

[Transcription begins]

#13 Monday 12-13-43

Dear Douglas:

I meant to clip an item from Saturday's paper telling of the terrific wind we had Friday night. Plate glass windows were blown in down town and limbs of trees, of course! and poles toppled here and there. With it was quite a drop in temperature and just a flurry of snow but for a time we thought we were in for our first blizzard. Yesterday had quite a rise in temperature but again this morning the thermometer is dropping and the wind is whistling round the building. I thought you might be interested to read of it for I think you are where it is hot (in more ways than one, am I right?)

Well, now let's see what we can find for news of the week. Tuesday night we attended a birthday party for Ed Metcalfe, a date easy to remember for it is December 7th. Dad's was on the tenth but no special observance except for a warm brown cap with earflaps from me and a book "Low Man on a Totem Pole"¹ from Marilyn and Daryl. If you are receiving all my letters you will know that he had been again troubled with that terrible eruption on his hands, Dr. Sawyer (memories of your unhappy experience just before going into the service!) has pronounced in "vocalational" can't tell just what causes it but it definitely is not catching nor poison within which is a comfort. The itchiness and swelling are now gone and just the unpleasant stage of losing all the skin on both hands and feet is being experienced. Tonight Dad goes to a supper of the CYMBC at Sadie Jordan's.

Saturday night we had invited the Marbles for beans and brown bread but Norman telephoned at the last minute from State College at Kingston that he couldn't make it so Jean came in his place. He, Jean, at present is at the ship yard but resumes his college course in February. Norman is thrilled with his new job at State, it will involve a lot of planning for the million dollar extension program of building besides the current work of supervising janitor, maintenance of building, etc. and a generous salary of \$4500. The [D]emocrats have caused some trouble through the newspaper asking for an

¹ Low Man on a Totem Pole, written by H. Allen Wolfgang Smith, became a best seller during the spring of 1941 when it became popular not only on the home front but also on troop trains and at military camps. The book was based primarily on risqué versions of whimsical features Smith had written as a columnist for the New York World-Telegram.

investigation as to how he obtained the job, claiming that it is a civil service position but Norman assures us that there is nothing to worry about--if it is purely administrative as he was told before accepting it, he has it, if on the other hand, it does come under civil service, he has already taken the necessary examination three years ago and has a 1A rating, so he is all set either way.

Bill has been home twice this week, yesterday for only two hours. His boat is finally in dry storage and he expects to hear this morning about his future assignment. Of course Marilyn hopes it will hold off until after Christmas but she realizes that they have been unusually fortunate. Daryl is a darling, is just beginnine [sic] to say Mama and "Beebee" when she looks in the mirror. She was sitting on the rug in the living room when I saw Chip throw his ball at her feet, which she immediately grabbed and put in her mouth. He suffers her to pat him but won't stand it too long. Bing on the other hand is very tolerant and will let her bury her nose in his fur without protesting at all, although of course we have to hold him there.

Saturday afternoon to our great surprise Tommie appeared for a short call. He left at two o'clock to return to Norfolk, where he expects to depart quite soon and does not expect to be back for a long, long time. He has been issued face mask, ear muffs, sheep skin coat, fur-lined boots, says that he does not expect to be in danger from subs but expects air attacks. We figure he must be going either to Iceland or Murmansk.

I went to church yesterday morning and it was a big day for service men, such a lot of them, for all parts of the country, mostly sailors. John Renzie wished to be remembered, he has just received his commission in the airforce [sic]. Tommie and his mother were there. Roger Brown, who left at once for Chicago, there to await further orders. His mother just called me to say that he has given a ring to Jean Wray, a tiny dark-haired girl not as tall as Genevieve, who is training to be a nurse and whom he met at the Young Peoples group in Brookline. That seems to narrow the three musketeers down to two, you and Tommie. As far as I know, neither has yet found the right one. Much as I would like to think that somewhere there is a girl that can mean happiness for you, don't just because of loneliness [sic] and the thought that time is passing you by and the others are getting all the girls, form an attachment with the wrong one. The right companion can mean so much to a man or life can be hell on earth after the glamour has worn off. You are level headed and I do not worry too much but I know what loneliness

[sic] can do and the thought that life is racing by. My life has been so perfectly happy and you deserve the best, think of nothing less. There, I don't preach too often in my letter, do I?

Every day, I manage to buy one or two small gifts for the family for under the tree on Christmas. The newspaper have [sic] kept us well informed of the current shortage of trees, so when Marilyn called up and said that a man at the door had a pretty good one for three dollars, Dad thought she better buy it. But now we see hundreds on every corner and I wonder whether we were a little hasty. But anyway Daryl will have one for her first Christmas.

Marilyn has picked out a lovely pattern for dishes, a white background with very delicately colored flowers of several shades and she will receive some of that I am sure. Anything for her home, is her wish for this Christmas. Dad as usual, is a little more difficult, but we have several small things I think he will like.

My hands have not yet warmed up and my typing looks terrible. Hope you can read it in spite of so many faint letters.

We eagerly await letters from you. We have a great time guessing where you are. The latest geographic map is tacked to the wall over the kitchen radiator and the Marshall Island invasion area looks as tho it might be the logical lane for our ship to follow, but again it may have avoided that conflict and gone to New Zealand for further orders. However, it is all guess work and your tongue will have to do some wagging when you come back to stretch out in front of the fireplace and regale us with tall tales.

All our love and prayers for your safety and peace of mind.

Mother

Tommie tells us he thinks you and he have lost out on your J.G. by just a few days until the next group. Too bad! [Transcription ends]