

5208 Glenwood Road  
Bethesda, Maryland  
November 12, 1948

Dear Virginia and family,

Here we are, finally. At home at the above address, after many vicissitudes, spelled wrong, I think. It was my sad but firm conviction for several long, weary months that we would never again unpack our suitcases, and never again have a house of our own. Now I'm happy to be able to report that we have upturned the last suitcase to shake the dust out of it, and I have (last night, in fact) finished the last bedspread, and hung the last curtain. Whee!

Our progress north from Venezuela was scarcely triumphal, due to many things beyond our control: Laurence John's seasickness, for example. As soon as we left the harbor of La Guaira our precocious son confounded the medical science available on board by becoming violently ill each half hour for three days out of five. The doctor assured me that children under six never suffered mal de mer, but L.J. merely proved himself old for his age. Once in the United States, he set out to see how long he could go without eating and sleeping. We stayed with Janie, William's sister, in Waco for about a week, and managed to have ourselves quite a time in spite of the four children under four and under our feet. We had dinner and went swimming with Nancy's sister- as nice as ever. What steaks they have out there! This thick. Then we went on to Newark, Ohio, but by that time L.J. had convinced us that it was time to settle down and find a permanent home, so we left there sooner than expected and parked on my mamma's farm in New Jersey, where 400 baby chicks, a goose, and eleven puppies captured the boy's affections immediately. We vegetated there happily for a few weeks, then William came down here, sublet an apartment for two months, and set to work. I used to come down week-ends and join in the house-hunt. We came to the conclusion very soon that we would have to buy a house, although people assured us that it was perfectly possible to find a good rented house or apartment in only six months to a year of diligent searching. In any case, we found this house that pleased us both very much (in fact, we found any number of nice houses for sale) and so now the mortgage company and the Kriegs own it. It's brick painted white, has a medium sized yard that isn't too hard for William to mow and rake, has a nice flag-stoned terrace in back with one of those outdoor fireplaces in it, and we've put up a picket-fence enclosed area for L.J. We are in a nice hilly neighborhood where the houses aren't all like multiple Siamese twins (the curse of the Washington area, in my opinion) and are right next to some delightful woods. The house was built in 1940, and seems to be a lot steadier on its beam than the dear old homestead in Campo Alegre! We had to paint inside, though. But that gave me an opportunity to indulge my passion for dark grey walls and flat white woodwork. We bought a new dining room outfit and some occasional tables, also a new grey rug to match the walls. I had a wonderful time painting the bricks of the fireplace black, and the walls of L.J.'s room yellow. Now the place is all fixed up, and I'm proud as can be of it, especially since it's all my baby.

I got some nice slip-covers made for the pregnancy chair and the John Page Hoover chair, in a print with strawberries (to match the red love seats) on a background of green leaves and yellow. Gay. The previous owner kindly built some ceiling-to-floor bookshelves on one side of the living room which have come in very handy. My dear mamma kindly gave me some of her furniture, so I now could lie supinely on a down-stuffed chaise longue in the bedroom, if I ever had time enough to do so! Come next summer we will be able to take advantage of the nice screened porch in back, but since we moved in about September first, we haven't used it much yet except as a place for the boy to play on rainy days. You would be amazed to see me in the role of the Compleat Housewife. I'm glad to say I have sunk under the weight of it all yet, and since the worst of it (the moving) is over, I guess I'll live. In fact the truth of the matter is that I feel virtuous as heck and am rather enjoying the noble feeling which results from having tired feet, aching back and dishpan hands in a good cause. I flabbergasted myself and family by making a dust ruffle for our new Hollywood beds, the aforementioned ruffled bedspread, and any number of curtains BY HAND! Me, who would always pin on buttons when they fell off in the old days. Deary, deary me!

I wish I could have answered your nice letter much sooner. Circumstances, mostly work, ganged up to prevent me from doing so at every turn. All of which doesn't mean that we have forgotten the Hoovers. Far from it. To this day, when asked who gave him the Knock-out bench, L.J. will shout "Virginia HOOVER did!" in a tone to deafen. I very much miss living near to you, and Cynthia, and Nancy and the rest. What with housework and the lack of Paily I'm in the house all day, and seldom see the various girls who are in Washington now except at parties, once or twice a month. But we have seen a whole slew of William's old acquaintances as well as those we have in common. Jane Dawson and Allan are as nice as ever, and we see relatively a lot of them. Virginia Davis sometimes drives over but we can't sit and gab as we did in Caracas. Jane Dawson had a wonderful party recently when Jesse Knox was here, and just after the Armstrongs turned up. Captain Armstrong has a most intelligent brother-in-law, you'll be fascinated to hear. Jesse is quite thin, due to illness (better now, though) and reports that Charley is literally languishing and fading away in Tel Aviv. No word about Curt, that I know of. Bain Davis went out with Dana to take her skating, fell on the ice and broke his wrist. The Dawson baby is cute as a button, and after a month or two of howling his head off nightly, has settled down to be a worthy infant indeed. Allan makes a wonderful fond papa, it's a sight to see him give little "T.C." the six-o'clock bottle. William likes and admires his boss Shelly Mills very much indeed, so that makes his new job pleasant for him. It's a positive delight to go to the Venezuelan Embassy for parties, and watch the dear old Venezolanos knocking themselves out to be pleasant as possible! But the ladies still find it dreadfully difficult to resist the temptation to sit down and contemplate infinity in stead of dashing about Talking to the Guests. Somehow all this appeals to me as being faintly funny, so I always enjoy invitations to the Embassy. We had quite a time when Betancourt was in town. He joined in with the spirit of things there at the Embassy and greeted us as if we had been his best friends in Caracas! Oh dear, no more paper! Anyway, much love,