

AL TO JILL JULY 2, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

The lack of mail for the last two days has at least given me the opportunity to read the surplus of the preceding days well. The hot weather has cut down my speed here and I have more time for reflection, or whatever you call the process wherein you are not doing something every minute of the day. The sun comes into my room every morning, blinding me and incidentally getting me up. The papers come in every morning full of heartening news so that I can maintain a steady low level of optimism with ease. The Russians are again stealing the headlines. They have certainly mastered the art of destroying large sections of the Wehrmacht. It looks as if they crashed through the Fatherland line with such speed that they can't be stopped at the Beresina, which is slightly reminiscent of what happened in the Gustav and Hitler lines in Italy.

The rest of my stuff arrived late last night from the South. Robbie brought it up in a truck. The first thing I grabbed was cigarettes. I had been reduced to smoking sponged State Expresses from a British friend. Also a pipe a few times, though the pipe is a reflective habit that I find somewhat out of place at the moment. Every time I stick a pipe between my teeth, I notice a definite inclination to sit back and look at the world calmly, detachedly and amusedly. Too much of that isn't too good.

Oh, I almost forgot to mention the gold dust twins that the Republican Party propped into their platform. The comparison isn't farfetched. The discussion of the candidates has already started to be something like this "Whereas Dewey reads his newspaper starting from the front page, Bricker invariably starts with the sport section! This shows up their great divergence in personalities." Remember when reporters were hard-pressed to find differences among the personalities of the Dionne quint? The nomination of Bricker does show that rather than trying to augment to a slight extent the personality and the conservative shyness of Dewey, the Republicans deliberately and maliciously

nominated a man who has the debatable rare virtue of being even more conservative to restrain him. Still, I wouldn't have the conviction to state flatly that they will be defeated. New York and Ohio are strong states to have represented. I think that Bricker will lose them votes everywhere else though.

Now that I've wasted all this space I have no place to describe how much I love you. I Wish we were in the country together, and alone, save for Kathy, of course. Kiss her for me.

Love.

Al

JOHN Reynor, now heading up the "propaganda ministry" of the Allies, has acquired Stephen Pallos, an Anglo-Hungarian film director, who is to be in charge of the Italian film industry. Pallos and the Lieutenant get along well; the job needs a military man; so John asks Alfred whether he would like a transfer over to films. It sounds good, and he sets up shop with Steve: "I worked with Villie Viler." Looks like a crook. Doesn't appear to be doing anything. Still, he's cheerful, voluble. There's never a dull moment with Hungarians.

Alfred becomes an attractive nuisance. At once beset by Italian film producers and directors for licenses to produce films. Nobody has a notion of relating to the Greatest War in the History of the World. They trot him around to enjoy excellent meals. They send to him starlets to offer themselves as assistants, secretaries or whatever, despatched to help the war effort by Direttore Greco or some other such ex-*Cinecitta* nabob or would be such. He asks one of them, sitting demurely before him, "You were sent by Signor Greco to be my friend and help him get a license for a film, *nevvero?*" She smiles winningly and says, "*Si, e' vero. Pero..*"

Bianca and Paolo Moffa laugh at his stories. Paolo is a little to the side of the mad scramble, never asks for anything, has done documentaries for the Vatican. Alfred does not succumb to Bianca's lures; nor is she bashful to employ them; she has the black slanting

Neapolitan eyes that must come from the neolithic Mediterraneans. Or maybe a recent Circassian, as simple as that. He writes Jill on her behalf, Dear Jill, I have this friend, see, who would love and embellish a good pair of American shoes and here is her footprint, and Jill should know that he would never send her a request for a gift for a lover of him; still, somehow, the package of shoes for Bianca never arrives.

Better than many another happening, Elsa Morante eventually appears at his office, courtesy of "D" Section, and, with her, Alberto, grim as before, and Alfred asks her, "Will you work with me on films?" to which she responds, "On what films?" "Oh, I don't know... A film on partisans!" And Elsa consented. They enjoyed several pleasant gatherings in those halcyon days of the Liberation of Rome.

On Bastille Day, more from coincidence than out of regard for the French Revolution, he traipses to a large party with Alberto and Elsa at the home of the Painter Severini's daughter. Capogrosso is there, with other *pezzi grossi*. The Moravias have taken up their former lives in Roma but with the new strong connection with the outside world through "D Section." They are, as the Lieutenant had expected when he sent them South, doing some work for the Allies. Alberto is, of course, typically ungrateful: he must have been spoiled by over-indulgence and inner rage accompanying his childhood infantile paralysis.

A Director of well-known films arrives and Steve and Alfred talk with him. He wants desperately to begin work on a film. Look, he says to them, if you think that I am a Fascist, why would I risk my life in crossing the lines to put myself in your hands. I never said, the Lieutenant tells him, that opportunists lack courage. He is angry. But what can he do? It is not a matter of killing. Some things are.

Professor Hartshorne arrives. He is in OSS, though he doesn't say so, and gets attached to PWB headquarters. The Lieutenant is naturally drawn to professors. An informant tells him, Hartshorne is dealing with some of the worst Fascists. Confirmation extends from another source. Watch out, he tells Hartshorne, I have bad news on this guy. Hartshorne resents the information. Sometime later (I could wait for six months of the story to tell you this, but I want to show right now his perspicacity) he hears that Hartshorne dies, mysteriously

murdered, say most. Al is in no position to follow up the report. He is far away.

What we need, he says to Steve Pallos, as shifty-eyed, physically unimpressive, over-verbal, and unconvincing chap as ever you might encounter on the side streets of Istanbul -- but all ears, so you can see his intelligence -- is a film to help the war effort, on the activities of the partisans in Italy. Great, says Steve, and off they go signing up people for the film on partisans.

Not content with a lovely fictional set-up amidst the rapidly coagulating bloody Hollywood atmosphere, it occurs to the American officer that they must have fresh live footage on partisan activities on the other side of the Front. "D Section," to which he regularly refers, though no longer a member, collects a continuous stream of reports of resistance activities in the North, of trains derailed, power plants destroyed, wires cut, enemy soldiers killed, industrial sabotage, and so on; indeed they are the best informed people in Italy about Italian affairs in German-occupied Italy.

Alfred talks privately to Gianni about the film about partisans. Might you undertake to go with a camera across the lines and take some pictures of partisan action, and bring them back? One explosion, even if you have to blow up an appropriate target yourself, would make a film persuasive. Gianni unhesitatingly agrees. He himself might be able to commit the authentic act that would be the subject of the filming.

Alfred has discovered a partner for him, a partisan, a red-faced Milanese engineer, Pietro Boni, who has just crossed the lines. It is typical, the man who has just done the heroic deed is the one who is turned around to do it again. Still, Gianni has his companion vetted by Italian Intelligence. He is probably a Communist. No problem. Togliatti has told the Communists to collaborate, not to destroy the existing coalition government.

The American arranges a couple of days of training in the use of the camera equipment that he has bought for them on the open market. He goes to John Reynor for clearance and funds. How much do you need? About \$2500.00 in old lira. O.K. He trusts the Lieutenant. One wonders whether he knows the odds. Fine. "I also need a car to take

them up to the Front Line." O.K. He gets a car alright. It's a new English jeep, right-hand drive. He is afraid to look its lamps in the eye, its axles might buckle. Its metal had been stretched to the thinness of pie crust before fashioning it into a vehicle. A two-wheel drive. Its tires were as delicate as a dancer's pumps.

JILL TO AL JULY 3, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Two small girls, the Cohen kids, are sitting on the couch, while I write this, so don't be surprised if my typing waves under their unbending stare. Isn't it funny the way kids can just sit and look sometimes. Perhaps it is just a certain kind of kid that does this, the kind that doesn't have much of a kid world of its own and learns to spend its time hovering on the edges of the adult one, peeking in half-longingly, half critically. I feel sorry for these kids. They live in a small apartment and their mother spends all her time keeping the place immaculate instead of providing a place for them to play in.

And your special kid has also been rather a trial to me the past few days. In the first place Saturday night after our visit to the doctor, her arms started to hurt her, I guess, and she screamed piteously for about an hour, until the paregoric he advised giving took effect and she went to sleep. Yesterday she felt pretty good and we went to the lake in the afternoon. But edges of irritability seemed to persist with her, and she cries quite a lot in short intervals now. It may not be the shots now, but her as yet unformed teeth which are bothering her. She also has a lot of painful accidents every day, now that she is beginning to stir about so much. She flopped over from a sitting position yesterday evening and hit her head against the side of the playpen, much screaming and kissing following immediately thereafter. This morning she was being a great wise guy, giving herself her orange juice bottle, and she raised it up to look at it and dropped it on her head. I naturally took her up and soothed

her with hugging and kissing, and then when I put her back in the playpen I knocked the back of her head against the bars, so we had to start all over again. Finally in desperation, because it got so as soon as I tried to put her down in the pen, she would scream, I took her out for a walk, and she finally fell asleep about eleven and now the problem is to get her up in time for lunch, which I just laboriously made. She eats the damndest things now -- a concoction called junket which requires the deftness and patience of a Madame Curie to prepare. The alternatives are jello, which I don't like, or bananas, which you can't get. Then a baked potato and canned vegetables. The doctor also told me, with what I considered coarse wit if he was trying to be funny, to give her beef juice, made from a bit of steak. Since I haven't eaten butter for three weeks, I'd like to know how he expects me to get steak for such crass purposes, short of giving my all to the butcher. Her dinner is still pretty much the same -- cereal or zwieback and stewed fruit. But you can see where I am starting to spend more and more of my time in the kitchen, less and less of it at the typewriter or beach. Tomorrow I may take her down to Flossmoor to see Mac, it being the glorious, etc. I would have written you yesterday incidentally, but I was absolutely dead by nightfall and went to bed around nine. Bill is coming down in a little while to go to the beach. He has the day off I guess. So you see what a busy and unproductive life I lead -- just one long round of trying to keep the baby quiet.

But she's your baby and as such is worthy of the best. Love you.

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 3, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

Our correspondence seems to be getting back to normal. Yesterday I got a two-page V-mail of yours from June 20 which

isn't bad. I'm sorry about the broken Sardinian boxes. I did have strong doubts about their practicability as well as their aesthetic qualities, but felt that they wouldn't be too bad in Kathy's playroom or some other rustic setting. A good cigarette box is a rare thing and also very expensive. Some day I may find a nicer one. The doll shouldn't be undersold. It is a thing of rarity and beauty, in my opinion.

The dog days are here. Between noon and four, only mad dogs and soldiers go out into the sun. I have acquired a large fan which is now humming away alongside of me, even though it is only nine o'clock in the morning. Today is Monday. Saturday evening, Jack Collins and I went to a very modern and well-finished theater to see the comic opera I Quattro Rustoghi, "The Four boors", a play by Goldoni, adapted by Wolf-Ferrari to music. The boors are four petit bourgeois who can't stand the pretensions of their wives. The parts were well acted and sung and the music was beautifully written. The net result was a sort of Gilbert and Sullivan thing that owed no apologies to anyone. They had a bar in the theater too, and we had cognac, gelati, and orangeade during the intermissions. There were many beautiful women in the audience, as well as a crackerjack on the stage who made a great hit (it was the opening night, we had the best box, naturally), but unfortunately none of them were with us. Or perhaps fortunately, since we had to sneak out before the play was over in order to be back in time to eat a late supper at the mess. If you were along, I wouldn't have worried about supper.

I agree with you in your choice of being a stewardess over a research asst, to Stouffer. I think the choice of relatives is a little unfair to the latter type of employment. But even so, I also find myself doubting sometimes whether I want to go back to the academic environment. I have seen so much stupid misorganization and lack of efficiency that I feel very strongly that I would like to purge myself by doing something clean, unhampered, effective organizational work. It is incredible how scarce administrative ability is. I can't understand it. 90% of humankind hate to come to the point.

I had better get down to work now. Many kisses to you, dearest.
And love to Kathy. Your Al

JILL TO AL JULY 5, 1944

Darling --

I'm ashamed to tell you I didn't write you yesterday just because I was having such a good time. Kathy and I went out to Flossmoor to visit Mac and of course, by the time I had dragged her home last night, I was absolutely blind with fatigue. But it was a nice way to spend July 4, particularly since I am getting mightily sick of the lake, which is pretty dirty these days with a prevailing east wind.

They had kind of a family luncheon at the Mac's and afterwards we went over to the Horton's house (that's Cal Sawyer's family in law's) where they have such a magnificent pool. I spent the whole afternoon swimming in it. It was such a divine change from the dirty, rough, rock-ridden waters of the lake. Kathy sat on the sidelines, the darling of the gathering, and watched us with great interest. Then I took her in the water with me and you'll be delighted to know she is a natural swimmer (I guess most babies are). I held her head and chest out of the water and she paddled along with her feet with a perfect frog's kick. She laughed and liked it very much until Mac's 11-year-old cousin splashed water in her face, the dear little boy. The Horton's and their friends, all hard-drinking Republican lords of the manor, made a great to-do over her, little reckoning from what wells of political unorthodoxy she had sprung.

We had supper there and took the IC back home. Kathy loves train travel and spends all her time looking out of the window. She really is a marvelous traveller and seems to thrive on large hectic gatherings. I was sure she would end up the day dissolved in tears, what with being bounced from lap to lap, with being dangled upside-down by jolly Mr. Mac and being poked at

by small cousin, and being barked at by the various dogs of the two establishments. But she loved it all and cried only briefly a few times. And while I was practically somnambulist by the time we got home, she was wide awake and ready to crawl right back to Flossmoor again. Yes, she is starting to crawl now. She turns over on her stomach at the slightest pretext and starts this peculiar rocking motion on her hands and feet, with her body arched out into space. A most amazing sight it is.

Mac's small cousin, a sharp little spark from Hollywood where his old man is business manager of the L. A. Hearst paper, of all things, makes it even more imperative that you get home soon so we can have a small boy too. They certainly are wonderful creatures. In the middle of a rather sedate family luncheon, where all the grandparents were busily shoveling it down, he broke the silence with a piping query, "Mother, who was that friend of yours who was caught in a riptide?" You have no idea how funny it was, and is.

Angel, I've gotten four letters of yours since Monday and am basking in the light of your loving attentions -- the 22, 23, 25 and 28. It will take me an age to answer everything in them so I had better take things up as they come along. First, about the shoes for your friend. I really and sincerely would be glad to give up my remaining coupon for her, since, having only a small idea of the deprivations of people in Europe, I wouldn't dare to say that I needed it. But what the hell, how am I supposed to translate Italian sizes into American ones. If you don't know what size 38 1/2 is in American, how about having her do it by the time-honored Montgomery War catalog way -- by tracing an outline of her foot on paper. Or, if you can't find her to do that, ask her her stocking size and get some idea of the width of her foot. Mine is 8 1/2 AA, to give you an idea, and as you know, my feet are very long and quite narrow. I think I can get her the kind of shoe she wants, more or less, and probably have a pair like that myself in white, but it's likely my feet are a great deal larger than hers because most Europeans don't have such big feet as American girls. Let me know right away and ask for the shoes again in your letter so that I can mail them out to you.

I wish you could take a bath here too. Kathy would probably jump in the tub with you, and perhaps get very mad at the idea of your being in Her tub. I would wash your back gently and stick my fancy, revitalizing shampoo on your head.

I stopped writing this to go down to the lake, it being another beautiful day, damn it. If it doesn't rain soon the house will fall down and the creditors will take me away, for all the unfinished business I have on hand. I just can't stay in the house when it's nice out, and a mad compulsion it is. Kathy was taking her afternoon nap when I started out with a nice girl named Sophie who lives in the building, but she woke up in time to sit on the rocks on Sophie's lap and watch me swim. The water was warm, and I myself am getting hotter than a pistol at my Al-taught crawl. It usually takes me about a month to warm up sufficiently so that I don't sink of exhaustion after three strokes. There is some funny stuff in the water, blown up after a week of East winds. At first I thought it was crap but I picked up a piece and it is a tan fossilized looking material, like floating coral, only much uglier. I wonder what it can be.

I agree with you about Mauldin -- that he's very good and that he isn't much appreciated by the folks back home. The baby's doctor for one prefers Lt. Dave Bregar's works, which I personally don't think so much of.

Your life certainly sounds interesting now, what with baked zucchini (you must get me the recipe -- not that I can bake anything more than a potato) and high mass at St. Peter's. You're right about there not being much sense in getting despondent any more. The war is going fine, bless the Russians in particular, and now it's just a question of waiting a little longer. I don't worry much about your safety any more -- I guess I sweated it out for all time this winter -- but that doesn't mean I think any less for about you. But life is good with Kathy and with the thought of our future together and also with the funny memories of our past, the only kind of memories that seem to stick, so there is no point in sweating any more. Like you, I don't enjoy masochism in its more diffuse aspects. I

mean, I think I have a normal share of it so far as sex is directly concerned (beat me, daddy) and that's as far as it goes. If you want to posit that all women are more or less masochistic, maybe you can divide them off into two groups -- those who are the perpetual martyrs and sufferers, like Joan or Liz Johns, and those who are constantly tempting men to give them a good sock in the puss, like me. Anyway, I can recall inflicting the most horrible injuries on you, like chewed ears and bashed-in biceps, just to get repaid in kind.

Thank you dear for sending the pictures back. I do think that is a very revealing picture of my mother, showing her tremendous will and devotion to her kids. I shall probably end up looking the same way. People mistake that kind of face for a show of unbending dignity, but actually she wasn't dignified in the conventional sense since she was a very hot athlete. She just had so damn much fortitude. I don't know if I'll ever have that but I certainly am and will be fond of my kids. I saw a woman down at the lake with four, ranging from six months to five years and was practically prostrate with envy at the sight. She said her youngest, the baby, was very good and quiet because she just didn't have the time to fuss much with her. How unlike yowling demanding old Kath. Not that I don't think Kathy is a healthy psychological specimen. She is just a pain in the neck sometimes. And what kills me is that when I finally do get her outside in a reasonably quiet state and then retire to the house to finish up some chore before attending to her again, some damn neighbor comes along and starts cooing at her. Then they walk away and Kathy lets out a howl of rage at being neglected. I think I am going to put a sign on her. "Yes, she has a beautiful tan. Yes, she looks like a boy. Now please go away and do not play with the baby. She gets plenty of attention from her mother and does not need any more from you." Or some such.

Evil one, I did not write three volumes of propaganda against Dewey to be scoffingly put off by a remark about expecting divorce papers. All I can say is that you'd better not vote for him, or else. Anyway, let me know what you think about all these antics on the home front.

I am writing this after supper and have all the dishes to do and formula to make and the parched garden to water. It really is a mess, mostly because I hardly ever do any work on it, it being so inconvenient to get to, and to find the garden tools which our janitor hides somewhere in the basement. But it's amazing how au courant one can get with just a few visits to the garden. I made a tour of inspection yesterday of Mr. Mac's really fine vegetable patch, and amazed myself and would have startled you out of your wits with my glibness in re horticultural matters. Looking at somebody else's garden is very much like peering at a new baby. You have to make flattering but knowing remarks to really gain the love of the demonstrator.

Well, I have to go now. A million big kisses to you and a big sock in the puss, for even mentioning D-w-y's name.

Jill (& Kath)

JILL TO AL JULY 6, 1944

Darling --

I just took a bushman's holiday and biked furiously down to the beach during Kathy's afternoon nap hour. The wonderful lugubrious cleaning woman is here and so I thought I'd get away from it all briefly. The water was warm and not too dirty and I had a nice solitary swim off the rocks at 53rd. I usually can't go there because they are quite unprotected from the sun, which is hard on Kath. This morning I put her in her buggy outside and took a ride on the bike and did some shopping. She sits up in the buggy and watches cars and people go by, and if she cries Flossie will come out and tend to her. You should see her whoop it up when she sees me appear over the horizon on the bike. She waves her arms in the air and shouts enthusiastically. Why she's as smart as Cooney. Right now she is in her playpen, which she seems to be losing her distaste for, watching flossie iron, and uttering little screeches of delight.

She's such a wonderful lively little creature, and still holder of the best-looking-baby-in-Hyde-Park title. You know, dear, her head is getting to be shaped exactly like yours, especially in the back. It is rather long and curves in towards the neck and her ears stick out from the rear view, though are pretty flat from the front, just like yours, I reiterate. Isn't it funny that she should have all of your facial characteristics and none of mine. Even her eyes have a little fold underneath, like yours.

The weather is still hot and sunny and it makes me sore as a boil, because the hose in the victory garden doesn't reach as far down as our garden, and it's all drying up, the alternative being that I haul huge buckets of water from the hose end to the garden and hurl it down over the weakened shrubs. And Virginia managed to plant the tomatoes in the one spot where the sun never hits, so they won't be any good either. My next garden I'm going to plant alone and it will be a lot better I'm sure.

Do you swim the crawl any more or are you taking it easy on account of your shoulder still? It would be fun to be in swimming with you now, swishing through the cool calm water. Next summer we ought to take a house on the lake out of town somewhere and make up for all the summer romance we've missed the past three summers (the first one you were in OCS). The dentist still has to find out about that cottage he told me about at Michiana shores. I called him yesterday and he said the rent was 60 a month, not 500 a year as he previously told me.

I think this Mauldin cartoon is one of his cutest, to use a bad word. It's so full of pathos of a sort.

You know, when you first come back we ought to just rent a house somewhere in the country, to get back to the preceding paragraph, because you won't know where or what you'll be doing for a while. Maybe you could get some studying done if we were off somewhere by ourselves, and in any case, it would be a good idea if you didn't have to take a job right away. And

the only imperative there would be your conscience about working, because we could sure afford some fun together for a while. Then later we could buy or build a place, after you decided what you wanted to do. We could just have fun for the first few months and you could bring up Kathy and maybe I could get pregnant again. I feel very badly that I have to put that off and can't understand why Ann and Mir aren't spawning like mad. What do you think about all this anyway? Maybe you have even more exciting ideas than the rather mundane one I just offered of sticking around the Middle West. I'd like to go someplace else too but that pretty much depends on where you wind up studying or working, doesn't it.

Kathy is crying again. She really doesn't enjoy her playpen, the spoiled little girl. I'll take her out to mail this letter.

All our love to you, darling -- Jill

JILL TO AL JULY 7, 1944 (A) V-MAIL

Darling --

I've just finished putting your darling daughter to bed for the night and thought I'd take a breathing spell to write you before making my own dinner and also formula. I hate to say it but I am always glad when she is put away for the night. The hours from four PM until she is fed are always a bit of a trial; even trips to the lake don't diminish the awful weariness that seizes my bones in the late afternoon. Yet between four and six I must keep her from crying, for she is most prone to get bored and restless at that time, give her a bath, make her bed which has been drying out all day, make her and give her her supper and incidentally see that we get back and get unloaded from whatever point of interest we have been visiting.

The New Yorker came today which reminds me I have a great pile to send you and also a check to send them for your subscription. I also got a letter from Day today, containing

some, in fact, a great batch of pictures of little Paul which Ann had sent her first. He is cute and blonde and looks astonishingly unlike anything the family has so far produced. I guess he looks like Ann's family, slightly buck-toothed and extremely Nordic. It's a funny thing the way the Oppenheim strain is being killed off by the apparently dominant genes of all it takes in wedlock. Oh where oh where is the noble arch of the Lauterbach nose, winging out into space like a flying buttress. Where are the melancholy blue eyes, out of which peeps a tale of centuries of oppression and crooked business partners? A sad thing it is to see this noble family disappear.

And of course the best part of the mailman's load today was your V-mail of the 27th, an excellent one though, or perhaps because, you threw the book right back at me on the Dewey argument. I wish we could talk about it together, but failing that, your letter was very good through not completely a satisfactory answer to this AI-bedeviled soul. Granted that I am infatuated with the personality of Roosevelt, I still don't see why Dewey presents a desirable alternative so far as his handling of the issues go, or will go. I think he is just a walking taker of public opinion polls, and in a true democracy, political action should be based on firm leadership of the public, that leadership of course being legitimately elected and responsive to the public, rather than being based on arithmetical means of the public's answers on any given question. If I make myself clear which I probably don't, Daisy funnily enough was all wrought up over the convention and Dewey getting the nomination and Time mag's biased reporting of it (which I didn't see but I guess you have), I guess she and I will always be third-generation Tammany-ites, no matter how far we stray from the fold.

I went to the lake with Priscilla Berquist today and Kathy. The water was pretty cold again and the flies were awful. I am getting so tired of dragging the buggy down there. I wish it would rain. Despite all the day-to-day fun I have, I find I miss you dreadfully, because no letter from me could substitute for the great well of affection I could pour over you if you were here.

You are my wonderful darling and I shall always love you.
Kisses from Kathy too.

Jill

JILL TO AL JULY 7, 1944 (B) V-MAIL

Darling - For once I've remembered to bring both pen (filled to overflow) and paper with me to the Lake. I just got thru taking Kathy to the doctor for her six months check-up. He pronounced her fine and gave her the first shot, for whooping cough, I think. To my amazement she didn't cry, particularly since she is getting so temperamental of late, she cries every time I change her clothes. The doctor asked a lot about you. I guess he is interested in you because Kathy is his prettiest baby. He said he'd like to have her around all the time to show her off. She weighs 18 pounds 9 ounces now. A big gain of 11 ounces over last month relatively speaking. But she is not at all fat. Thank goodness I was able to borrow a playpen this morning so she'll be able to crawl around unsupervised for the next few months. I'm not optimistic enough to think she'll stay in it once she begins to stand up, or whenever her free flowing libido decides for her that she can't stand the confines of anything smaller than a battleship.

I've been so damned tired lately. I never seem to be able to catch up on my sleep no matter how early I go to bed. Maybe I ought to follow my advice to you and take vitamins. I think if I could sleep late just one morning I'd feel O.K.. And one more reason why you should come home - to give the baby her breakfast. Another reason is to aid me in the various complicated financial transactions I've fallen prey. Joan touched me for 100, Virginia for 40 and now I get a letter from Walter. He wants to buy something or other (I was too bored to read what) and would like to nick me for 3,000 - 3,500, payable at 5% in a year or two. Is it okay if I lend him this money? He also wants to invest the rest of my dough profitably for me and I say

balls to that. What a dull letter this is. I wish I could sleep with you. All my love

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 7, 1944

Dearest Jill,

I am a desperate and negligent husband, but I have decided here and now to start my first letter in three or four days in a determination to make it a long one under any and all circumstances, including the use of this infantile paper pad. My most recent letter from you is from June 26 and that just arrived an hour or two ago. It was swell to hear such late and detailed news. I won't deprecate your furious socialization by comparing my own experiences with yours. Suffice to say that my door is a bruised mass of splinters.

To bore you with the old refrain, I am in process of changing jobs, inside the organization of course. The new one is a lot of fun and since you could never guess, I can tell you it has to do with film production. (Note: the spilled stuff is real Sarti cognac mixed with water. I am at the moment in refuge in my apartment before venturing out to dinner. It is nice and peaceful here. There are some trees outside the window and no one stirring at all. A blackbird just flew past as I looked up.)

Well, back to my work. It seems that I got here and got so heavily involved in everything that I could neither get out nor could they sent me away. I'm too occupied with everything to even spend time wondering whether I regret not going forward. When I do have any free time, I usually feel in a completely passive mood and cannot get a long letter off. Like last night, I played poker and enjoyed it even though I lost originally and spent the rest of the evening recuperating from the initial losses, thus ending where I started. My poker companions were just right - a joke occasionally, generally silent, honest and good

players mostly.

It is now the next morning before lunch. I have said to hell with everything and have gone to my hotel room for a few minutes of peaceful writing. I am so sick of the lack of coordination and the inefficiency of this organization. Like Topsy, it just grew and now has all sorts of defects, parts missing, irrational departments, bastard personnel, etc.

Darling, why don't you cast your blue eyes over the field of farms. You ought to be making yourself an expertess of sorts so that we can fix up something when I get back, what's the difference in the price of farmland in California, New York, and Illinois? Where are the prettiest hills and woods. It would be heaven for me to step into a car with a dispatch ticket, rations, gasoline cans, gear, travel orders and lots of explanations here and there, and to drive out somewhere alone with you. And just take a dollar for big hamburgers with onions and tomatoes. Someone today wrote into the Stars and Stripes asking the difference between a fryer and a broiler. The editor replied: "You'll have to ask someone who's tasted chicken." The hamburgers practically always have canned corned beef or spam inclinations in these parts.

I'm sending you a picture of me with this letter. It was taken a few days ago by an Italian parachute It., a little cocky red-headed guy. Now I suppose I'll get another order from you to take more vitamin pills. If I ever see any around, I'll take them. As soon as all of Italy is taken, if that occurs before the end of the war, I'm going to ask for two weeks off. Or at least, so I tell myself.

I'm glad you liked the Sardinian pictures. They were taken with our own El Paso camera. For the second time you told me that Kathy can sit up by herself. Was the first time a false alarm? I think a picture of the feat is really in order.

Did I tell you I got those NewRepublics plus a couple of New Yorkers the other day. I haven't had a chance to even glance at

the New Republic yet, but thanks anyway. I'll bet it's going to town on Dewey % Buckey.

I haven't written Ed a word of advice yet on his plans. I think myself that he is right to get into the war and overseas as soon as possible, whichever way he does it, and you can tell him that for me. As for myself, I think I ought to get out of the war and into your arms as soon as possible.

All my love, and kisses to Kathy.

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 8?, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

Now I know how the farmers feel. It is finally starting to rain after more than two weeks of not, and I am overjoyed and relieved, since now I don't have to attempt the arduous job of watering the poor old parched out victory garden. I guess that in a previous letter I discussed the mechanics of hosing it down, i.e., the hose they have just doesn't reach our particular plot. I hope it rains for a month now. I was down at the lake again today, it being excessively hot and sunny, and there seemed to be a little group of us heliotropes who, loathing our vice, still persist in indulging it daily. Poor Priscilla Berquist was standing in the icy water up to her knees when I arrived, too weak to move because she had been out since ten AM (it was then two) and didn't want to leave the sun to go home and eat. We all kept moaning prayers for rain and it's finally here. Of course, if it does keep up I'll have a new complaint -- that of trying to keep travel-spoiled Kathy amused inside the house. I'll probably have to visit all my neighbors just to give her a change of scenery.

And that would be a horrid fate too. I've alienated most of them by starting to bawl them out when they rock and chuckle Kathy when I set the buggy outside for a few moments' peace during

the day. Thing is, she usually cries after they move on about their business, so their good-natured (which I doubt, believing in the inherent evil of man as I do) attempts to amuse her end up by leaving her crankier than she would ordinarily be. And then today I left her sitting up in the buggy when I went into Kroger's and when I came out some woman was wiping her drooly chin with the woman's handkerchief. I screeched, "Don't do that," and trundled off in a huff. Can you imagine the presumption! She said it was a clean handkerchief but still people have no right to handle other people's babies. Diane, whom I visited briefly today, and whose baby is really quite a little cutey, has the same trouble. Only she has the sense not to be intimidated by all the bad advice people give her, while when I was at her stage I was kind of.

I'm trying to make up my mind to go to the movies now. It's been a long time since I've been and here it is Saturday night and I don't have formula to make so I really should do something new and different. But it's raising pretty hard I guess. Do you remember all the flying trips we used to make to the Pic, usually wrangling on the way over the state of my feet, which were usually clad in indecorous socks and saddle shoes. Well they still are, only now I have a better excuse. Kathy keeps me on my feet so much, etc. etc.

Since I started this Saturday has passed into Sunday, and I have no more to show for one less day to be spent in purgatory than a good burn on my nose. Damn it it was a beautiful day so down to the crowded promontory we went again. The woods were full of adolescent boys wrestling, shouting and playing with their girls and I had to work hard to keep the barrage of green crab apples, fish and footballs they were hurling about off our Kathy. But I say it without venom. There is something about the typical city tough young guy that charms this heart. For one thing, they are so beautiful at that age, if not of face, [*new page with July 9? as date*] at least of body. I've heard many a man, including you, comment at the poor specimens at the induction centers and I can't understand it, because at least this current crop of pre-inductees are so beautifully set up. Ed and his

friends are examples of this type of boy. It's kind of a cross-section American type, certainly not restricted to any nationality group (except that you don't find it in the Jews in this neighborhood because they are a different economic group for one thing) -- tough, wiry, beautifully built in an unspectacular sort of way. The cities may not produce the six-foot-two blonde giant but the stock is good just the same.

Speaking of Jews I was on my bike today and had an altercation with a Cadillac -- I guess they thought I was going to cut them off (which I was) and they called me a damn girl and I was about to call them goddam Jews when I remembered. It's a terrible thing how easy it is, as easy as water running downhill, to pick up the prejudices of the masses.

Even the teenage boys make flattering remarks to Kathy. I am getting quite bored with all the adulation accorded her (very little of which splashes off on to me -- in fact I might as well be her nurse for all the credit I get). People come shrieking with "There's that darling baby again -- I simply must see her before (I die, go home, etc.). Part of her charm is the constant bellow of laughter she accords every human, dog or machine that pass before her view. She even laughed at the radio tonight and touched it all over. I guess she is very bright. And then of course she has such a perfect funny little face, with her peaked white pique hat which I've decided looks very much like the Afrika Corps fatigue hat or whatever it is. I'm starting to call her Rommel for short.

I didn't go to the movie last night after all for it rained so hard. I just stayed and read the paper and had a beer with Fritz. I went to the beach with Hin today which is why I could ride my bike because while he is in favor of having a bike along, his continental caution forbids his riding it through the city streets. So he wheels Kathy and I ride, a fine racket.

I'm so dreadfully sleepy. I wish it were time for bed already. I still have to feed Kathy. She isn't hungry for a change and also for a change is playing quite peacefully in her playpen in this difficult

hour before mealtime. Jesus she's spoiled. But there's not a thing I can do about it, since it would be silly and cruel to deny her deliberately the things that give us both pleasure, like holding her on my lap at the edge of the rocks -- she loves to see the water and the swimmers splash. I had the most awful dream last night about babies. It seems that in my dream most human babies are born with oysters attached to one ear, which oysters drop off by the time they are six months old. Well, I went to this restaurant on first or second avenue in new York, a very popular steak-and-chop house it was, and found several adorable babies wrapped up in blue cellophane on ice. The manager told me he took the oysters off (I think he cooked both oysters and babies together) and then threw the babies away. I was terribly indignant and tried to make *[new page dated: July 9]* the diners and people on the street understand the monstrous crime that was being perpetrated but nobody would do much about it. Then they all conspired to send me to a hospital where I was held unjustly on a murder charge. Isn't that a Dostoieskian dream? I still haven't gotten over it. Those poor babies. I also dreamt I went fishing with a terrible little five-year-old boy who lives in this block and he made me catch all the fish by hitting them on the head, which necessitated my jumping in and swimming after them, and then he would cut off their heads and eat them. Well, now that I have raked up my subconscious for you I think I will give Kathy her supper and go to bed again, perchance to dream.

Darling, I hope you're well and having some sort of fun. I love you very much and am very mad that you can't be here to see Kathy, to fend off her admirers and to protect me from my subconscious.

All my love to you angel,

Jill

Cartoon: Woman rapidly wheeling baby carriage with baby toward a sign reading "City limits"

JILL TO AL JULY 10, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling --

A big day this. A letter from you (July 2), I broke my glasses, finished up with the dentist for the time being, cut my left thumb slicing an onion and made borscht with too much pepper in it. Oh yes, and I bought a Duke Ellington record.

I was amused by your comments on the Bricker-Dewey slate and feel that we are At One again. Bricker looks and probably acts like a character out of a Sinclair Lewis novel, doesn't he? But it's amazing what the power is of a public relations policy. Apparently Bricker put up a great show down at the convention or hotel halls, so that even the New Dealist reporters of the Sun came out with no unflattering statements about him, like what a game guy he was. Of course that's so much eyewash when it comes to evaluating a man for his political philosophy, but I think that kind of thing influences people favorably, nonetheless. I'm not sure either that the Democrats will win but then I wasn't even positive in 1940. I wonder what the president will do about Wallace. Granted that he is a good sincere man, he may not be even the liberal's best for the vice-presidency this time. He just isn't a good politician and not a very astute speech-maker, and perhaps a man like Byrnes, who would be more pleasing to all the elements in the party, might do just as good a job.

I bought the Ellington record because I'd been reading a three-part biography of him in The New Yorker and thought I'd like to know more about his life and works. I just selected the record at random -- Black and Tan Rhapsody it is on one side -- which may not be the best way of doing it but it turned out that I liked it very much. Even if I could bear losing face by consulting your small brothers on the matter of record selection, I still might not be as interested in their favorites as they are, because a lot of times they will like a record because of the technical skill of some instrument player and I don't know much about that. But I find all of a sudden I'm getting [*a yen ?*] for really good jazz and you don't hear much of that kind over the radio. And Kathy likes

it too and I think I should start developing her musical interests, don't you?

You probably wonder what happened to my great plans for taking a course this summer. Well, they just fizzled out naturally, since I found that it was impossible to get someone to stay with Kathy even for my once-a-week trip to the dentist. Anyway, I spend all my time down at the lake with her now. I was down again today with a gal who has a baby in the building. it was very rough, a north wind, and not much fun for swimming. I had my fill of rough water the first ten years of my life when we went down to the ocean in the summers. Give me a calm clear outdoor pool any day now.

The dentist told me that house for rent in Michiana shores is for 60 a month, not 45 as he originally said. They don't seem to be in any great hurry to rent it and as my lease here doesn't expire until October, I think I shall just watch and wait. It's supposed to be very nice albeit deserted in the winter time, about six miles from Michigan City. Would you like to come home to some country living? I know the apartment we [*full-size letter from here on*] have now will be rather crowded for us all, knowing your predilection, and a most civilized one it is too, for spacious living. And knowing your desire for privacy, I don't think you'll be exactly fond of the public life attendant on living on the ground floor of a building where everybody knows everybody else. We'll probably have to have the shades pulled down all day long. I know it's a little early to start sweating out this housing business but I might as well think about it as not.

Jane Cates just dropped by. Do you remember her? Her husband is that guy from the history department with the little black dog who looked so much like him. Well, Bill has just been transferred to Ritchie and she wanted to know all about the joint, where to stay, etc. I drew her a little map to send him, giving the location of the Barton's and Zorthian's houses in case rooms are available when she wants to go down. he is taking tests to be a student officer in their language section.

Diane and Oliver also just dropped by, to borrow the bike. Then Maxine just called up, to say she was engaged to some Lt. What a happy happy busy busy life I lead.

And now it is crowding nine PM and the kitchen is still dirty and unattractive. I guess I had better do something about it, much as I would like to keep writing you. Maybe I will just keep the paper in the machine until tomorrow morning, in case some great thought strikes me to fill it up with Lovelovelove Jill.

[in ink]

Tuesday - the day after - Now I have something to write about. On the spur of the moment Kathy and I took a trip north, it being the making of a dull day on the South Side. I left Kathy with Mom and her friends -- she was giving a luncheon party, and went swimming with Cooney and Vic. I took a running dive into the lake to tease Cooney and he caught up with me and bit me by accident. It is a hole 1/2 inch deep. I went to the doctor in the neighborhood and he cauterized it and said it was the deepest dog bite he had ever seen. Now my leg hurts me very much but it will be OK he said. Kathy is playing on the floor now, making Bronx cheers and yelling at Cooney who likes her but keeps his distance because she pulls his tail. I don't see any point in getting mad at him -- I should know by now he chases divers and not tempt him. Vic is playing some good jig music now, we had chili for lunch and all in all, despite casualties, it is a real treat for us to come to Grandma's house. Mom sends love, so do everybody else, most of all your martyred frau.

OOOXXX

Jill

AL TO JILL JULY 10, 1944 V-MAIL

Dear Love,

A day of surprises since I am writing you in full afternoon with time to spare while I'm awaiting for some administrative confusion to be disentangled so that I can get about my work. I should easily finish this page, I have so much to say. A few minutes ago I was halted on the staircase by no other than George Peck, big as life in a naval ensign's uniform. I was very happy to see him, though I could only spend five minutes with him before I was called away on a nothing. But I arranged for him to eat dinner with me tonight at 7:30 and should be able to pump him unmercifully all evening. He said I looked thin which is what I've been telling you. He just recently arrived in these parts and only left America in May, lucky fellow. He saw Buzz in Washington too. I had no idea he was heading this way. What a pleasant shock. Just when I needed it because I was tired of not seeing people with whom I had a past in common.

I remember now that I ought to say something about my bonds. Before my temperature rises too quickly I ought to say it. The presumptuous stupidity of that letter was too much. They acted as if no part of the fault was theirs whereas everyone in finance knows what a bungled mess the whole thing was at the time of the changeover last March. A number of people are in the same boat. Furthermore, it may be very difficult for me to do anything here. Someday I may get the money back. But no one here at the moment has the proper application forms and they won't give me a refund nor did a finance office major think I could do anything about it without getting a statement from each and every finance officer (!!!!) who has paid me in the last year to show that they had really deducted the \$18.75. How do you like that? On the chance that the form and statement will work alone, I shall keep asking whenever the occasion presents itself for that application for bonds form. Meanwhile, I shall discontinue deducting that amount every month, commencing with the month of July. I hope you have better luck with your benefits trouble. That's another mess, and not our fault either.

I had a very good lasagna dinner yesterday at the house of a friend named Lionetti. They had some of the best old wine that has ever touched these parched lips, a slightly sweet red dinner wine with all the flavor of very old Chianti. It was a family wine and therefore has no name that means anything. It ought to be named "Labori di Jill".

All my love to you now, darling, and kisses to Kathy. Hurry up, damned peace!

Al

JILL TO AL JULY 12, 1944

Darling --

Kathy is crouched on the floor at the moment, drinking in the heavenly strains of the Duke's Creole Love Song. I am about to fly out and get some more of his records. I think I've played this one worn through the last couple of days. It really is a revelation and I'm ashamed that the good things of life have come to me so late (like meeting you at 20, having a baby at 24 and falling in love with the Duke at 25).

This is one of those mercifully grey days and Kathy has been very good about staying indoors and letting Momma recuperate from dog bite. My leg feels better today although I could hardly walk on it last night, necessitating Mom coming home from *[with?]* me, making the safari through a blinding rainstorm. We didn't get home until 11 and I slept until almost nine this morning, a great treat. Mom got up and gave Kathy breakfast, for she didn't sleep although she got to bed no earlier than the big folk.

But the most awful thing happened. We were sitting around chewing the fat about five yesterday afternoon, the boys, Mom and a loudmouthed Syrian friend of their and the doorbell rung and you guess who it was. The police. That damn doctor went

and reported my bite to them -- I guess it's the law, like having to report gunshot wounds -- and now poor Cooney has to spend a couple of weeks again in durance vile. I said to the cop, "It's a fine country when a person's own dog can't even bit them without the police coming" but he didn't appreciate my legal interpretation and said chidingly, "Now lady, you don't really mean that, do you." I said I would be careful not to bite anybody the next two weeks until Cooney's health had been determined and he didn't think that was funny either. So poor Cooney has to go to the vet's. We were going to let the pound take him but Dad, who is constantly threatening to kick Cooney in the head, wouldn't let

him go because he didn't think the Pound would treat him right. So now Cooney is residing at a private vet's and again 15 bucks, probably mine, will go floating away. I was really more afraid of what Dad would think and how mad he would be at Cooney than anything else, and Mom and I didn't know exactly how to break the news to him that Cooney had lacerated me. But he, unpredictable as ever, and as you are, wasn't too mad at the dog, even going so far as to claim Cooney had tried to save me from drowning and had thus intercepted my dive into the lake.

We all think it is very funny and Mom suggests I write a book, the royalties to be used to defray the costs of maintaining Cooney, on "My life with Cooney." You can imagine how Rube Goldbergish the whole thing must have sounded to Dad, who arrived home late last night to find Mom gone without a trace, and then to be confronted by a midnight phone call, Mom explaining that she had gone South because Jill got a bite. It would drive a lesser man mad.

I got your letter of July 3 when I came in last night, a nice homecoming. You seem to be having fun going to theater and all. Jeepers, I hardly get to the Pic once every third moon. Yes, I've wondered too what you would think of coming back to the academic environment after the life active, but certainly would reserve judgement on any possible future until you come back

and decide pretty much for yourself. I just don't want to live in a Chicago apartment if we can help it.

I'm enclosing one article that should be of interest and another that's faintly amusing from the Sun, both. I started to read the first page of the Italian one on Sunday and made a mental note then to put aside the paper until I had time to clip it, but it was only today that I got to reading the whole thing and discovering how highly relevant it was.

I feel very virtuous. I paid all the bills for the month now and better run out and mail them all before the deadline for the gas net bill expires. I put them in the buggy but forgot to mail them earlier and then Kathy chewed up the one to the rental agency so I had to throw it away and write another check. What a brave bouncing girl she is. She can hold her bottle by herself now, did you know?

Sweetheart, a million big kisses to you. Come home soon.

All my love,

PS Why didn't you tell me your APO was changed or were you waiting to see how long it would take to dawn on me? You know I don't read those things.

AL TO JILL JULY 12, 1944 V-MAIL

Dearest,

Admittedly I am in no condition to write a letter after a morning of ranting, raving and swearing. I got an order approved to do something and no one seems ever to have considered the indispensable elements of supplies, transport and personnel. So I fume and fume, and am angry about everything, and wish this damn thing would be over and I could see you again. I don't even remember saying that I was lonely for you in the letters of this last week though any fool can plainly tell that I'm not

interested in anything so much as getting to where you are and staying there. Well, I'll say it now and let it go for the week; I miss you and wish you could help me pick some of the plums that are now ripe in my garden. I would gladly evict Jack Collins in your favor, take over the room with the double bed and deed my own to Kathy. And then I could let all the mal administration in the world rage around my unperturbed brow. Yesterday I got your letter of June 29, telling of the heat, giving some very good Dewey slogans, some educational theories involving the physical sciences (though some of the most impractical people are physical scientists). And best of all the pictures of Kathy which are the best of all of hers. She is everything you say and more, and take back all doubts I may have implied that she is not the best-looking, healthiest, best-tended, happiest child in the world. She is indeed most charming. I wish so much that I could see her. she must be all sorts of fun, even as you day. Damn it all. I am very much annoyed by all this work and no play with you or Kathy. I shall not do much more shopping for you. It is very difficult to buy for people in America. The stockings, for example, are too small, they are 9 1/2 and the largest they had. A lire is one cent, you ought to know by this time. However, you can still be my sweetheart and send me some cigarettes, some chocolate and some coffee in bottles when you have time. Then I'll buy you lots of chocolate sundaes when I get back. Just think of it, hundreds of them cool nights, nights with each other, no army, light duty, toujours l'amour, and everything nice.

I should stop this and go eat lunch before I go mad. But I have to confess that I miss you more than my lunch and have always been slightly mad over you no matter what the schizo screen may have concealed.

I had a fine quiet evening with George Peck the night before last and will tell you the latest in my next letter. Many kisses to you, my love, and many to Kathy too.

Your Al

JILL TO AL JULY 13, 1944 V-MAIL

Angel pie --

I have a headache, a sore throat, my white glasses are broken and my leg hurts and my nose is peeling. Some weirdie named Klaus Ollendorff, whom I believed you had social intercourse with last year before you left, called me up earlier to play bridge with him and the Neugartens. Now, Mr. DeG., my problem is, what excuse shall I give to him when I break the date (as I inevitably break all dates not with you). Oh yes, and I was washing out some turnip tops in the sink before supper and left the water on while leisurely taking a crap, and before I knew it the sink had jammed and there was two inches of water on the kitchen floor, which I had needs to sweep out and mop up.

Other than that my life is very gay and really, I feel rather good in an awful way right this very minute. I guess nothing ever depresses me, now that I know the war will not be so long in the winning. I went to the beach today with Diane and that new little cutey, Liza, and we met Priscilla Berquist down there. I borrowed Priscilla's bike and dashed to the IC and thence downtown, thinking to get my glasses fixed but when I arrived that jerk of an eye doctor was out to lunch and I didn't feel like waiting so I shall have to repeat the whole process tomorrow again. And I do so loathe going downtown, particularly in this warm weather with a bathing suit underneath my outer garments. Anyway I always trip on the IC platform.

All in all I don't feel like playing bridge, a waste of time at best and particularly in the summer. I hope we never have to play it with anybody, just parlor games with ourselves and the family. It's so gruesomely competitive. And the Neugartens have turned out to be dull company. The long line of sad events in Bea's life this winter and spring have left her very depressed and washed-out, and while I don't blame her I certainly can't say I like people with troubles. I guess I was never cut out to be a Florence Nightingale. I hope I don't make too great demands on other people for sympathy for that would hardly be fair, as I don't like

giving it to other people very much, unless they are badly hurt or I love them or they are dogs or cats. I know consciously I resent people feeling sorry for me, which is why I act so obnoxiously cocky with the neighbors and people like that, but I probably liked to be babied as well as the next person, which tendency I ask you to sternly suppress in the future, since otherwise in all justice I would have to give that kind of attention to other people.

The pork chops, my nightly fare, are hissing and spitting in the frying pan. I surely am fond of them and anyway I don't have points for beef or lamb. Do you like them as well as I do? You probably think they are indigestible, which they are, and will caution me not to eat them, the way you always did about coffee. As a matter of fact I practically never drink coffee anymore because it's so much trouble to make for one person, and I find I am sleeping relatively well these nights. But I don't think there's any cause and effect, because I don't sleep any worse the nights of the days I've had a morning coke, say. Well, that's a dull thought to end a letter on.

I love you more than anybody could.

AL TO JILL JULY 13, 1944 V-MAIL

Darling Jill,

You have a nerve painting pictures of the cool waters slapping against the rocks and of Kathy knocking over a chocolate sundae, while the heat and these maddening little problems suck out all my energy, wit, and literary ability. I can hardly think of anything to write, much less fine twists and turns of style like your letters of the 29 and 30 were full of (so what terrible English?). I must say again, in any case, that I continue to enjoy the pictures of Kathy, the tiny ones, on every occasion. They are really completely charming. And they show half a dozen moods. They might be very nice enlarged. You ask me how I know they

were virgins. Well, I had to chase them a mile down the side of a mountain before I could get them to pose for a picture and then had to give them the best part of my hard rock candy supply. I'll take more pictures of things soon to send you.

I feel in a great mood to bitch at the moment, but nothing seems to come out. I don't have that fine ability of yours to delineate perfectly the abuses under which you labor. The telephone, for example. It's horrible. I used to think the complete breakdown of communications was bad, but the exhaustion and nervous prostration that comes from trying to use my telephone is ten times as insidious. And the damn thing rings when I hand up. It won't stop so that I spend half the time searching desperately for numbers to call to keep it from ringing, and the rest of time in drunken flight from the office. Thank God this can't last forever. Please look into the quiet farm situation, before I have you looking for quiet sanatoriums.

It has just turned a year since the Sicilian business began. That's a long time to spend in any country except America. I never thought I'd do it without you, but "thereyouare". That's enough for all the sins of my life. I hope the good lord takes it out of my term in purgatory. My chief future sin will be, I hope, overindulgence - gluttony and so forth. When you think of how hungry I get without much effort and with respect to food which is definitely inferior a good deal of the time, you realize the great trial of your life is coming. One, can one woman buy enough food in one day to keep him going, two, will he evidence signs of interest towards his outer environment at all, save for the ingestive process. On the latter, I can say, yes, he will, but I hesitate to add on what similar primitive level.

George Peck dropped up today for a minute or two. It is certainly nice to see him around again. I have nice memories of you through him.

Love to you both.

Al

End of July (first of two parts) 1944 letters

