Linz, Austria
17 July 1945.

Florence, sweetheart:

There's a new quarter moon high in the heavens, producing a beautiful silhouette of the mountains overlooking this town, as I stand near the Danube to-night, watching the river flow by. I realized how breathless the scene would have left us, were we both standing there arm in arm. Darling, just as the river is flowing by, so is the time both of us should be together. It is inevitable that soon this war will come about, and until it does I remain in limbo, a sort of suspended animation of life. Being in love with you has turned our hearts to a complete understanding of life and happiness, and until our hearts beat together in unison, nothing else matters. As I write this the strains of the lovely music of "Vienna Woods" is coming over the radio, reminding me of you in your hoop skirt evening gown. We have never danced too much but every moment that we have been together seems so important to me. They were occasions of blissful, happy times, of which we will endeavor to duplicate more often in the future. If I am more romantic to-night than usual, it is only that I am expressing myself more so than usual. I miss you every moment of every day, and love you more often.

I walked thru town this morning for about an hour. It was refreshing to see people busily rushing to work, to shops to stand on line for rations, and newspapers on sale. Although printed in German I purchased one which I'll send to you under separate cover. Also purchased some views of the town which were mailed to you via regular mail. You will pick up several others I've seen, and I'm sure you too will find them interesting. Sunday is my day off, so I expect to take a long walk with some buddies to snap pictures. Developing will take longer in this place, but I expect they'll be worth the delay.

As I wrote yesterday no mail is expected to reach us before Friday, but waiting for your letters is worth the delay and suspense. My primary concern is that all goes well with you and Jimmy. I haven't been in a writing mood since the move but these daily expressions to you is most important to me. No doubt in a day or two I'll get started again. I am several letters behind but will catch up

before the rush of letters starts again. About a month ago I used some air mail envelopes which I requested you to save for me. Please advise if you did. Within the next few days I'll begin sending you these Nazi postage stamps via free mail, also many negatives I want preserved. In yesterday's letter I advised that I forwarded you $40.00 via Army Finance Dept. You should get a check from the War Dept in about 3 or 4 weeks. Let me know when this reaches you, as well as the $20. money order I sent around July 1st.

Having gotten into the souvenir-hunting business you probably realize that I haven't forgotten to look out for some do-dads for you and Jim. I'd like to get you one of these alpine costumes the girls wear, but no can do. Stores selling such items are sold out, haven't had any in years, regardless of points, or are "off limits" to soldiers. As for getting one for Jim that's even more difficult. About 1/4 of the population wear these costumes, you know leather (lederhosen) shorts, fancy jacket, horners suspenders, funny hat with feathers, but every one I question insists they are from 5 to 10 years old. Several of us, as determined as I, have decided to carry our rifles Sunday, and probably steal the pants off some natives, or something. I'll not give up trying.

I do not recall ever having described European toilets to you, but this is as good a time as any. In France, Belgium, Germany and Austria it is common practice for every public toilet in a nice theatre, restaurant, dance hall, or railroad depot to have an attendant. It is always a woman, usually 45 to 50 or older. Very often the same room is used for males and females, with a dividing screen or two. In any event at the entrance or very close to it the woman directs you to the "pissoir" or the "sitters". If you use the latter she dashes in ahead of you, wipes the board dry or clean, hands you paper if any is available, gives you an understanding smile, like a weasel eating shit, and you hand her the tip prescribed on a sign in the room. At first Americans are terribly embarrassed by this practice, but biological urges leave you no alternative, so you soon forget to blush, and proceed. There have been places in which men did number one, and women merely walked by on their way to a stall. Slightly crude, but apparently sex is not so reverently held in esteem here as it is in the States. Well, anyway in this bombed-out station at Linz, the practice is much the same. Only one toilet

room has been left intact by the Germans. It is used by men and women alike, and the woman in charge is about 60. I spoke German to her, gave her a little can of cheese as a tip, and now she's washing clothes for me. It would surprise you what people will do even here for something to eat or smoke. More about this when I tell you all the stories.

Went to the movies to-night to see Ann Sheridan in "The Animal Kingdom" which developed into a stinker. It helped to while the time away, after which we had coffee and doughnuts, and now I'm writing to my only sweetheart. The evening is delightfully cool, the sky is brilliant, and I only hope you too are having grand weather, and a grand vacation. Do write me all about Gene's and Jim's daily doings in the knowledge that every word will be eaten up like a kitten lops milk.

Stay well, honey, kiss Jim for me, and I'll kiss you in mind with all my love and adoration. My very best to everyone,

as ever,

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