

Jan. 31, 1950  
Bethesda

Dear Darling,

First of all, I love you. And second, I love you still more, and third, a bit more of the same. There now, first things first! I am getting along splendidly, paying all the bills as I should, not spending too much money (so far!), keeping cheerful and muddle-headed as usual, going to bed early, being good as gold, and missing you in a delicately excruciating little way, or I should say ways: in the morning, when I don't put out your soup spoon for the cereal, and don't have to make your bed; in the evening, when it doesn't matter that it's seven o'clock and dinner's not made; at night, when I have to remember to turn the thermostat down myself and nobody pats me once I'm in bed; all during the day, when I think to myself "I'll have to tell William about that!" I do love you so very, very much my dear, and no one else will do at all. I have suddenly discovered that I love you slightly better than anyone in the world, even including our dear boy. So take care of yourself.

Not only that, but a fly got in the house and there's no one about to catch it for me!

Jim Lobenstein collected the books for the Bernbaum children on Monday morning and presumably they will be on their way to Quito as soon as possible. I hope they arrive there more or less the same time you do, but in any case you can tell them about the books when you see them. Tell Betty how proud we all were of her during the earthquake business.

I had a aptry on Saturday night as planned, but on Friday night I wished it had been that evening, because it was then I missed you most desperately and lovingly. However, the Davis and Harry came over and we had a gay evening indeed, lasting till two in the morning. Heavenly days! We played canasta and really had quite a high old time of it, all four of us- including Uncle Bain, who was gayer and more devil-may-care than it now seems possible to imagine. Virginia had two cocktails and two whiskey sodas with refined though spectacular results. I, also, had uncounted numbers of drinks which I thoroughly enjoyed at the time and which I didn't regret until the following day. My souffle rose to dizzying heights, what's more. In short, everyone rose to the occasion.

Mother arrived the following afternoon, much to Laurence's delight. The boy's cold is still with him so he has not been back to school, but he is getting over it fast now, and his appetite is returning. We have had a series of chilly, rainy days so I've been glad that mother was here to help keep the young man entertained during his incarceration. I went down to the library with Gail yesterday and brought back four count'em four lovely English detective stories so both of us are up to our ears in chills and thrills.

Jane Dawson came over this noon and took me to the Mills for lunch. Francesca kindly had a wonderful spread for us (Virginia, Dickie Penniman, Jane and me) and we heard all about the troubles of life in Santiago and the evils of the packing firms down there. Once more I say Francesca is a wonderfully kind person. Jane is

-2-

pleased because she finally got Billy into Sidwell Friend's School, and he started yesterday. Little Teecee came along with us as far as the sitter's house, and kept asking for "Ba"- Billy. He apparently takes a dim view of Billy's not being there all day any more.

The Kuhlmanns have taken pity on my widow's state and have invited me over there for Friday night. Alice said little Kay Anna is getting along quite well, although the doctors were worried about her blood, and gave her a transfusion a few days ago to act as a pick-me-up. However, Kay Anna is feeling her oats. Alice said her crib is sometimes moved to the hall, beside the nurses' desk, and the other day while she was lying there she spied a fascinating paper on the nurses desk and was moved to crawl or walk to the end of her crib and reach for it over the crib's side. Of course the nurses and doctors were delighted, for that was the first time she had traveled so far since she got sick. Apparently she had no other temptations to move again for several days, but then again she took a few steps in her crib much to everyone's delight.

Mother has offered to stay with the boy while I go up to New York and see father when he arrives. I had had it all settled in my mind that I wouldn't go up and spend all the money, but that was before you went away. I find my attitude has changed considerably, and now I think I will do it. I wish there were some way to ask you if it's all right, and if you approve, but I don't think there is, other than cabling you, which would be rather silly and expensive. It would make such a fine break in the MONTH that the temptation is well-nigh irresistible. I am still in the process of thinking it over, and haven't yet made inquiries as to the exact landing date of the Saturnia. I expect it will be the ninth or tenth of February. That would be a Thursday or Friday, and I would perhaps spend most of the weekend in New York before coming back to Bethesda. I could then do the famous spring cleaning for a week or ten days and finally be ready to receive daddy and Helen when they come, earlier than they expected- I hope. I trust I could persuade them to come down sooner than March first if I went up and met them there. Mother thinks daddy would be disappointed if I didn't go up and meet them when they come. I don't know, maybe he would. In any case, I am so very lonesome in spite of mother and Laurence John that any break in the lonesome monotony would be a great help, and that's what it boils down to. I gravely fear I just ain't no good without you. I cherish the optimistic hope that if I had the trip to New York to look forward to from now till the ninth, and father's arrival to look forward to from then on, plus the busy-ness of cleaning, plus the general feeling that the 27th of Feb. were fast approaching, I'd be happier about things in general. I consulted Virginia, Francesca and Jane this afternoon, and those three ladies all recommended the trip vehemently and easily. It's not their money going down the drain, of course, but they were unanimous in asserting that I was to ignore that angle completely. While it's still all in a state of flux, or of si dios quiere, I'd be willing to go as far as stating that I'll probably go to New York.

Well, my dear heart, goodbye. Bear in mind that I love you in a manner that can only be described as excessive. I knew it all along, of course, but I know it all the better now.