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761 Scotland Road
Orange, New Jersey
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Dearest ,

A most reprehensible delay in writing to you, love. For a week after I came back here a black and morbid depression cause by the unaccustomed and most unwelcome cold of the Far North, coupled with some quite unaccountable mental factors, held me in evi~~in~~ sway. In short, I was in the dumps. When your cable came it jerked me up. But the tragedy of the situation is that letter number 34 to which you refer has not shown up, and I fear has been lost between here and Miami. The reason I think so is that my former boss wrote and said he had forwarded a letter "from Africa" to my Coconut Grove address, way back on September 21st. I have received letter 33, but 34 hasn't come. It would have to be just that one that went astray. Apparatly the lost one came via some traveler. Does it sound reasonable?

Natu~~ally~~ally I knew nothing whatsoever about the Portuguese vessel, so I went into New York to find out. I went up to the British consulate to collect my visa, and found the people there absolutely lovely to me. One gentleman scurried around and found about the addresses of the agents of the Portuguese companies in New York, so I went to see them, finding to my delight that it is easy as anything to obtain a reservation from here to Lisbon, and from Lisbon to West African ports. The hitch is that they are all pretty far from Nigeria, and no one in New York even hazzards a guess as to whether or not it is possible to get from Angola or some such place to Nigeria these days. It is lovely to know that it is possible to get somewhere near you, at least! That makes me feel on hundred and ten percent better. That, and the fact that you wouldn't have mentioned a Portuguese boat if it were impossible to get from Portuguese ports to Nigeria. Darn that silly letter for getting lost!

Wishing I knew whether I could bank on your being able to get the information to me again, I wrote to Mr. Jester again, asking him if he knew anything about it. I hope to get an answer in a couple of days, because I wrote air mail. If he doesn't know, I shall reluctantly spend ten dollars on a cable to you. The thing is that I should like to be able to start things moving in the Portuguese visa line, which I can't do until I get reservations out of any Portuguese territory I touch. They say at the Portuguese consulate that it takes from one to four weeks to get an answer to a visa application back.

There, my pet, you have the situation. All in all, it isn't at all a bad situation. It seems to me that things are clearing up noticeably, and that within a couple or three or four months we ought to be able to get together on things. If only you had told me something about these delightful Portuguese boats beforehand! Still, things could be decidedly worse, quoi, and I love you to distraction, and you are a remarkably sweet and wonderful man, and everything's going to be all right in the aforementioned couple or three or four months! As for the decidedly long trip it will be, I don't give a d----! A long trip is good for the general health and takes your mind off of petty things. What you must do is tell me immediately if not sooner by all possible methods exactly how to use these Portuguese boats and where to go. If I can get that info, I shall start on my way with a particularly joyous song.

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Nothing new on the home front, except that my wonderful little niece has developed wavy platinum blond hair that is the delirious joy of her relatives and the secret pride of her mamma. I haven't been doing anything startling beside brooding about ways and means of getting to Nigeria (every time I say that I remember the perennial comment of the people around PAA: "What, Nigeria? - You don't actually want to go there!") Thank goodness people around here don't think it's so funny. Well, I've been reading, and dreaming, and visiting my brother and his family, and my father, and seeing some ancient and not-so-ancient friends. I got all dressed up in my spangly evening best the other Saturday and attended an Army Air Corps social function. For some reason being in spangly evening best always brings out the worst in me, and I want to play nasty childish tricks and be undignified. This time I contented myself by watching how proudly uncomfortable the budding airmen were in the ir beautiful O.D. uniforms. Poor dears, they were having ~~times~~ the time of their lives. Please believe me that it's not only my typing that's awful, but also this dear old typewriter of yours, which loves to skip and jump around. Or am I just making excuses for myself?

Perhpas you said something about that in the famous letter 34, but in any case let me remind you agin that I should like to know what in the way of household furnishings should be taken over there. On second thought I think I was just making excuses for myself- the typing I do is probably the worst ever seen on the face of the earth. Anyway darling love, please rush all the info you can think of re getting to Nigeria via Portugal.

Here's all my love, sweet.

Phinda