

Monday, May 23, 1949, Bethesda

Dear Pop,

I'm ashamed to see from my small files that it has been almost three weeks since I last wrote to you. Time has slipped by, and each day I hoped that the next day would see an opportunity to write to you. I finally received a letter from you, happily, and was glad to see that you had been having such a nice trip in Switzerland. William and I do so enjoy envying you as we read about it!

We have been busy as we could be, painting the porch and the porch furniture and working on the garden. I mow and William trims our fantastic great bank, which we hope will eventually be worthy of the name of a myrtlebank. At present it is a question of trimming the wild grasses and extracting the more obvious weeds, the while we hopefully watch to see new leaves on the myrtle. I have finally planted something myself! Some ivy plants in the back terrace beside the flagstones. Each day the children take bottles and water the ivy, fighting for who is to have the honor. At present it is a small but virile growth, with what I hope is a great future. Our rambler roses have been in bloom, delightfully so. The dandelions and wild garlic are fortunately gone, all gone, with never a tear to mourn them. William is going to take two weeks of his month off at the end of this month, and we hope he will be able to paint the front of the house at least during that time. We are also going to take the boy up to Flemington one weekend, and collect him again the following weekend. During that time we are going to prepare for and give a giant, or jumbo cocktail party as a sort of Gran Despedida for the Dawsons. According to Virginia Davis, we should be able to handle about forty people. If it doesn't happen to be a rainy or cold night on June 9th we can use our porch and perhaps even the terrace with good luck, and so in that case there would be no great press of people in the living and dining rooms, but I shall consider myself most ill-used by fortune if it does rain that evening. The boy's being away will make the preparations easier, and of course it would be well-nigh impossible for him to try to sleep with a party like that going on.

If I had written a few days earlier I could have reported model behavior on L.J.'s part, but this very morning he fell from a long period of grace, and was seen by a neighbor of mine in her car, to be walking down the dreadful, dangerous Georgetown Road, following his latest love, the garbage truck. So he is now locked up for the afternoon in his play area, supposedly to think over his indiscretion. How will I ever teach that boy safety!.... He has his new swimming pool, the size of his sandbox, and during some hot days we had he has been able to use it, along with his pals the Meleny children. Speaking of which, he has proposed to Betsey, in the following gallant manner: They were chasing each other around the dining room table one day, and he said, "By the way, when I grow up to be an engineer and you grow up to be a lady, I'll marry you." Betsey wasn't coy, nor did she feign surprise. "All right. But first 'd better ask my mother." And that was the end of the matter, so I daresay subject to parental approval, it's all settled. This morning when I found him (not far from home) I found him with the usual impressed audience, this time a lady householder who had asked him if he was lost. She told me he said no, he could find his way home to Glenwood Road "wery well". She asked him why he was following the garbage truck, and he replied that it was because if he didn't get to be an engineer,

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he was going to be a garbage truck driver when he grew up. He was only afraid they wouldn't sell ~~them~~ their truck to him, and he showed ~~many~~ her the pennies he had saved up in the pocket of his blue jeans with a view to purchasing the truck. He follows these garbage men all over the neighborhood, but this is the first time he has gone out of the area onto the Georgetown Road in pursuit of them. He follows one man or the other, and directs operations with the garbage cans, indicating where he thinks his man has been remiss in emptying this or that can, and pointing out articles which may have dropped from his sack on the way back to the truck. They take it in a spirit of fun I'm glad to say, and so far I have realized that it would be quite useless to try to stop him from doing it. He is very often a garbage truck himself, and one day even honored me with the title of "the mamma garbage truck", for which distinction I was suitably grateful, knowing his feelings on the matter. When he is a garbage truck he makes a grinding noise, indicating that the refuse is being ground up inside himself, as well as the usual truck-like "Bobp-bop" which is often his only mode of address while impersonating a motor-vehicle.

The boy keeps calling me pitifully, asking if it isn't yet supper time, so I suppose I'd better begin it right now. When he is not incarcerated and in solitary confinement he is almost impossible to drag in from play, but being lonely in disgrace today, things are considerably differente.

Love,