social conditions in Naples and inclined to blame the Neapolitans. The city is too large and condensed, overflowing with the unemployed who seem to have thronged it from the beginning of all time. It is dirty, noisy, full of shysters and thieves. The soldiers bring in their own forms of thievery.

Sometimes he wishes some kind of stern communism upon them, not Stalinism, although at the time he knows only of a fraction of the horrors that Stalin's cruelty and paranoia have visited upon the Soviet people and its neighbors, and of course nothing of what was to come. Nor is he even a socialist. But he sees nothing but misery and disorder in the present and projected future of the City. (He does not even think to compare the place with American cities such as his own Chicago which have already arrived at, and are rapidly descending to a level far below that of Naples in many respects, without any of the redeeming aspects of its hospitality, its style and beauty, its *joie de vivre*.)

He prefers to think of himself as hard-hearted. He tries to be tough, wishing to discipline the Neapolitans, the troops, etc., but in actual encounters he is not so mean. Not even in speech.

Still he certainly writes and speaks angrily against the *lumpenproletariat* of Napoli. The horde of thieves. The poor common bony shabby mass. The ragamuffins all about. (He admires and is affected by the rough-humored tender horseplay of soldiers and street urchins, mocking, swearing, cursing fiercely, throwing things, laughing, giving and taking food and things, "Hey, Joe, wanna meet my sister?")

The Neapolitans will not admit that the accusations against them are valid. They are unashamedly and hopelessly manipulative, demanding, rhetorical, irrelevant, unimpressed by any conquerors or liberators. To a man they would agree with St. Thomas Aquinas (rather a close neighbor of theirs 600 years earlier) that you are entitled to steal food out of hunger. Furthermore, they know, but it is also incontrovertible, that they are warm-hearted, hospitable, clever and affectionate, by comparison with most of the world's people. Are such qualities to count for nothing?

Alfred might spend his time simply meeting characters and personages. Colonel Professor T.V. Smith, transferred from Sicily, whose scratches from his critical nails are quickly healing, is now applying his arts to Napoli. The father of Gertie Goldsmith, Al's high school and college friend, has come to town to purge and reorganize the social services, even as Gertie is a fleeting reference in the letters of Jill from Chicago. He has been for many years occupied with the

Jewish charities of America; he will do about as much as any man to organize help for the poor and disorganized here. It is of the spookiness of historical cycles that he should visit Goldsmith with Edmund Howard whose ancestor pioneered charitable organization in Britain. Charity is so special and rare as to appear genetic, a family strain or Jewish instinct. So he thinks, if he doesn't say it.

The Italian liberal and radical leaders are close to Alfred's British friends. The foremost Italian philosopher, Benedetto Croce, is in touch with them from Sorrento, and they visit him; his publisher is La Terza, in Bari, whom Greenlees had immediately locked into when he liberated the City. Tarchiani and Carlo Sforza, with his son Sforzino Sforza, regard the "D" group as sympathizers. So does the supreme Italian Communist politician, Palmiro Togliatti; Alfred de Grazia doesn't know what Greenlees is up to here and when a private dinner at the Palazzo is set up with Togliatti as honored guest, he thinks that he ought be invited. "By all means," says Greenlees, "do come." Togliatti seems to be just about what he will appear to be for the rest of his life as leader of the largest Communist Party outside of the Soviet Union, affable, reasonable, intelligent, alert, unthreatening, an incongruous partner of Josef Stalin, incomprehensibly forever in his good graces.

JILL TO AL APRIL 18, 1944 (A) V-MAIL

My xxxxxx darling (I misspelled the first one) -- What a silly life this is. My finger is better but now I have the flu or an interesting conglomeration of symptoms which looks like the flu. I called my nice refugee doctor, mostly because I can't very well afford to have even a minor ailment (which this is) around Kathy and he is dropping by on his way home in a little while, since I have no intention of braving the Loop to see him. I'm sure this is all one big neurosis. Now that Irmie is here I am permitting myself to regress to the dependent, demanding state of my childhood, although truly, I loathe being sick and helpless and can't bear her fond ministrations. So it must all be on a very subconscious level if it is at all. I really have changed in that respect. I used to

think it might be fun to be sick in bed if one weren't very sick but ever since I had Kathy I have loathed the very sight of nurses and nursemaids. I guess my sudden assumption of a lot of responsibility right after I got pregnant very effectively exorcised any covert hypochondria I might have had. Now I like other people to be sick, well, not everybody, just you and Kathy, and not very sick, just enough to keep you in bed and enthralled with a jigsaw puzzle.

Honestly, as I started to describe to you in yesterday's letter, things are going from bad to worse on the home front. It seems that Dotty has us three "ladies", Diane, the Chuck Peeveys and me, and has been, at one time or another, swiping what little sterling silver we all have. Diane, who just bought hers, noticed it the other day and then we all discovered our losses. She never took anything else, so the awful task fell to Oliver and Chuck Peevey to confront Dotty when she showed up today at the Peevey's with this strange coincidence. She denied everything and then they got the brilliant idea of her taking a lie detector test. For some reason she consented, since it was within her rights to refuse and the police were not in on this yet. Of course it proved her guilty, or at least showed she wasn't telling the truth, but after she finished the test she dodged out of the psychologist's office and hasn't been seen yet. The address she gave me on Indiana doesn't know her or says it doesn't, and now we are not only out our silver but also 25 bucks for the test. What dopes! I suppose I'll have to pay my share of the test though it certainly wasn't my idea in the first place and I didn't even know about it until afterwards. The whole thing is very disillusioning, because she certainly looked to be too dumb to be dishonest, and very funny at the same time, in an expensive kind of way. Jeepers, wouldn't you know, though, that out of the half dozen pieces of sterling we had, somebody would walk off with some of it. I'm sure if you had been here you would have handled the thing with considerably more finesse and less expense.

Oh the doctor came over and said there was nothing particularly wrong with me, just maybe the flu or whatever it is that is

sweeping the populace at the present time. I swear, Chicago is getting worse than Bombay as far as public health is concerned. Joan also came over for dinner tonight, very exhausted and distraught. She is still at the mill and has this very stupid soldier's wife and 17-month-old boy living with her. She pays the girl as well as gives her room and board, in return for which this character takes care of the children and house in an incompetent fashion. So again Joan is up blank creek. I know you don't like me to swear in letters so I won't anymore, unless I feel very bad.

I really feel pretty good now, it being several hours since I started this letter and feel pretty silly about the doctor coming over. I guess that's the thing about being essentially healthy -- no matter what's wrong with you, it always disappears by the time the doctor arrives and you arrive at the doctor's. Which is one more reason why I hate doctors. I never get my money's worth.

In re-reading this I find it a notably silly and distraught letter, full of non-sequiturs for one thing. You know I'm not at all concerned with all this static in the social scene, in fact, I don't give a damn about anything except you, specifically the thought and possibility of seeing you again. Of course, a lot of my concern for you overflows on to Kathy. And I get frightfully irritated at events and persons which intrude on to preoccupation, which is in fact a continuous fantasy, with you.

Gosh I'm sleepy. I know it's a frightful waste of shipping space not to finish up the rest of the page but forgive me darling and ask the postal authorities to do likewise. All my love to you baby.

Jill

Cartoon captioned: the great silver theft. Stick figures (first one captioned: Oliver - note Air Corps insignia). (second one: Diana) (four more: others) (one with a black face, running with spoons in hand)

JILL TO AL APRIL 18, 1944 (B) V-MAIL

Darling --

I just got a card from Liz Evers, evidently written by the nurse, telling she had a girl last night, 7 1/2 pounds, named Louise. Isn't that wonderful? I just finished a stiff-upper-lip-much-unwanted-advice kind of letter to her. Won't Bill and you have fun puzzling over the mysteries of girl children. The card said no more but I presume Liz feels all right, under the circumstances. I keep having dreams that I am pregnant again, one of which had issue, another girl, this one named Elizabeth. And I had a dream last night, in which you came home and I was very happy, except that the only place we could go was a USO club, and all these girls kept trying to entertain you with dancing and jigsaw puzzles, when it was our patent desire to go off by ourselves. What a nightmare! But at least the dream had both of us in love and with good intentions to one another. It was just all those damn people trying to interfere. It's funny, because you had a dream of that order once yourself that you wrote me about.

It was a lovely day today and we walked to the park around the Rosenwald Museum and took some pictures with my nasty little Brownie, which probably won't come out. I also contracted to have a portrait of me made Saturday at this new studio on 57th St., run by some girls who evidently do good work from the samples they had up on the wall. But those pictures are so expensive, dear. Kathy's cost me about nine and so will these. I'm having small ones made too, so that you can carry Kathy's and mine around easily.

Honestly Al I don't know what to do and wish you would advise. You know Dotty disappeared utterly with the silver as I wrote yesterday and nobody will ever be able to find her because the police aren't the least bit interested. Well, I don't care because we didn't lose much, but they want me to split on the cost of the lie detector test, they being the Peevy's and the Kerner's and since it wasn't my idea and I undoubtedly would have opposed

such an outlay of money if they had consulted me, I don't see why I should have to fork out a third of 25. What would you do? They're all such dopes, so incompetent like so many of the people you characterize.

Irmie is still here and will stay until Monday, at which time I will return to solitary bliss until the next time somebody in the family who loves me very much decides to visit "that poor child". Was there ever a child more loved and more ungrateful than I? Now Day wants to give us a high chair and I politely refused. I just can't bear being pitied when I am really happy & rich.

Oh, Irmie just came in proudly bearing the missing silver fork. She found it behind the stove. Well, Dotty still did take a silver soup spoon, tea spoon and two stainless steel forks, the latter of which are the only things I part with, with a tear. May she wear them in good health.

Darling, it's close to ten and I must mail this. Now that Kathy is on four bottles I can dodge out at night and mail letters, which I haven't done since my days with Cooney. Poor baby, though. Her bellyache came back today. I feel so sorry for her -- she just screams and screams, usually in my ear because I pick her up to assuage her grief. But it isn't serious -- it just makes us both unhappy, the only thing that does make me happy is loving you. -- Lucky me - OOOXXX

AL TO JILL APRIL 18, 1944 V-MAIL

My darling Mrs. DeGrazia

Would that your title meant something in concrete and embraceable terms. I fell asleep last night recalling with particular poignancy and despair some of the very nice episodes in our early life together. They weren't great events or even very exciting. I remembered trees which blotched the sun on the sidewalks and streets, and you and me wandering around not doing much of anything. I remembered long white

legs in socks and mocassins, glinting hair & lots of it - and lighting a cigarette for you or letting you puff on mine begrudgingly. There was time, the imminence of work to be done and the half-conscious foreboding of war, but still we were carefree with each other. I think we did a good job of carving rays of sunshine out of a granite block. I think we'll always do so. I think we love each other that much. The experiences I recalled were not remote either - they are so very remarkable because of that. Every detail is as clear as yesterday. If I don't think of them all the time, it is not because I have forgotten them but because I have a certain amount of work to do, because the war and our participation in it are irrevocable facts, and because someday I know we can recall them together under happy circumstances, where each picture doesn't have the steel dart of melancholy piercing it.

I've been meeting a number of people more or less incidentally the past few days, both in my work and at the transient officers billet where I am staying. It is interesting to get the slants of all kinds of people who think very much the same way on many things despite the fact that they're seeing action in the war all over the world and in different branches. I played several games of ping-pong with a French aviator yesterday. He was from Paris and was a good player. He wasn't very steady though, which, after all, is not commonly supposed to be a virtue of French aviators, of all aviators. Afterwards we talked a while over two glasses of Monica, a not very good sweet red wine, dry wines being most difficult to find. Then I went with Captain Wardly, who used to be a production manager of the biggest journal presses in London, even bigger than the Trib, to a little wine shop wherein there were mostly Italian workers downing a glass on their way home from work. The place had an informal, tavern atmosphere which made it a relief from the usual bars for officers you find in any mess all over the world. Once there is a bottle and a couple of glasses in any little hole in the wall, an officers' bar comes into existence on the honor system - which is a device completely impractical for charging drinks. The officers invariably have to be assessed per capita;

everyone has taken a nip but didn't have change, or forgot to pay or something. However, it is all very friendly and nobody seems to give a damn. The liquor is as bad always, anyway, that nobody would pay immediately after drinking it.

With all my love, I am yours,

Al

Kisses to Kathy

AL TO JILL APRIL 19, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

It is already too late in the evening to write a very long letter, as I am tired and must get up early tomorrow to go on a trip. I haven't heard any news from you in well over a week now and will be very happy when it all finally comes through. I'm very lonely as usual. This game doesn't produce fast and long-term friends, but I suppose that I've been so changing everything in my life, that, except for where you are, the world is one big YMCA for me. I wish I could be playing with Kathy tonight, teaching her a soft-shoe dance or something.

To the slightly sad expression my puss habitually ports, this morning was added the glower of a hangover. Yesterday afternoon, I went with a group of men in assorted Italian, American and civilian dress to see a variety show put on by an Italian unit nearby. I drove out with an Italian captain in a leather-upholstered convertible, through beautiful country - and naturally I couldn't think of a convertible without thinking of you. The boys from this unit put on a fine show. They are famous and have a great esprit de corps. After the show we had a bang-up dinner with the general at the head of the table, wine flowing freely and guarded statements being bandied about. There were several well-cooked dishes, with the specialty, a sweet omelette at the end. The waiters carried in two great

plates of it, flaming beautifully, and each of us took a piece of the fiery food into our plates.

We talked a while after dinner and then the chief of staff cleared the tables for a drinking session. It was to be a game. To start with, everyone had to drink quickly two big glasses of wine. Then one at a time each man had to repeat a formula - two phrases regarding the unit -, and make certain gestures exactly in order, drinking one swallow, repeating exactly with the change, drinking two swallows, etc., until the glass was empty. Most funny - the man who errs starts all over. The game ends when the first man collapses. But we couldn't wait that long and finally rolled out on bandied legs when the hour got late. Only on the road home did things begin whirling about dizzily. This morning we weren't feeling too well. But I'll never forget the formula. Ask me for it sometime and I know I'll taste mi blanc (?). I had a very interesting time and would like to tell you all about it. Perhaps some day I can have you meet them all.

Tonight I felt in the mood for leaning back in a chair on the roof after dinner (not my famous roof) and watch the colored clouds over the darkening water and the swallows who dart silently over the city by the thousands. It was a wonderfully mellow feeling, tinged properly with the melancholy befitting a man who loves terribly a woman far, far away. You are my only girl and I wish I could give you a thousand kisses to prove it. Give my most tender hug to my brown-eyed Kathy.

Always your

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 21, 1944 V-MAIL

My darling --

I'm so sorry that I didn't get a chance to write you yesterday but I was surrounded. Who should call but Irene Keller of El Paso

and as she had about ten hours in between trains -- she was on her way back to Oregon from seeing her husband off in the East someplace -- I thought I'd be nice and meet her downtown. Which I did, not entirely without doing myself some good (don't I ever), by dragging her through the stores with me until I found a suitable raincoat. This is the coat I should have gotten with you a year or so ago. I really hate to buy important things now without you and am saving up the big spree that will reinstate me among the ranks of chic women (what do I mean, re-instate -- I never was there in the first place) until you get home. The raincoat is very Vogue-y looking and I will send you a picture of me in it as soon as I have it shortened. It's not at all like the officer's trench coats which women seem to lap up like cats these days. I decided against that rather too-cute style of dressing quite a while ago. You look like you and I'll look like me and we'll meet in bed, or something. But how I longed for you yesterday as I tried on dozens of horrid coats, not knowing which one to pick. I'm not altogether sure about this one -- it's very glossy and sharp looking and probably won't keep out the rain but it was the best Field's had to offer, and it must be Field's since I can charge there. I've decided that when you do come back I'm going to move my clothes up a price bracket or two. I'm a little tired of junior miss and with my hair so long and everything, I think I could manage to look *[more]* like a Vogue place than a cross between a pained schoolgirl and a bedraggled hausfrau. But I want to wait to spend our patrimony on Narcissistic enterprises. Anyway, getting back to Irene, I bought her a vile martini at Stouffer's and then we came home for a brief glimpse of the baby, whom Irmie stayed with, and then she had to leave again. It was odd seeing her -- it brought me a painful reminder of you more than anything else. The kids are in Oregon at a school and eventually they'll move back to Texas, she guesses.

Then Bill dropped over last night for a short while on his way to the Law School to pick up a date. He was in rare good form and amused Irmie and me no end. I still think he's a funny guy which I've said countless times before. Sometimes I like him very

much and other times he dismays me with that odd unbending quality he has about certain matters, mostly of the intellect. Anyway, I didn't get a chance to write and not much a chance to sleep either. I read till about 12 and then just about was getting off to a good night's sleep when our little dream child woke up, circa 2 AM, clamoring for food, which I gave her and then couldn't get back to sleep until about five. At seven she wanted more. This has really been a terrible week for us both. Up until today she's had terrible stomach aches -- anyway she had screaming spells which terrified us all. And she still has dysentery. But she is hungry as a dog, mostly because it goes in one end and right out the other, and then also because I've had to cut out one component of her formula, dextro-maltose if that means anything to you. it's a sugary substance and the lack of it makes her hungry and ultimately, I hope, will have the effects of stopping her up, to put it coarsely. But her malaise has had one good effect -- it's made her so hungry she eats her cereal once again. She is also so hungry she cries because of that, too, so when I am not feeding her I am brewing tea to appease her hunger and also to soothe her battered innards. She is really not sick, you understand. No fever or anything. This is just one of the minor afflictions of infancy but it keeps up all hopping and she gets hungry at such odd hours during the night that I don't get much sleep. Actually I feel very peppy today, though, and managed to clean out one closet which was beginning to look like an old wine cellar.

Irmie is downtown today, seeing the sight of the city with a friend she has here. I'm relieved to have somebody do it for me and also to have some time to myself.

Kathy however still continues to prosper. She is getting more hair and it curls a bit, what there is of it. Her eyes are still a funny indeterminate color and her lips are plump and firm. She is making a weird assortment of noises at the moment, apparently in amusement. She growls like a dog, mumbles and shouts. She is getting very sharp about playing with things and sucking her thumb. I can't imagine why people ever object to thumb-sucking. To me it is a great relief to have her do it, since

it gets her mind off her appetite and whatever else troubles her. She is still a great laughing girl when her tummy doesn't hurt her, but doesn't seem quite as prodigious now as she did two months ago. Anyway she isn't walking or helping me with the dishes. But she really is quite wonderful, if only because she is our child. Sometimes I look at her and get the funniest feeling in the pit of my stomach, as if she was still there. It makes one marvel at how close one really is to the biological level of existence. I think that feeling about one's child can best be described as the passive counterpart of the desire you feel for your lover. Anyway, it's very visceral. If it's not universally felt, it is only because sexual desire is also not universal among women of a certain class anyway. So many cultural factors intervene -- prudery or false notions about sex equality.

But my desire for you abounds on all levels -- visceral, intellectual, spiritual, fiscal (i.e, I want you to balance the checkbook this month). Yet I don't despair. I know nothing can keep us apart ultimately, and besides there is the tangible hope, held out to me by Old Army wife Keller, that your trick may only be for 18 months. Six more months isn't so bad when we've sweated out a whole year already. It seems amazing and appalling, doesn't it, that we've lived this whole year apart? And wonderful that, at the end of it, we are so much in love and so much more assured than ever before that we have found the good life in one another. Anyway, that's how I feel -- kind of washed and virtuous because I've found all satisfaction in being married to you and having your baby.

All my love to you, darling, and I mean it all.

Jill

JILL TO AL APRIL 22, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Two letters from you today and life was so chaotic I didn't get a

chance to read them for simply hours. I went back to sleep after feeding the baby this morning and when I woke up, everything descended upon me at once: the janitor to fix the faucets, two neighbors in to chat socially; the sudden realization I was supposed to have my picture taken over on 57th and the wild dash over to break the appointment because Ed was coming down to take the exams and I had to escort him to Rosenwald; the snatching of the bike from the bikeman, in return for six ducats; and then Master Ed himself. I took him with reluctant feet where Rosenwald and the Law School meet and deposited him to an afternoon of ascertaining false syllogisms. I hope he does well on these aptitude tests. He himself is quite indifferent and even embarrassed about the whole thing because, as he said, nobody but the prudes of Lakeview are taking this test and if they saw him, one of the hoods of Lakeview, doing same, he would be subjected to some ridicule. Ed is an example of a good man dragged down to the level of the crowd. I wonder if he'll be able to make the break. He is really so funny in his role of the high school hoodlum that I can only laugh along with him, not having enough moral integrity on my own hook to chide him. So his fate is in the hands of the Gods. I boned him up briefly on the meaning of a syllogism and how to detect when they are false, only confusing him further because I couldn't remember myself very well what the whole thing was about. We arrived fashionably late, having stopped off for a coke and a bright new pencil at Stineways. Mom had called up frantically at the last moment that Ed had forgotten his pencil., He said no he hadn't, and produced a two-inch stub to verify it. Then he wondered whether he had done the right thing -- the notice from school had said to bring a pencil with eraser, and Ed wondered if that meant to bring a pencil and an eraser, or just a pencil with an eraser on top. All of which leads me to question whether he would not be better off in some cozy branch of the armed forces, like the Barrage Balloons. We dragged the bike over and I rode home, after a brief gander around the Social Science building to see if I couldn't find somebody to talk to before I returned to scenes of domesticity. I had the funniest feeling riding back home. In a thrice I was wheeling through several

distinct phases of my life -- school, the Army (for I passed a column of raincoated ASTB's marching very well for a change and singing loudly) and then back to the A and P and baby. It is funny, and perhaps not a very good thing for one's psyche, to live one's life so disparately, to have so many roles and so many different pasts. Even the presence of Irmie brings me back to a childhood which is both remote and distasteful -- I can't understand how I existed for so many years in such an atmosphere of overprotection and still live to tell the tell -- objectively, I mean.

And today I also got a letter from a boy named Bob whom I knew at Smith when he was at Princeton. He is the one who has loved me unrequitedly for so long. Ours was a most innocuous relationship I hasten to add. I had gotten a Christmas card from him this Xmas so I let him know about the baby. He is in Italy too. I mention it as further proof of the [*illegible*] of life if one were to succumb, as J. P. Marquand's man did, to the confusion inherent in the proliferation of roles and situations attending the life of the urbane individual. Fortunately I am too well oriented by the presence of a very real and demanding child to feel anything but fatigue at the demands of the outside world and wonder at the fact that I have done so much in a life that I thought was dedicated to doing very little.

Kathy is her charming old self today, very hungry but bright as a tadpole. I just arose from a couch of pain, upon which she now rests. I had put her on the living room couch because I knew she must be bored with buggy and bed, it being too rainy to take her out. Then I lay down beside her and she proceeded to tweak my nose, dig at my lips (let her suck her own damn thumb) and remove my eyeglasses. Ergo the pain. She is now asleep after her labors, resting in the same innocence that a Chicago copper must experience after working on a reluctant felon. She certainly is a remarkably apt child, if I really correctly how sluggish were our two handsome nephews at her age. She also gets prettier every day and it will be no surprise to me if she turns out to be a raving beauty, making the old lady look faded and lumpy by comparison. But I shall probably project

mightily, making myself happy and an awful mess out of her. No I won't either. That one book I read on psychology will save us all.

Ed will return with all the brood tomorrow, to preside at her initiation into Christendom, or whatever the baptism means. Ed and I both view this event with great cynicism, but it will make Mom and Irmie happy, and as long as someone else does the cooking, won't do me much harm. The event takes place at three, bottle time in this household, so I shan't be surprised if our ravenous child takes a good bite out of the priest's hand. I can't say that I'll be sorry either. It's all a lot of crap if you ask me.

And speaking of crap and also of pots calling the kettles black, your one letter this morning of April 6 detailed your discussion with T.V. I don't know why you think "it will make me feel better to know that he prefers Dewey since I consider ex-rep. Smith a veritable found of political inexperience. He should criticize Willkie! I might expect something like that from T.V. I always thought his academic background only served to lead him to any number of political deadends, so it is only natural that it, and whatever God hath wrought within the Smith dome, should lead him to the greatest political deadhead of them all. You can keep your towel if Dewey gets elected but you certainly won't keep your wife, since I shall vamoose with our child to some happy land where the editorials are written by Democrats (New Deal) and Organization Republicans are only used for clay pigeons. And you can tell that military superior of yours that he couldn't even square off in an argument with my child Kathy and win if he were back home.

Returning to pleasanter subjects than the possibility of Mr. Dewey being the next president, my bike has new tubes which I hope won't explode this time and it's altogether pleasant to have it in use.

So much letter and so little loving! But I do just the same.

OOOXXX

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 22, 1944 V-MAIL

Jill, my darling,

This is beautiful country and there is fine weather in which to see it. I'm beginning to feel like a tourist after having hibernated uncomfortably all winter. The temperature is perfect at about a sunny 65o, I should say. No doubt the hot weather will come and I'll be beefing again but I hope there'll be a compensating breeze as we move swiftly northward.

The news this morning of the formation of a new Italian cabinet is good (in a minor sort of way for the world war).. It should mean an acceleration of the Italian contribution to the war, though first things come first and we most need driveways on which we can accelerate. The greatest army in the world is of no use unless it's employed. However, I think we can look forward to the near future with some confidence. Naturally we can't point to visible evidences of German collapse with great certainty and must utilize that old cliché "But it stands to reason". Anyhow, to me it stands to reason that Germany can't last much longer. And I think as part of the peace terms, I ought to insist upon seeing you and Kathy immediately. Perhaps I don't say often enough how happy I am that we brought her into the family right now. In a way it is a wonderful kind of cooperation between us despite the fact that we are apart. It is a natural continuation of our relationship despite hell and high water.

I've been looking through the art objects this particular Italian civilization produces with Kathy in mind. I would like to buy her a set of gaily colored paintings of people in costumes and animals that could be hung very nicely in her room when she has one. I think they're just the thing for a little girl to like and they are very

decorative. The problem of money worries me somewhat at the moment. I have a week to go before payday and haven't much money left; yet perhaps I won't be able to wait a week. We'll see.

I wish I could get some mail from you. It's been two weeks now since my ear has been bent by tales of love and home. Certainly before another week is out, I should have it all. I've been trying to buy a colored summer blouse with various indigenous figurines on it for you but haven't had any success so far. Cotton goods are impossible to obtain in any shop. Perhaps, driving through the country, I can talk some farm woman out of her shirt. It will have to be a Sunday because otherwise they run around somewhat ragged.

I'm feeling well, darling, except for that part of the corpus humanus that nostalgia rules. This spring completes the cycle of seasons we've spent apart, and for ever, I believe. Each one has been worse than the others. The potential best is the worst (according to Greek philosophy, the biggest virtues have as their opposites, the greatest vices). Fortunately, it will be the last.

All my love,

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 24, 1944

Darling --

Monday

More V-mails from you this morning, the latest April 15. I just re-read all your letters since the first of the month because the V-mails are always in such jumbled order and I thought that, by re-reading them, I could figure out where you are and where you came from. Unfortunately the powers of my analytical mind are more or less nullified by an imperfect knowledge of geography.

I didn't get to write you yesterday because oh God, what a day it was. Kathy got inducted into Catholicism -- I looked at her in bed last night and wondered if I dared to sleep in the same room with her any more -- and everybody else got mildly tight. The family came down around two and my little angel was borne off to St. Thomas's around the corner by Mom and Irmie, vigilant Catholics for the day -- and Eddy, the reluctant and cynical godfather. Dad, Vic and I stayed home, the former to read the paper and make snide remarks about priests, Vic and I to make hors-d'oeuvres and eat them all ourselves. Finally, after an intolerably long hour, the little party returned home, Kathy quelled and tear-streaked and pathetically grateful for her late bottle. It seemed it was a mass baptism -- there were four or five other little babies and ours had the singular honor of being the only one awake, so vociferously so that the priest had to repeat everything three times and then finally gave up, saying to Mom later that he had too much competition. "I told you she'd cry," I said smugly. She got salt in her mouth, which led me to make a dirty remark about possible bacterial life on the priest's fingers, and holy water on her head. Then we all drank chianti which Dad bought in lovely bottles, sharpened with vodka to cut the grease. Incidentally the current domestic grade of chianti is just awful. Then Joan came over with Mike and joined in the merriment. We had a goulash-like dinner of liver cooked in sour cream with noodles and ate a good cake that Mom baked. Then the boys left, followed shortly afterwards by Mom and Dad. Then Virginia came down and us girls sat around talking till about ten, when Joan gathered up Mike and crept home. Poor Mike was definitely out of the limelight so I spent much time holding and loving him. Hell hath no greater frigidity (at least in the Dantean portions) than that of a grandmother for a baby that is not her grandchild. Irmie and Mom kept whispering how inferior Mike was to Kathy and I really felt sorry for the little tot. He is such a sweet subdued child -- his cry is a low wail, not the great ear-splitting variety generated by our own self-assertive, rage-type infant. Kathy may have more personality than any child extant, according to all her admirers, but she is also a willful little brat, come cereal time anyway. However, I am

learning how to handle her, or rather, how to be handled by her. Now I wish Joan and I had lived together so I could take care of Mike and give him some of the affection that Joan would like to give but can't, lacking time. Of course, I suspect Joan would not spend as much time with her children even if she were financially able to do so. We have quite divergent philosophies about the functions and needs of the educated woman. I am quite convinced that the woman of a high general educational level can put her training, no matter what the field, to its best use taking care of her children (*footnote*: if she wants children in the first place). It is silly to talk about division of labor and getting "trained people" to take care of one's children while the mother in question pursues her own field of interest. Nobody is better "trained" to take care of a baby than its own mother, assuming a modicum of brains on the mother's part and accessibility to knowledge of child care. And as far as the intellectual needs of the educated woman, I do admit that the present system does not provide very well for their satisfaction while she is fulfilling the role of mother and housewife. In the first place, I hold with my brother's obsession that a lot of the problem is architectural. The houses we live in are so unsuited to our needs -- they are filled with structural gee-gaws rendering cleaning difficult, if not impossible. Rooms are too big or too small. Storage space is insufficient and dining and cooking space is usually divided so as to make cooking and serving the most onerous of tasks. And even when you can afford help, it's unsatisfactory because the help is incompetent or because you don't particularly like your privacy invaded by people outside the family circle. Of course, all these problems are quite solvable -- community cleaning women and the like -- so that ideally a woman could take care of her children and her home and still have time left over to do part-time professional work, if she so desired, or to read and dawdle in the sun. (This is all assuming that the woman doesn't have to work for pay.)

God what got me started on that. Virginia was just down and we are plotting how to leave our respective families to see The Lodger and Higher and Higher tonight. Naturally we don't want

to see Higher and Higher but it is a double feature., The Lodger isn't supposed to be very good either but I'm nuts about murder pictures and besides, I haven't been to a movie for three months now. I saw one after Kathy came while the nurse was still here.

I was pleased to hear you were buying me gloves but they sound expensive. Maybe they'll be worth it though. I haven't bought gloves here either for very long so don't know the current market prices.

Kathy is lying on the couch, waiting for her three PM bottle and pulling Mr. Panda's ear. Gosh, I never thought when I bought that for her that she'd be playing with it so soon. She has already removed the neat bow tie he wore and has several times pulled him down on her face, creating confusion and sorrow in our little home. He is nearly as big as she, and quite a bit fatter. She has been so good the past three days. Her sickness is all past and while she is hungry, she has learned to be a little more temperate in her demands. I guess that first starvation feeling after illness has passed.

I'm enclosing some pictures we took in the park last Wednesday. I hope you are keeping all the pictures I send you because I hate having duplicates made -- so few of them are worth it, they are mostly good because they show us, if not in a very favorable light -- and someday when you bring them all home I'll make an album. I have one album of pictures of you and will make one of pictures of me and Kathy if you will keep those I send you.

Well, I must go feed Kathy now. Be good and healthy and don't take no more wooden nickels from T.V. (I'm still glowering over that.) I wish I could prescribe for your morning sickness but I don't think my experiences would be of much help. They told me to cut down on liquids, which is probably just the wrong thing for you.

All my love -- Jill

JILL TO AL APRIL 25, 1944 V-MAIL

Sweetheart --

I have just spent myself in a maniacal burst of cleansing activity. I woke up this morning too soon for one who had thrown away her substance in a double feature last night and, groggy with fatigue, I proceeded to whip about the apartment, sponging tattle-grey surfaces with a deadly combination of trisodium phosphate and water. The results are that the surfaces are still tattle-tale grey but my hands are quite clean, like a skeleton's. The place smells of wax, however, so it seems clean at least. I've decided to see if I can't do without a cleaning woman for a while. Not that I plan to save great gobs of money that way -- if I do it will only be a by-product, but actually a cleaning woman once a week isn't very much help because I have to clean up every day anyway, the way I throw my clothes and diapers around so prodigally every night before I get to bed. And then, cleaning women these days never do the cleaning you want them to do anyway. They won't wash windows, scrub the woodwork or anything like that. So I'll just bide my time until I lose this sudden burst of energy anyway. It's a good thing I got it in the first place, since while Irmie was here I lapsed into my old lazy ways and I was afraid I'd never get back into the old routine again.

So much for cleaning, a dull subject at best. What I'd really like to do is move since I despair of ever getting this place back into the pristine shape it was in early last winter, after my decorating labors of the fall and before Kathy came. But I guess I won't. That would probably be more trouble than spring cleaning. And in this morning's frenzy I took off the white and inky leatherette top that was our desk. Took is a mild word. I ripped it off, hoping to find a treasure trove of varnished mahogany underneath, the way they always do in home magazines. What was underneath resembled nothing so much as the nether side of a wet log. So now I am faced with the hardship of planing the whole thing down or else covering it up with more leatherette. I guess I'll just forget about the whole thing for a while, like so many of my

other decorating projects. That will be a little difficult, considering I have to look at this dank unwholesome top every time I write to you.

Kathy is lying on the couch again, regarding me pitifully. She really has changed a lot in the last week, since she was sick. All of a sudden she has acquired the ability to lie awake for hours, amusing herself with thumb-sucking and playing with the panda or with her covers. In the past three days I don't think she's cried once out of boredom or whatever else she used to cry about. She's really learning how to use her hands and her powers of observation, and it's funny to watch her pluck absent-mindedly at Panda's ears, finally to doze off with him lying on top of her erotically. Since they are about the same size it looks as if we had spawned an odd pair of twins. This new stage in her development is certainly a gratifying one, since now she combines all the charm of a young baby with some of the resourcefulness of an older one. Last night she went to sleep at eight and didn't wake up till 7:30 this morning. I was able to go to the movies with Virginia because Nin, Virginia's husband, consented to come down and look at her every half hour. The movies weren't worth all the bother, needless to say. The Lodger was just awful -- it wasn't enough plot to work out a 15-minute radio show -- but I came off luckier than you with Higher and Higher. We got in at the end and stayed just long enough for the beginning to see the fabulous Mr. Sinatra, who certainly is a sad sack though his voice is very good. It was rainy going to the movies and it reminded me of all the windy rainy and cold walks we used to take, as dogged as mailcarriers, to get our Saturday night flicker. The pictures were usually awful and occasionally one of us would insist on walking out, bearing the other kicking and screaming. Yet it would always be fun, mostly because we knew we could go home to each other. We'll probably never be able to dash out so light-heartedly to the movies again -- from here on in there will always be the problem of getting somebody to stay with the kid or kids, but I hardly think we'll view that as a detriment. Think of all the cold evenings we'll be able to spend sitting around with jigsaw

puzzles, with perhaps a last-minute uneasy dash to the corner for ice cream, just to make us feel glad and relieved to be home again. And then when Kathy gets older we'll be able to take her out to the movies with us, that is, if Disney resumes his art after the war.

Kathy is being so patient and sweet about waiting for her three o'clock bottle. I could be decent and give it to her earlier, but all of a sudden we've gotten on some kind of schedule -- it took me four months to find one I could stick to -- and now I hate to screw it up unless she is really desperate. And you should hear her laugh when I kiss her ear. She's developed a really loud ecstatic "Heh, heh." And although she shows no inclination to sit up, she has developed a rather surprising ability to stand up briefly when I'm holding her upright in my lap for the burp. She rears up on her toes like a dancer, gives a shout of glee and then collapses back into my arms. Maybe it means she'll walk soon, although I don't see how she can walk before she sits. She'll probably just break from a crouch into running and won't stop until somebody lassoes her.

I'm getting sleepy again and find this a pretty dull letter, so I'll stop before I dismay you with my mundaness (one syllable missing, I know).

We both send you all our love, mixed in with a big kiss from me and a little drooley one from Kathy.

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 25, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest,

A thousand apologies and kisses for not having written in the last two or three days. I've been on the go constantly with nary a mail box to be found. This morning, returned to the fold, I was overjoyed to find that about eight of your letters were on my

desk, the first from you in about three weeks. There were also two Time mags and an alumni bulletin. Now this is no letter and I'll write a long one tonight, but at the moment I must rush through a lot of work despite the fact that I feel tired and would rather sleep. Your letters were very sweet and wonderfully detailed. I don't think my heart could stand any more though. It pounded like a bass drum for an hour while I read through them. I wish I could see Kathy as you describe her. She seems to be doing marvelously despite (or perhaps because of) the lack of a male parent's presence.

I must get back to work now. I hope you don't mind the brevity of this note. It's a short kiss, but a heartfelt one.

as always, you

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 26, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Another day, another duller, or something. Life for some reason has taken on a hazy grey pallor this week, to match the weather outside no doubt. I haven't been doing much except clean the house since Irmie left, and while Irmie was here I kept wishing she would go away so I could have some time to myself. Isn't that always the way? But I really don't feel justified lounging and reading during the day -- Virginia and I talked about this and we agreed that somehow one gets the compulsion to work like a dog (doing very little incidentally) so that you feel that your leisure is earned, when you get it. So by the time I get to reading the paper I'm usually too tired to do much about it. Well, this morning I went back to bed after feeding Kathy at seven. I never feel that anything is more important than that -- thank God I'm not that obsessed. Last night I did her wash and finally got to read Disorder and Early Sorrow, which you had talked about in one of your letters. I can remember many incidents in

my early girlhood comparable to that little girl's unrequited love affair. I was always getting crushes on men long before anybody ever gave me credit for having any emotion except familial affection -- and little did they know how basically unresponsive I was in that sphere. I guess I was rather spoiled. And another thing -- few people ever realize what hatred a child can conceive for people who thwart and humiliate him. I can remember only with loathing the family doctor and my Unk's lawyer, both of whom gave me playful spanks at one time or another. Both guys are dead now, little realizing that not even death has redeemed them, in my eyes anyway. And speaking of passing on, as genteel folk would have it, Renee's mother-in-law, with whom you once engaged in a spirited game of lotto that first Thanksgiving, kicked off and I just finished a painful note of condolence to Renee and Ben. How I hate condolence notes and the folkways of the genteel society into which I was born that requires them. I wrote Day a harsh letter to the effect of what the hell do I care when she wrote me relating the sad tidings and ordering me to write Renee. But ultimately the old habits get the upper hand, despite my dislike for the custom and my more-than-dislike of the Mitler family.

I just got the janitor to lend me a heavy plane and some sandpaper so one of these days I'll get around to working on our battered desk. That damn janitor talks my ear off and of course I listen politely since it would be impolitic to do otherwise. Little does he know with what malice I regard him as I fix my deceptively dulcet blue eyes on his grimy puss. Little does he know how he has figured in murder plots on Ridgewood Court. He's so damn fussy too. He just made me take my bike in from the hall, which means I'll have to take it through the house to put it in the basement and I just mopped the floors.

Maxine and Laura Berquist are coming over tonight which promises a dull and catty evening. And I want to go to bed early because if the weather is nice tomorrow Kathy and I are going out to Flossmoor, to amuse the MacEldowney family with Kathy and to amuse Maw with the sturdy Flossmoor horses. Last night

I got to bed early -- before eleven for the first time in years it seemed, without sleeping pills either. It felt terrible too. I kept waking up all night long. I guess I was never made for the restful life. I did have a dream about you and it was so interlarded with frettings and anxieties - I heard Kathy go to the bathroom about one-thirty and I spent the rest of the night half-consciously debating whether to get up and change her or just let her rot in it -- that I can't remember it. It was pleasant and sexy -- I remember that much. Do you find it awfully hard to do without a woman, specifically me? (Do you mind my being so personal?) I know I do.

That erotic train of thought was broken by Sally Steele coming over for a visit. She is one of Peg's daughters, the one that used to go with Karl Hess. She is a very attractive gal married to a rich and from his pictures unattractive English Jew and they follow the races. Nice work which I don't want.

Some one of these days you'll come home and get sore as hell at me for ruining your child's ear for music. But I can't help it dear. I know I can't sing but Kathy loves to hear me anyway. The worst part of it is I don't know the words to any song ever written, with the possible exception of Rockabye Baby, so that I end up every song, be it Brahm's Lullaby (which Libby McNeill Homogeneized Baby Foods very obligingly sent me the words and music of) to I couldn't Sleep a Wink Last Night with a dissonant series of toot-toot-toots. Actually, she seems to enjoy the toots best of anything. However, I'm sure I'm preparing her for a happy marital life by kissing her so much. It's really surprising how a child naturally loves to be kissed if you start her off right, i.e., by making her fond of the kisser. I kiss her any place my fancy leads me and she positively roars with delight. No, no man has kissed her yet and I'll save her for you, if that is your wish. I'm sure I don't know any man who wants to kiss her - - your brothers would consider it sissy and Bill probably thinks it bad for babies to be kissed.

Darling, I have to go out now and pick up my raincoat which is being shortened by the horrid little tailor at an exorbitant price.

All my love to you as always,

Jill

Cartoons: woman in heavy coat, captioned "me in my sharp new raincoat"

baby crying: "Kathy, without raincoat"

AL TO JILL APRIL 26, 1944

Dear Love,

Sardinia

However badly it is scrawled, now is the time for a lengthy letter to you. I feel comparatively relaxed after a day of strenuous writing and completely indebted to you for the half dozen letters that came yesterday. I dragged myself into the bar an hour ago to read them again over a glass of Moscato. After I finished them, I walked down to the nearby shop of a woodworker who had promised to complete two boxes for me by 6 o'clock. They were finished, the sum of 1400 lire left my pocket, and I came back to my room with them. They are unusually nice carved wood affairs, using two colors of walnut wood. A Sardinian figurehead is carved on the top in addition to all the other carving. I think you'll like them. They are well suited for cigarettes. I'll take them along with me on the plane and send them home later.

I've enjoyed these last three weeks, even though I've been working hard. The trip through the country was especially nice. I had as a driver a cowpuncher from Wyoming named Bill MacAllister who knew how to keep quiet and yet was intelligent when it was called for. I took some pictures too and hope I can send them to you before long also. One of them shows me a naturale with a towel on the edge of a tiny pool. It doesn't show how cold the water was. If you could have seen the mountain it was flowing down from you could imagine it. Needless to say, Bill is a nice guy but only one other body could make the scenes

complete.

I shall be sorry to go back, even if to my nice roof. Life is grim here as elsewhere but it has a pace to it and the people are very interesting.

My hours have become peculiar tonight, as usual. I ate a hearty meal and went down to my room, intending to write more. Instead I lay down, as of yore in Chicago and slept for a couple of hours. Then I woke with an effort, read a little more of Dos Passos' third book and am now finishing this letter because I must leave very early in the morning. Dos Passos has certainly a sad collection of characters in his book. I honestly can't see his point. I meet people who I think are nice almost everywhere. I think I've met as many as he, yet I can't find his grounds for despair. He is almost the hackneyed cynical idealist type, wanting the moon and hating any and all things that offer themselves on earth in place of the moon.

I took a walk with a civilian named Winperter, who is passing through, last evening. It took us all around the city through some Roman ruins which echoed silently over a calm sweeping vista down to the sea and some fine new modern buildings. He is office manager of Time, Inc., a youngish-looking, bespectacled man, resembling Fred Astaire, and a pretty keen fellow.

A couple of days ago, I bought a silly little doll in traditional costume from a small village to send to Kathy. I'm going to have my packing problems when I get back. And speaking of packing problems, as soon as we go into summers, I'm going to send my winter clothing home. I'm sure I won't need it again overseas. That's a pleasant thought for a nice girl. And I won't need it in the winter either with you around to keep me warm.

I enjoyed the two clippings you sent me, the book ad, and the Kuh column. The first, as you say, was breathtaking, comparable to the open nihilism of Nietzsche in its open, flagrant advocacy of buying books to fill bookshelves. And the

pictures, so pre-par, so absurd. Pursuing their own logic, however, I'd go to a second-hand bookstore and get all the best books in the world for 20¢ a copy.

I'm surprised at the attitude of Ed's teacher. He looks such an angel in the picture he sent me. She has obviously no idea of what it takes in a person to get something out of college. She should have seen Buzz at a little later period before he settled down to work. On my own part opinions conflicted and I probably would have met with the opposition of one or two.

You want an opinion on Kathy's personality. All I can say is wonderful, just like Jill's. She obviously is hard to feed because she'd rather prolong the pleasure of sitting in your lap. You'd never get a spoonful in me under such circumstances. Any rational being will do it. Later on she'll probably insist on dinner music instead of your lap. Anyhow, leisurely feeding is a fine continental trait that should go well with a properly brought-up young lady. On her being spoiled, I think the introduction of the masculine element will help in the discipline. Then you won't be considered inconsistent. Anyhow I don't believe she really is spoiled, from what you say. Her rejection of certain foods is less important than the rejection of change in the manner of taking the food. Again to her credit, her initial acceptance of the change, followed by her later rejection, seems to indicate that she has weighed the merits of both methods and has been led to prefer the bottle.

For my own part, the smooth gurgle of the bottle is definitely superior to the jerky, lumpy-choking thrust of the metallic spoon. You can't say much until she begins to train on the toilet. Then a comparison with little Mike will be more useful. I really enjoy your descriptions though. Next to the real thing, they are tops. My pictures of her are getting old; she must be more lovelier than ever after these couple of months.

Did I tell you I solved my financial trouble in a poker game the other night. These men were from a very small group in a town. I removed forty-five dollars from circulation at their insistence.

Now I have a few bucks to tide me over to the first of May.

I'm looking for the Russians to take Sebastopol for Mayday. They're so considerate about national holidays.

Is your circle of friends really interested in the war? Has Ollie changed any by his escapade in army life? I suppose most of the people around you don't really know what it is to get a sinking feeling in the stomach occasionally which is directly traceable to the war.

I'll have a sinking feeling in my head in the morning, if I don't get some more sleep. It's 1:30. To hell with the spring, darling. There'll be plenty of it when I get home.

I love you always,

Al

ALFRED had devised a plan that had the approval of Greenlees and the others, to go to Sardinia and organize political intelligence all over the place, meanwhile peering about, here and there. Sardinia had been occupied by a couple of British torpedo boats in September, a week after the Germans withdrew. There had been almost no political information coming out of it. You may not hear from me for a little while, he writes Jill, his signal that she has now learned, that he is off to an unsettled situation. His orders, which he writes himself and which Greenlees signs, give him leeway to do just about anything he can get away with, and far more than he can possibly achieve. Send in a weekly Report, by secret cable if needs be; he is authorized transportation to visit the whole of the Island; to arrange to get regular reports from agents at all principal centers, paying them 5000 lira per month, less if part-time or members of the Committees of Anti-Fascist Concentration; to see to it that copies of all political pamphlets and regular press issues are channeled to "D Section," Naples, and set up well-located receptors for all of our 'bumpf.'

He wants to go by boat so he visits the Headquarters of the

Italian Navy, and asks to be placed upon the first ship leaving for Sardinia. Soon he finds himself aboard an Italian cruiser and enjoying life at sea. There is almost nothing to fear by sea or by air; the only potential enemy threat is from the Italian North and Southern France and little had been signalled from those quarters; the Luftwaffe has more valuable naval targets at Anzio. Soon he lands in Sardinia, which is run by the Italian government, occupied by Italian troops and used in scattered localities for guiding and landing Allied aircraft.



Al (smiling, in the middle) and others aboard an Italian cruiser on the way from Naples to Sardinia.

He checks in on the local Psychological Warfare representative, Major Siepman, and meets an American civilian in uniform who is running the radio station, Guido d'Agostino, a writer. The senior American nabob officer must know of his presence, he hears, and this turns out to be a Colonel Doyle who is of the Air Force and who has set himself up at the most impressive building in Cagliari. When Alfred opens the massive door to his office, he is amazed to see this figure seated in the center of a kind of ballroom at a massive desk. He doesn't want to offend him by a salute; they don't salute any more in the Air Force, do they?

Oh, yes they do -- when they want to. This hulk had probably been slumping there in that enormous gilded chair imagining himself as the Duce and wondering why he was not commanding legions of troops and planes. So when this strange Lieutenant manages the fifty meters of approach and does not salute, but introduces himself in a civilian-like manner, the Colonel refuses to acknowledge him until he returns to the entrance to the chamber and approaches him again, this time in a proper military fashion with a correct salute. The Lieutenant, astounded, does as ordered, of course, and comes back, gives and receives the Colonel's salute. He is so full of rage, however, that he can

only speak in mutterings and hisses from behind clenched teeth, and has to repeat himself because the Colonel cannot understand him. Which he does, still hissing, but more clearly. The Colonel looks at the piece of paper containing the Special Orders, and hands it back. He has nothing particular to say but the Lieutenant doesn't want to listen. He has had his chance to receive him on friendly terms, and wants to pull his rank. So he gets the treatment that his rank requires and nothing more. He can sink back into his silent stupidity. Alfred snaps him a smart salute such as he has never before received -- and which would be interpreted as a gesture of contempt by some -- swivels about-face, and clomps off.

JILL TO AL APRIL 28, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

I didn't get to write you yesterday because I went out to Flossmoor to visit Mac, the weather being clement. We had a nice afternoon, for it was afternoon when I got there. The baby slept most of the time, having yelled like fury on arrival, and Mac and I sunned and walked and talked. Gosh, every time I spend a short time in the country like that I get the most intense yearning for a country place of our own. It seems that all my life I have just been making short dashes into the countryside, always to return by nightfall unsatiated, however weary. Last night I was pretty tired but couldn't get a cab at the 53rd St. IC station so had to lug her home. I know it's a short walk but it feels like miles when you have to carry a wiggly 16-pound baby. The night before Laura came over and it was dull, as expected. Laura isn't very interesting after the conversation is exhausted of people and institutions that she knows. The same applies to Dietz, who dropped over for a moment this afternoon. Fortunately I was on my way out to the market and she was going in another direction. Aren't I nasty?

Oh, and I went to the dentist today, a new one. He's a German refugee that Virginia knows, conveniently located in the Hyde

Park bank building. We spent a happy half hour admiring the work done by my ex -- Dr. Baim who is now yanking them in the Army. He took X-rays, as they always do, and will probably find that I have to have new inlays made to cover up all the wrongs done by the previous Men in my Life.

Today is Kathy's 1/3 birthday and she celebrated it by crying for an hour on end. Tomorrow I take her to her doctor (what a gay mad whirl is mine) and he will probably find she is undernourished, as I suspect. Of course she looks wonderful and all kinds of people stop me when I take her places, to gurgle and admire her. Then they look at me, all straggly-haired and harassed, and wonder how such a pale-faced ascetic-looking creature could have such a fat dark and rosy-cheeked baby. Maybe I should carry your picture around on my lapel, like a defense worker's badge, just to show that I haven't kidnapped her from somebody.

I'm in an evil mood and suddenly remember why. I was late to the dentist and preparing to leap upon my bike to save minutes, discovered the tire was flat. So I ran all the way over there and then discovered I didn't remember his name, only the floor I thought he was on. But he wasn't on that floor, though there was a dentist there who looked surprised when I dashed in announcing myself confidently. I spent about ten minutes running up and down the treacherous service stairs and finding all kinds of people in the presumed location, like osteopaths, masseurs and insurance agents. Finally I read the directory of the building, which is a large one, until I came to a three-syllable German name and sure enough, he was him. So you see, I have not lost my talent for losing my grip.

It's love I guess. I certainly do miss you and wish you were here to love me and keep me warm at night and make the baby stop crying and get me the hell out of Ridgewood Court, now that spring is here. And now I have to wash the supper dishes and some pants, altogether probably. Kathy sends a big kiss and I send many more too.

Yours ever,

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 28, 1944 V-MAIL

Jill, My Darling,

Palermo

I have an hour or so of waiting and there is no better way of passing time on a beautiful Spring day than writing you and thinking of you. I am in an in-between stage in returning to station, and have been able to see friends I haven't seen since November. They are all doing well and life is very nice here. There is beginning to be a hint of lilac perfume in the air. You can see the trees blooming here and there as you walk along the streets. There are roses and light purple delicate lichen, too. I visited a family yesterday and they gave me a bouquet from their garden. I got in a couple of licks in the struggle for the four freedoms too, so I'm feeling satisfied. Speaking of the latter, I'm not too impressed with the melancholy of people who have been lately regretting the passing of the Atlantic Charter. I think they lack a little of the pragmatic spirit. Any attempt to give ideals their absolute meaning is bound to end in failure. Not the failure of an approximate realization, but the failure of the monolithic idealist, as Dewey would put it. Let the ideals stand, certainly but for the sake of usefulness, let us realize how nebulous the words must be and how in life, the accomplishment of an ideal for one people often means the limitation of the ideal for others We ought to follow always the greater good rather than insist on inaction or the lesser good. That is an old utilitarian principle which gave charm and meaning to Mill and Bentham. I feel that those who scream for idealistic commitments beyond all possibility of execution and without regard to the alignment of forces are in reality slightly paranoid and see in every minute concession to reality a harm done to themselves. It wouldn't be so bad if they weren't in my estimation defeating their own ends by their actions.

I'm reminded of the whole galaxy of characters in Dos Passos (whom I finished last night). They reflect along with the "Newsreels" his own disillusioned idealism. Yet, if one were to read the number of little biographies which are scattered through the book, where he must hew more closely to the truth, one gets an entirely different picture of America. It is more balanced, as interesting, and not at all alarming. I think it is a shame that Americans are so indulgent of their authors that they allot greatness to such an orgy of misery. No claims to portray America, yet if the consumption of liquor allotted to his characters per day were made good for the whole country, the exaggeration would be staggering. This is not a statistical quibble. It is a great falsification. And there are other great forgeries in the book. He has a little psychology, a pretense of what makes people behave on a superficial level. But he completely lacks a sense of time in psychology. In other words, the thoughts he reads into a character's mind in an early stage of their life (including the tone of his literary treatment which is more important than the direct thoughts themselves) are the thoughts of an old and frustrated personality, shamed, beaten, and resentful. We can look back at our past and pick out things we are ashamed of now, of incidents that were silly, of attitudes that were stupid. But their meaning and associations at that time were altogether different, and if a picture of the psychological state at that particular time is desirable, the cynical increments of time shouldn't be added. His "newsreels" are self-abasements. His scope is grand, his plan a good one, but his sociology poor. Any fool in the thirties knew that the twenties were mad and that the first World War was a failure. Does his greatness consist in giving a caricature of that madness? (The popular tendency is to exaggerate the madness; it was certainly limited.) On the expressive level, a thing that annoys me is the non-conversational writing in slang. I always feel that is a cheap device of an author to insidiously propagandize the reader when the force of events and character portrayals are not enough to fulfill the task of eliciting emotion.

Enough of Dos Passos and almost enough of a letter. Did you get the little presents I sent you, Mom and Kathy for Easter Time. There wasn't really much to send. The next big event is our anniversary. It's two years now and I love you twice as much, a statistical impossibility owing to the mathematic properties of the number infinity, but a pleasant thought notwithstanding. Start a calendar of all the feasts we must make up, one for Christmas, one for our anniversary, etc. We must make up for lost time.

Your relief at commencing again the lunar cycle is mine too. I hadn't thought about it, but I imagine you must have been a little worried. I guess my thoughts are not very practical regarding home. It's a sort of misty never-never land, which I will be shocked beyond endurance to enter one of these days.

Give a big kiss to Kathy for me. I'm expecting her pictures soon. And don't forget your own. It's been a long time since I've seen how blue your eyes are. Perhaps our next child will have blue eyes.

All my love,

Many kisses, Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 29, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

This is the beginning of a rapturous and short Saturday night, to be spent listening to Frank Sinatra and writing you. No, I'm not really an addict but it's nice to have the radio on good and loud, knowing there will be few commercials for the next hour. And we had such a big exciting day today and there's so much trivia to talk about. In the beginning Kathy had an appointment at the doctor's for her monthly checkup at one and then I had an appointment at the photographer's on 57th St. at two. You can imagine the flurry this morning, getting us both spruced up.

There was much hair-washing, bathing and showers and of course I worked myself into such a frenzy that it ended up with everybody including the janitor, Virginia and four small girls pitching in to get us launched. In the middle Carl and Julie rode by in their nice convertible. Carl just got out of the hospital after an appendectomy and was taking the air. Well, finally we left the confusion behind us and had a nice long wait in the doctor's office to cool down. By the time he got to us she was yelling away merrily but above the din he made it known to me that she was in good shape, despite our varied complaints the past month, all centering about her over-indulgence in the excretory functions. He put her on a different powder to go into her formula, and very treacherous stuff it is. Talk about the difficulties of making a good Hollandaise sauce (which I have never made, timorous soul that I am). I used up half of a dollar can of this stuff before I discovered that the only way you could prevent it from turning the formula into a plaster-like substance was to let everything cool off before mixing it in. As it is, the damn stuff was lumpier than any gravy I ever made. She is also dining on vegetable soup now (officially -- I had been giving it to her anyway the past week because she doesn't like cereal) and also cereal twice a day. You try spooning semi-solids down a baby three times a day and then you'll really know the horrors of war. She only gained a half a pound this month but apparently that's OK -- if anything. It's fine because if she had continued to gain at her original astonishing rate, she would be the size of the sun by the time she was one-year old. Finally, harried and unnerved, I got to the photo place, where I had pictures taken of me in a state which will at least be normal, if not photogenic. The baby was crying in the anteroom until the young lady's mother -- the young lady being the photographer, picked up the baby and quieted her down. I hope the pictures turn out well. They are certainly expensive and a pain in the neck to have done. I think I really do prefer the dentist and when you see my pained hair-bedecked puss you will truly know to what lengths my love for you takes me.

Then, famished, I picked up a malt at Stineway's and met

Ruthie Schwartz. Now Mrs. Lee Pierce. We retired to the little stone bench outside of Goef. house, the scene of former revels if you recall, and proceeded to sit and sun and gab for the next two hours. Fortunately I had brought a bottle along in a vacuum container Joan willed me, so Kathy got fed in plain view, adding to the quaintness of that already quaint corner. Maggie Magerstadt, whom I don't think you know, joined us. She is lots of fun and we all had a fine time saying mean things about everybody else. Johnny Marra came by too, asked about you and invited me for dinner with Joan next week.

So you see, spring on 57th St. never changes. Always a little coterie of eccentrics remain -- the anthropologist, the hot babe (in the person of Marilyn Morgan), the eternal Mrs. Goff herself. And I guess spring never changes you babe's high potential for loafing on street corners.

Kathy is being recalcitrant about going to sleep and in fact just burst into tears because she had wedged herself in one corner of the crib. I sang her a jivey melody and she is now soothed and hugging her giraffe, which Lorraine made her. Today is also notable because Kathy for the first time, in front of God and all the 57th streeters, grabbed hold of her own feet and laughed at them. She certainly is a vocal little babe. Not an hour goes by that she doesn't devise some new way of self-expression. Whoever said that young babies were just vegetables certainly couldn't have known a baby like our Kathy. She even seduces the most confirmed non-lovers of babies. I know it's hard to believe these things I tell you about her, but I honestly try to be objective and therefore draw so heavily on these opinions and testimonies of otherwise unimportant outsiders to confirm the fact that you have really sponsored a wonderful child.

I haven't gotten much mail from you this week, just a letter of April 17 but I'm not worried because you warned me and you needn't feel badly about not writing much if you're busy or in a remote place. I'll still keep writing and loving you anyway. The radio just said that Ernest Bevin just said that a date had been set for the invasion. Happy day. And what do you think of the

Battle of Montgomery Ward? That Syrill Avery really is a bsastard (I misspelled that to confound critics of my bad language). I can remember the three days I worked there, everybody was afraid of him and he was always pacing through the floors and offices to see that everybody was busy at their desks and nobody was in the little girls' room. Rather small-minded of him, I thought at the time. I hope the government wins the case in the courts. As usual, Congress, on the side of big business, is demanding an investigation of the government's charges. Fantastic, isn't it, the ideological split within the branches of government. Something else we can write an essay on.

As usual the supper dishes are in the sink and now that it's nine, the night doesn't look so long and rapturous any more. I really should get to bed by ten every night because Kathy is up promptly at seven or a little before these days, now that we have such a hot schedule. I usually don't through.

Oh hell, she's still awake, crying too. More tomorrow, darling.

Is your kid hard to get to bed! I just had to rub her back for 15 minutes to get her to sleep. Shades of her ma.

Always -- Love & kisses,

Jill

AL TO JILL APRIL 29, 1944 V-MAIL

Jill, My Darling,

Naples

I feel virtuous enough at the moment to be planning to write a couple of letters to my epistolary creditors after finishing this one. It usually happens, however, that after writing you, I am in an airy mood unfit for holding a pen and must open a window and take deep breaths and that sort of thing. I've lost my nice roof terrace for the time being, Reynor having taken a great

fondness to it in my absence and being in a superior bargaining position. However, there is still no admission charge for the premises and view. I am presently under the nervous stress attending the search for a suitable box in which to export souvenirs to America. I have a doll in Sardinian costume which everybody says is lovely, which I will send to Kathy if she promises not to chew off the felt. I also have those two cigarette boxes or junk boxes which I had carved for me, and which, though they are not exquisitely made and finished, do have a rough and competent artistry about them. I think you will like them. They'll go well in our woodland retreat some day. By the way, what is the price of wood and lots?

I got a letter from L. D. White thanking me for my not congratulating him on the APS presidency. And I also got one from Mom who besides saying that everyone was well talked about the baptism of Kathy and about how fine a mother you are. She says you make a better mother than her. I, of course, knew all the time how very adaptable and versatile you were. It's not your fault that no one ever taught you how to carry a tune. Speaking of tunes, Albert Spaulding, the violinist, is living and working with us now. He seems to be a very charming man, though I haven't spent much time with him yet.

But back to you and the sweet strains of romance, your latest letter to me is dated the ninth of the month. So I'm marking time impatiently, awaiting your obligatoes. The latest Time mag is March 27, and it might just as well have been any date. The news has been pretty much the same for a long time. The halting of the Russians for a few days brought out the real nature of news. The headline was "Russians Report No Advance". I annoy people by saying "home" when they ask me where I'd like to go now. I don't like traveling very much. It's an uncomfortable nuisance. I must say though that the night I spent with you on the plane from Cal was the pleasantest traveling I've ever done. Among other things, I liked the excuse it gave for you to rest your head against me for a long time. My second to the last trip by air was a little rough and annoying. We spent an hour in the air amidst jostling clouds before the pilot

announced that we were unfortunately over the place from which we had started and that he would have to start all over again. By that time, I was casting glances sideways at the bucket located in the rear. However, I managed to last it out even though I ground off the fine edge of my molars.

So long for now, sweetheart. Give my Kathy a kiss.

Your love,

Al

JILL TO AL APRIL 30, 1944

Darling --

Oh dear, another nice spring day, which means that I spent it gabbing in the sun. I almost am grateful for bad weather because then I get things done, like letters written, papers read and the house cleaned. The odd thing is that there is no reason why I should have a conscience about doing those very things, since they are none of them very important or creative or beneficial to the growth of my or Kathy's personalities. But I guess I am obsessed by the great American fever of getting things done, however inconsequential they are. And perhaps if I were lounging in the outdoors with you, I wouldn't have such a feeling of wasted time. Perhaps I really feel that every moment spent away from you is a wasted one, and therefore feel that I ought, though I seldom do) to fill up those lost moments with activities generally considered desirable. Oh the hell with it (I wish I were sincerely and consistently convinced of that). Actually if I take care of Kathy and write you I should feel I've accomplished something for the day.

I had dinner at Maxine's today and it was memorable because on Maxine's very bed, in the lonely hour when we grownups were all eating dinner, our Kathy did her first flip-flop from stomach to back. Isn't that wonderful? Such progress.

Yesterday she grabbed her toes and today she did this wonderful thing. I only wish I had been in the room to see it. Then Maxine and I took a walk and since then I have been lounging about on the Steele's front porch. I am supposed to go back there tonight because their youngest daughter is being confirmed and they are having a party after. Mr. Steele is Jewish and Peggy is Catholics and the kids were all brought up Catholic. I bet you're fascinated.

I'm sending you two silly comic strips from the Chicago Sun. Anyway they are relevant if not the acme of sophisticated humor.

Gosh I'm sleepy all of a sudden. I really didn't get much last night. For some reason I woke up at six this morning and just stewed around till Kathy woke up at seven. She is really cute in the morning. She doesn't wake up roaring the way a very little baby does, but just lies there on her face, with her eyes wide open and smiling her secret smile until I turn her over, at which she bursts into a great chuckle. Oh darling, I wish you were coming home soon to see her, not to mention the advantages that may accrue to me from the deal. Do speak to Eisenhower. It's an old gag but one sailor had pinned up the motto "I have given the best years of my wife to the Navy." Well, that's the way I feel. It's really a shame to waste all this passion and good humor on the mild airs of Ridgewood Court. I guess you have the same complaint, but somehow I think that a state of unsatisfied desire is more natural with a man, wolves that you are, and that when a woman hits it, it sort of a more important, bigger thing and Something Should Be Done about it. I'm probably quite wrong, not on purpose, of course -- just the general ignorance the sexes have about the workings of each other.

And on that provocative statement I leave you. With all our love
of course, darling.

Jill

End of April 1944 letters

