

November 28, 1949  
Bethesda, Maryland

Dear Mary Alice,

In honor of my typewriter's being fixed at last so that it can write J's again, here's a letter of thanks for your kind letter. It was very nice indeed of you to write me a fan letter, and sometime I hope to do the same for you. Mr. Kenpton also thrilled me with a short note, so I think I'll have to buy some violet ribbon and tie the two of them together so I can read them over and over again when I'm old and grey (or should I say greyer?)

We were so glad to hear that you are going to have a baby, because in spite of their faults they are sort of fun. I'll never forget how I took all sorts of books to the Clinica Cordoba when Laurence John arrived, and then instead of reading them I just sat there like a broody hen contemplating how wonderful the baby was and how terribly clever I'd been to produce such a marvelous little creature. Couldn't read a thing, I was so proud. I even thought he was beautiful, although now when I look at his first baby pictures I'm amazed to discover that actually he was rather nondescript; with Dumbo ears, at that. But there's a lot to be said for having a nursemaid, etc. to take over when mother gets weary. So for your sake I hope they won't transfer you to Washington right away.

We're going on at the usual pace here, slowly but surely going into debt and eating away at our capital, etc. But it's healthy, anyway. May Skardtvedt's house is only a short distance away, and is very clean and pretty. She's working very hard, poor girl, but the first months are always the hardest. Same applies to the Kuhlmann family. Little Kay Anna is as cute as a button, cuter than most buttons. The Manns have a nice house only ten or fifteen minutes drive away from the Department, and Nancy has it fixed up most attractively. They are certainly among the world's finest people, both of them. I hope they will appreciate Tom as he should be appreciated, and make him an ambassador as soon as possible. Nobody has consulted me on the matter yet, but when they do, that's what I'll tell them to do.

The house you have was always one of my favorites. It seems so sort of happy and cheerful! I imagine the extra living space provided by walling in the porch must make it even better. As I remember Rosette had water problems there, however, but probably the Tovars attended to them when they returned. One of the best parts of living in the United States is that you can run the water like crazy and it still keeps coming- but I'd still exchange it for hot and cold running maid service!

The Whirling Dervish will be back from Nursery School any moment, so I'd better have his lunch ready for him. Thank you again for your kind and cheering letter.

Best wishes to all three of you,