

Tuesday, Sept. 24th, 1944.

Florence, dearest;

Once again my sweetheart I am forced to quote Omar Khayyam's "Rubaiyat",

Into this Universe, and Why not knowing
Nor Whence, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not Whither, willy-nilly, blowing.

At the moment I can think of nothing that better expresses my present situation than the above quatrain. We are somewhere in the middle of the ocean, with our destination unknown. The ship I am on is part of a convoy, and the voyage up to now has been pleasant and the source of many new experiences. Need I add that all mail is censored, so you will please forgive my eliminating all details. I have been fortunate in being berthed in a state-room with five other men. The food is the usual army chow except that we eat but twice daily. The weather has been grand, and I am happy to say that I have not been sea-sick or anything akin to it. We have various forms of entertainment including movies, prize-fights, band concerts and all forms of games of chance. As an added attraction to-day, the gun crews on the ship had some target practice. Believe you me it was a thrill watching those boys hit the targets with all kinds of guns. You know how exciting that stuff looks in the cinema, well you should see the real thing.

I am so sorry, darling, that I was unable to see or speak to you and the folks before we departed, but it was just impossible. There were no passes, no telephones, and although I wrote you daily our mail was censored, and I am not so sure you received any of the letters I wrote from the staging area, before we sailed. I hope by this time you have received all those letters. The last letter I received from you was dated Sept. 17th. This is being written while at sea so that I can mail it immediately upon our arrival. If at all possible I will cable you at the same time, however should you not receive a cable prior to the delivery of this you will understand that I could not reach cable facilities.

It is easy for me to understand that you and the folks must be quite disturbed and worried over this turn of events, but at least be assured that all is well with me. All of us must continue to show courage and fortitude, and hope that this latest separation will not be too long. You must do all within your power to be of good cheer, and convey that feeling to my mother and father. They, I am sure, will also endeavor to do the same for you. Perhaps in the not too distant future we will all be together again. If I know that those I love at home are carrying on like good soldiers I feel sure that it will help me do my best.

There is plenty of time to think and be introspective on a trip such as this. Realizing that to-day was Jimmy's second birthday I wrote him a long letter, which I sent regular mail. I am aware that he will not be able to understand it now, but I feel that some day he will, and then, perhaps he will want to read it himself. I am so sorry, my darling, that I have to be so far removed from you and him on such important occasions, but I promise when this is over, and I am home once again, a free man, we will spend the rest of our days making up for lost time. Be patient, don't let all this get you down, and above all don't do so much worrying until you get to the bridge. I want you to write me often, though not daily as in the past, as mail will take a little longer to reach me than heretofore. I do not know whether V-Mail is faster than air mail but I suggest you send your letters via air-mail, using thin paper such as this is typed on. At present I do not need anything, but since you will want to send me a Xmas package I suggest you send such items as canned sardines, salmon, Nescafe, and the like. I don't know whether or not I'll need them, but it will sure be great to have such delicacies around just in case.

Now, dearest one, so that you may always know that I am thinking and dreaming of you every moment I quote one of Eliz. Browning's famous sonnets.

HOW DO I LOVE THEE

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints, - I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life, - and, if God choose
I shall love thee better after death.

When you realize that poetry as Keats believed:

".....the great end

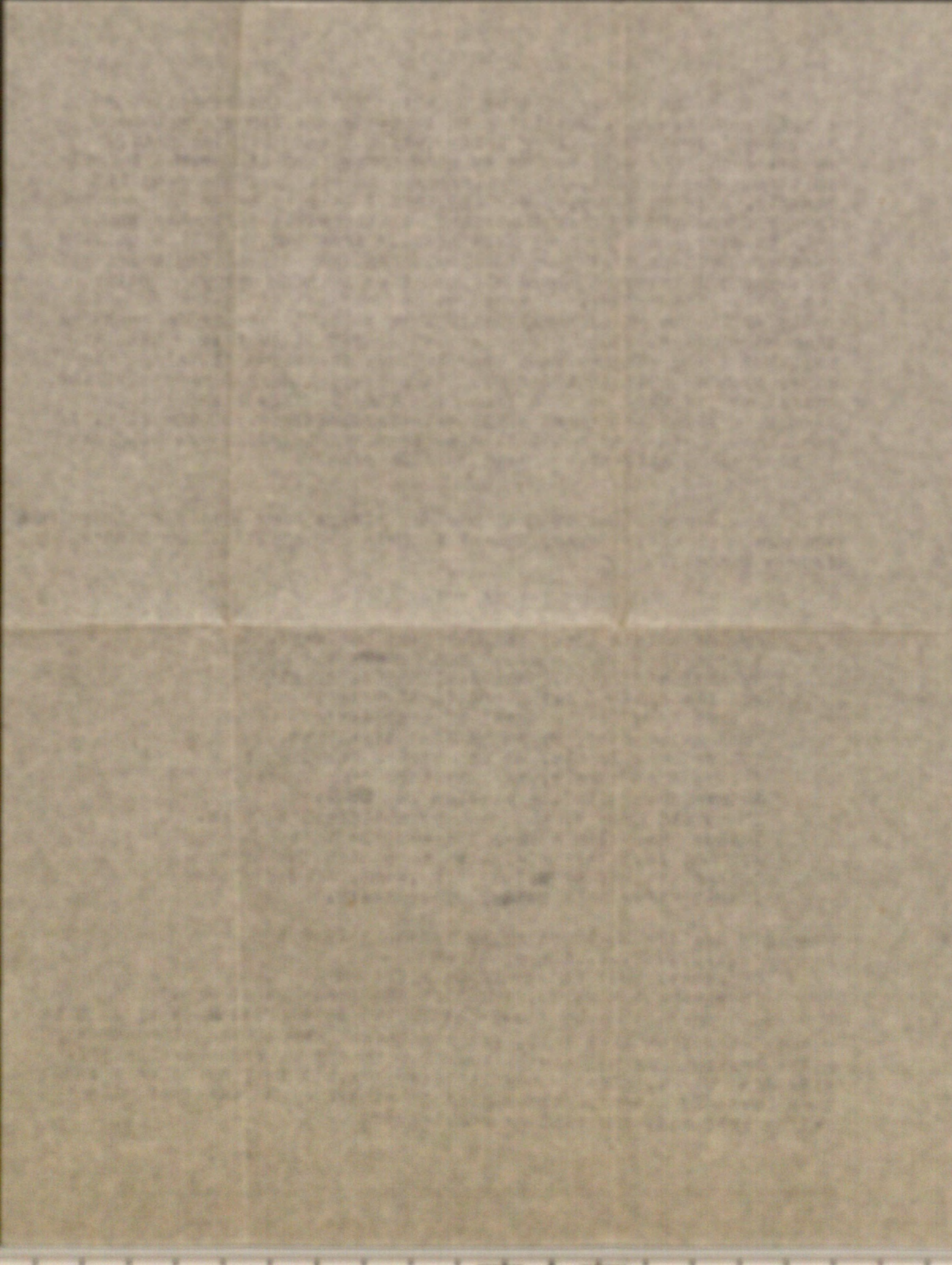
Of poesy, that it should be a friend

To soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of men."

You will understand why I have attempted to express myself in this manner at a time like this. Yes sweetheart even though thousands of miles separate us now always remember that I am right beside you. Kiss Jim for me, give my best to everyone, and tell my folks I send them Love and Kisses. With a kiss in mind for the sweetest wife a fellow ever had, you find me adoring you ,

As ever,

George



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