

September 9, 1949, Bethesda, Md.

Dear Auntie Piet,

It was simply delightful to get a letter from you, and naturally, most unexpected. I haven't been writing this summer at all: no letters, no postcards, no nothing. I have been having guests and things instead. I started out in May to prepare for a huge cocktail party as a despedida for Ane and Allan Dawson, who were transferred to Santiago de Chile much to our regret but their delight. That came off in the beginning of June (this typewriter has refused to write the letter between I and K ever since the boy started practicing his letters on it) and left me weak but triumphant. We spent a week or so at Flemington with Grandmamma, and when we came back it was to receive a letter from Montevideo saying that John and Virginia Hoover were arriving in Washington at the end of June. Since it was then the end of June, the Hoovers arrived the day after their letter did. They moved in with us because I couldn't stand to see them pay out all that money for a hotel. They left ten days or so later, because the plumbers arrived to install (Oh Glorious Day!) my Dishwasher and Disposall unit, when meant tearing up the kitchen. The kitchen was torn up for a week or two while I painted and they installed and then later came back to fix mistakes (which EVEN American plumbers seem to make) and the dear, wonderful mechanisms had only been in working order for a week or so when William's sister Ane, her husband Norman, little Barbara (aged five), little Laurie (aged three) and little Robert (aged one and a half) arrived for a visit. Followed two weeks and a day of such scenes as the walls of this house have probably never witnessed. With four small children and four adults to feed, wash, clean up after, and keep from suicide (that is, in the case of the children!) Ane and I hardly had an hour to spare all the time for talk. I can still hear the thundering hard as it came galloping down the stairs in the very early morning shouting "I want my Pablum" "I'm hungry, Aunt Philinda!" "So am I, mamma!" or- from little Robie, simply "I EAT! I EAT! Aunt Ph'inda, I eat WIGHT NOW!" The mop was hung by the kitchen door in constant readiness for the many occasions on which the bathroom wasn't reached in time. Nobody had the same napping hours as anybody else. By the time we finally bathed all four of them in the same tub, put on all the paamas, told all the stories, answered all the requests for water, drained all the older ones and changed Robert for the last time, it would be anywhere from nine to ten at night, and after dinner ourselves we were only too eager to go to bed. Heavenly days! When that was over it was time for us to settle down to painting our house, which William and I finally managed to do. I painted the trim and the shutters, William painted the brick. We know look quite respectable. But dearie, dearie me, I hope it's a nice quiet winter!

It's fall now. I have entered Laurence John in nursery school, and he will start next week unless he comes down with the chicken pox, to which he has been violently exposed. All we need now is a case of chicken pox to liven things up a bit. I had hoped Pop would be coming this winter, but he has snagged a perfectly wonderful job with the I.T. and T. in Madrid which will last for from four to six months, pay him handsomely, and keep him off the rolls of the retired for a little longer. I'm delighted for his sake that his ego is being bolstered in such a heady manner. That's about all the news from this front. I do so hope we'll be seeing you this Christmas. We are still at 5208 Glenwood in spite of you mamma's dreams. So come! Love,