

April 17, 1944

Dear Dot;

The boss is away on a fifteen day leave. "Glory be to God." Been having a little trouble with Junior. We can't agree on what we should develop in the Dark Room. He is spending his leave in Hollywood at the home of Ira Gershwin. They have a wonderful swimming pool I understand. You don't think he could drown do you? I HOPE!!!

Before I go into your newsy notes on that exclusive stationery, (Oh, Schiltz, such penchants you are heving) I'll tell you about my weekend spent with a gal named Reynolds. This drip has red hair too. Well, we got off early Saturday and went to the Bus Station and picked a town to visit just because we happened to like its name. We got into Fall River and naturally it was raining and ^{WE} looked high and low for a Hotel. Well, Fall River used to have a hotel but it burned down a few years ago but they did have a place where we could stay called "THE WOMEN'S UNION" So I wanted to scam right away but Reynolds just had to see it.

So we saw the Women's Union and all the girls who resided there. Some kids anywhere from sixty on up. (Age I'm talking about) And they would have felt bad if we had not stayed and they offered us the best room in the place. One look at the room and I laughed so hard I had to sit down on the floor. Hell, no, there wasn't a chair. We had a bed tho. You should have seen that little number. I think it was salvaged from some Puritans bedroom. Brass, and so many high posts that once you got in bed you didn't know but what you were in jail. We had a window too. A great big one and it looked right into a church tower and it had bells that rang every fifteen minutes. Worse than WASHINGTON, Pa. I almost got cockeyed watching those bells coming and going every fifteen minutes. So I decided that before I went stir crazy I would have a bath. When I opened the closet door to get a towel, I found all the rules and regulations. NO SMOKING IN THIS ROOM??? Were they kidding? NO FAIR WASHING CLOTHES IN THE BATHROOM. I couldn't even find it until I had been lost for about a half hour. I went passed the door a couple times but I thought it was a fire escape. PLEASEZ DON'T SLAMMING THE DOORS. And I'm thinking lovingly of my little Schiltz. Also KEEP LIPSTICK OFF THE TOWELS and OUTSIDE DOOR WILL BE LOCKED AT 10:30. I guess you know that we would have been better off to have stayed in the barracks. We had a ducky time visiting all the old antique shops in town and going around whispering to each other. You were afraid to talk out loud for fear you would wake somebody up. The people in Fall River either had that New England reserved manner I've heard so much about, or else somebody was paying them to impersonate a living corpse.

Dot, wouldn't you know that Ed would get stationed in the Hawaiian Islands. You would think that he could cultivate something better than a philosophical point a view in a place like that but with a little time, who can tell? Dot, letters are pretty important with these guys and doesn't it make you feel good to

know you're doing something toward the war effort. Keeping up the morale is a heck of a job and I ought to know, but sometimes a fellow begins to see what lies behind those little pieces of paper. I'm not talking about any motive. I mean the person. If you can take it, Dot, I'll tell you that what you really are never meets the eye. You won't let it. Everybody likes what they see when they look at -- Dorothy Shields but it is not the real Shields that they get to know. Few people really know you. What you keep burried, all your emotions and affection is something the world needs very much and it is a pity that you share them with so few, because they are the rare kind and they are the most beautiful thing about you. You should write to Ed and for no other reason than to let him really know you. You told me once that Ed knew you better than any person in the world. No he doesn't and all your writing may not amount to a damn but there will be a guy who will think of you and when he does he will at least have the right picture. With that, he will admire you as long as he lives. (It took me about twenty minutes to say these few things because I'm very inarticulate, as you know, and it's hard to say what I'm thinking and have it understood but I tried to tell you what a hell of a swell guy you really are.)

When I told Deck about my week-end in New York, he just couldn't get over it. He has a sister living in Patchogue. Her husband teaches school there. Do you remember the night that the five of us had a drink in the Union Grill? I said that I would go to a dance if Deck came and he had to take his clothes to the laundry? He made the mistake of bringing up the subject again along with the fact that he likes my voice and my beautiful dark eyes. Did I ever have dark eyes? Wouldn't you think that the least he could do would be to keep his women straight. Well, I don't think Gramps is going to be talking to me once he gets my last letter. Dot, he's learning to Conga. With his blood pressure and with a WAC named Judy. Maybe she's got dark eyes. I wish I had dark eyes. Both my sisters have beautiful dark eyes. I wonder if that will help any. I wouldn't even mind playing second fiddle to his laundry. I know a guys laundry is pretty important. Clothes sometimes make a man. I wish I could make a man.

Dot you better call Goldens' romance number one. I'll take a back seat for that one any day. And remember how we worried about her going to AG. She wasn't well and we thought it would be too much of a physical strain on her. Well, I take my hat off to her and send her many wishes for happiness.

You never know about these nice quiet people. Take Frank. Oh, Dot I can't believe it. Can't you just picture the wedding, if it takes place at home. It will take months to get the house back to normal again. Oh, your family is truly wonderful. I'm happy for you all. Stop picking on Joe. For Petes sake. After what he put in over there I don't blame him for wanting to spend every minute he can with a pretty girl. You know how he feels about the family. He couldn't love them more than he does and he's the kind that appreciates every thing that anyone ever did for him. He's got good sense and when he's ready to take root

he will and not a G damned minute befor. And what if he doesn't? What's the matter with being the way he is? You know darn well that if he wasn't Joe people would not love him so much.

Deck asked to be remember to you. Said he was sorry that he did not get to know us better at school but altho he only spoke to you a few times he liked you very much. A hell of a lot of nerve to say that in a letter to me. What with Judy and everything it only makes matters worse. Well, if I pine away in an Upper Bunk I shall not care, no one will care, and when the tears cloud my beautiful dark eyes - Damnit I wish I had dark eyes.

So long Shieldsie, I'm going home to pine.

Fortunes trampled flower

Herman