

Bethesda, Aug. 29, 1949

Dear Ane (and Allan)

An overdue letter! Life has been creeping up and pouncing at me viciously all summer. Dates and months and time in general is all rather vague, but I do know that it has been strenuous, and I'm not sure yet who won the fight, me or life. The Hoovers arrived simultaneously with a letter announcing that they were coming to Washington on leave sometime in June; I think. They and the two boys stayed in our house while I spent a week at Flemington, N. J. (By the way, this typewriter will no longer write the letter between I and K, since Laurence John has been practicing on it.) Then I came home again, and they stayed for another week, departing as the plumbers started to wreck my kitchen to put in a new DISHWASHER and DISPOSAL, heaven bless them both. The Dishwasher etc. was only in working order for a week or two when William's sister Ane Drake appeared for a two weeks stay with her husband and three children under five. I shudder violently when I think what that visit would have been without the dishwasher and disposal. As it is, I am still somewhat weak, although half a month has passed since they departed. But William's sister is a grand girl, charming and good-looking and cheerful in spite of her overwhelming burdens. I guess I must be a wussy of the first order, because just caring for the four little characters (with mine) for two weeks flattened me to pancake size and left me gasping for breath. Bedlam would have been a rest cure in comparison. We have also been painting our house, shutters, trim and all, with the one happy result that I haven't gained an ounce, but contrariwise have lost three pounds. I did the shutters and most of the trim, so I am now announcing that the shutters are French grey at this point and will remain so for the rest of our tour of duty in Washington, come hell high water and hurricanes.

Since you departed we have been cut off from our only source of juicy gossip, so you will have to correspond ~~from~~ with someone else to know what cooks at the department. But we did attend an extremely pleasant ARA party at Shelley's house some time ago, - a sort of farewell party for the Woodwards, on their departure for the War College. We have a new desk officer for Peru, Jim Lobenstine, whose wife I am beginning to love dearly though I haven't met her as yet, because she is going to take my son to nursery school come fall, in exchange for the rides William is going to give her husband. I had been worried about how the boy was going to get transported, and Mrs. Lobenstine appears to be rushing to the rescue.

How do you like our friend Tom Connally's remarks about the Foreign Service? What with that and the article in the Sat. Eve. Post it's about time the entire Department of State went out and ate worms. I regret to state that it makes my blood boil to have my husband and his colleagues referred to as lying bastards in the public press, but I suppose I should take it all in a spirit of good clean fun, and remember that probably more than half of the Department's employees can't vote, for one reason or another. But someday, somewhere, I'd like to see someone say something, just anything, good about some branch of the Dept of State.

Duty calls, only it's actually Laurence John's voice. We miss you as much as we expected, Alack. Love,