

MARJORIE KINNAN RAWLINGS
HAWTHORN, FLORIDA

June 1, 1943

Dear James Still:

How are things going? If you were not a realist as well as a poet, I should be suffering about you, but as it is I rather rejoice in the experiences you must be having, which, for all the pain and hardship, you will assimilate and return again in a creative form. I don't mean that you will write war poems or war books, but only that everything that happens to you goes into the deep reserve pool from which you draw.

My husband, 42 years old and presumably draft-free, has volunteered for the American Field Service. Something archaic in women makes them proud of their men when they are brave, and at the moment of being proud, I resent it like hell! Yet in the long run, courage to fight for an idea makes a man. The Field Service is dangerous, for it operates on the front line, there is practically no pay (\$20 a month for expenses) and the members have no claim on any government if injured or killed. Norton is no more the "soldier type" than you are, but if he is accepted he will do well, for he has the inner integrity that is more important than Notre Dame football muscle.

I am in that painful period of not working--- a little more painful, I think, than the agony of work--- principally because I have been very ill and ended up in New York with a serious operation. I am doing well now, but am furious that I don't have the strength to drive a tractor or plow a mule, for I am trying to put all my avail

under cultivation, and there is practically no manpower left at the Creek. I have 3 acres in lima beans and depend for cultivation on a white half-wit and a colored cripple. I have 16 acres leased to a neighbor, where we are raising hogs on shares.

If you have a permanent enough address, let me know, and I'll send you a book now and then. And if there is any particular book you want, let me know. I think they have just lifted the ban on parcels for men overseas. I have just read Julian Green's "Personal Record", a valuable account of ~~the~~ the creative worker's mental and emotional processes. I think that from now on, when any would-be writer asks me "how it's done", I'll just refer him to this book, and if he isn't discouraged after reading of the unutterable agony, he is fit to go ahead.

The death of Stephen Vincent Benet from heart failure was a great blow. He had laid aside work on a long narrative poem to do war propaganda writing, and I can't help feeling the poem was more important. The half or so that was done is to be published---and I wonder, too, if he would approve.

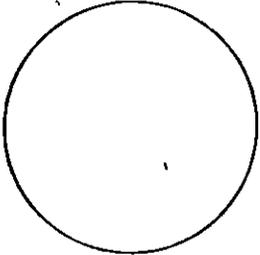
The summer heat has set in and I'll soon be moving my headquarters to my ocean cottage. I have no "work in progress" though something is gestating.

I hope all goes well with you. Aunt Ida would want to send her best if she knew I was writing.

Mayne

Print the complete address in plain block letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly. Very small writing is not suitable.

No.



(CENSOR'S STAMP)

S/Sgt. James S Hill, 35133320
79 479 59 8th ADH AAF
A.P.O. Box #425
% Postmaster
Miami, Florida.

Mrs. M. H. Sharpe
(Sender's name)

Bushnell
(Sender's address)

Florida.

June 2, 1948.
(Date)

Dear Jim,
- Well its another day of a brand new month and I can't hardly keep track of the time.

Its canning time again. Peas + Tomatoes a hundred quarts each. It will take two days each. Will soon have in place to put all my canned food.

Every one is just fine, only this warm weather makes one feel lazy + sleepy. I went to Wahoo church last Sunday. Sitting there quiet + still I got so sleepy I thought I'd surely never live through it. The sermon was interesting enough but not one to being still that long.

Had a card from Inez. A letter from Lonise, also one from Bill + Hervey. All say they are fine. Mel picked Tomatoes this a.m. got five crates to carry to market. There are a few water-melons coming in from the South. Oh's are later.

If you haven't already heard, Edsel Ford died. Oh yes. Carl Sandberg has a good piece in the Tampa Tribune every Sunday. and I still listen to "Between the brook ends" with Ted Malone. If I could see you in person, there is so much to talk about. Love
Eleanor.

V-MAIL

NO OTHER ENCLOSURE SHOULD BE USED

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

*Department of English
and Foreign Languages*

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

7 June, 1943

Dear James,

When your letter came I took down my copy of "River of Earth" and read the inscription you wrote on the front end paper several years ago. Do you remember what it was? "I saw things Walking John Gay went many a mile to see. I saw country like a dream dreamt..." You stand a prophet in your own words. I imagine, though, that you have seen many things that Walking John Gay never even imagined in his time:

First of all, I want you to know how glad I was to hear from you, to know that you are well, and to see that an "S" now goes before the Sgt. in your address. One can easily see why you should have little time for the writing of letters since so many other and more important things probably fill your days and nights in your particular corner of the world just now. But it was pleasant to get word and to know that some of my letters have been reaching you, in spite of the fact that I had a different box number for your A. P. O. out of Miami.

This past month has been a busy one for me -- a different kind of business from yours and right now much less important. Since I wrote last, I have been to Richmond twice. My Naval concerns are now hanging fire. As I probably told you, I am trying to get into a service unit which would take me into the firing line. At least I have passed all of my tests and fulfilled all of the prerequisites. Now there is the matter of waiting as patiently as possible until the final reviewing board passes on my qualifications. I hope that will be soon. This is my second attempt. I am afraid that there may not be a third, now that the direction of this war seems to have turned the corner and the day of victory comes nearer with every bomb dropped.

My trips to Richmond were a revelation to me. I hadn't been down from the mountain top in months, and in this rather isolated corner of the State we see little of the immediate war program. True, we have several Army training units here at V. P. I. but the sight of several hundred uniforms isn't enough to show what work toward the winning of this war is going on in other parts of the country. In Richmond everyone seems to be doing something, and you can see what equipment is being turned out and put to use. I imagine the situation is the same up and down the coast. The realization is a very heartening one.

We are having final exams here now. This will be my last quarter, if I stay, for teaching the regular academic work. From now on I shall be teaching ASTP courses only, in grammar, composition, speech, and military communications. It's a new kind of world for me, but I feel that I can do at least that much. We have another unit arriving here now also. They are known as the STARS. Before the

2

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Department of English
and Foreign Languages

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

end of this week I may find myself teaching basic Spanish to a group of them. Our Spanish instructor has gone to Mexico to study this summer, and in his absence I may be drafted to fill his shoes. And very uncomfortable I'll probably find them, for I haven't used my Spanish in years. I did begin a grammar and vocabulary review several months ago; I hope that may be enough to keep me afloat until I can find my bearings. The wife of one of the architectural professors is doing the Italian. I am preparing to sit in on her lectures to refresh my knowledge of that language. As someone said yesterday; if this war continues most of us will be teaching every language except English. I tell my wife she should offer a basic course in Norwegian.

What you had to say about the book of Wolfe's letters was interesting, as I had just finished reading them. I heartily agree with your ideas -- it is selling his literary bones, along with the coffin, with a vengeance. Wolfe suffered a thousand agonies and frustrations known to his friends. Some of them got into his books! But to parade his private correspondence as Julia has done is as sad as many of the letters themselves. The current issue of the Nation has an interesting review of the book. The author swings on a rather unreasonable tangent in his comments, but he does say some new things about the strange blend of infantilism and gigantism in Wolfe's makeup.

Incidentally, your friend Stokeley's comment shouldn't be taken with any salt at all. I think I know exactly what he had in mind. Much of Wolfe's empty fury was directed at his mountain heritage, just as ~~the~~ wild ramblings ^{of his travels} were an attempt to escape from the mountain scene. Think how he speaks of the mountains and the mountaineer in "The Web and the Rock." You are exactly the reverse. You have tried to show mountain life without the sentimental quaintness of your Kentucky contemporary or the furious writhings and protest of a Wolfe. You might have shown him his material in a completely different light. It's an idea that never entered my mind. But your friend must be a very discerning person; his statement has a lot of meaning behind it.

If I am one of your last contacts with the literary mainland, I'm a very slight one indeed -- almost the last of the Dry Tortugas, in fact. I have done almost no writing this past year, and there are so few books that seem worth reading any more. Your quotation from Miss Porter supplies a good explanation of her delay. But one can still wish that she would soon publish.

Don't envy me my garden this year. First we had cold wet rains that rotted lima beans in the ground, washed out small things like carrots and celeriac. Then came the cutworms. Then a long dry spell. Then hard rains that washed everything. I spent all of yesterday repairing damage of the storm the night before. Last night another storm undid a lot of yesterday's work. So it goes. But I do have excellent peas, growing on brush in the New England fashion, and loaded with plump pods. And my potatoes and tomatoes flourish exceedingly. I am having most of my trouble with the common things like squash and cucumbers and carrots and okra. This year I'm

(3)

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Department of English
and Foreign Languages

BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

trying some novelties: a vine peach that is a species of mango, supposed to be good for pickling and jellies, and a new variety of bean that grows pods about a yard long. They have survived drought and flood thus far; I can probably report on them later on.

I'm sorry that there is no picture to enclose. I did have some taken for my Naval papers, but in them I looked like a mildly benevolent anteater. The next time we do get a good snapshot of all of us, I'll send it on. Pete and Stewart are growing fast. Stewart has now found the way to my office and classroom, and I never know what he will arrive in the middle of a lecture. After this war is over, I hope that you will come and pay us a long visit, wherever we may be by that time. And how about yourself? Surely you have had some pictures of yourself in uniform. If you do, I should really like to have one.

I'll write again in about two weeks. In the meantime, the best of luck. If you find a spare moment, drop a line.

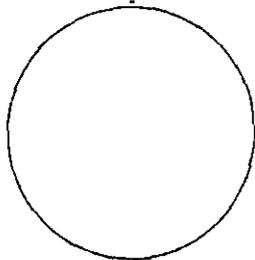
Yours sincerely,

Dayton

P.S. Jean has just reminded me that we have a picture of both kids, taken last November, so I send it along. They are watching a plane. Pete is a plane enthusiast. One of the instructors had promised him a ride at the local airport. But now the field is being used to train Navy fliers and so closed to civilians for the duration. His ride will have to wait.

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No. _____



(CENSOR'S STAMP)

S/SGT JA MES STILL 35133320
Hq. & Hq SQUADRON 8th -A.D.G.--A.A.F. A.A.F.
A.P.O. BOX 625
C/O POSTMASTER
MIAMI FLORIDA.

GUY LOOMIS
P.O. BOX. 98
BROOKLYNN-2-
NEW YORK
U.S.A.

(Date)

June 7th-43

My dear Jimmie

Three cheers for your letter of May 31st. that reached me today. Have had many inquiries as to where you were and how you were for no word had come from you in weeks and had to tell them all "NO WORD" recently. Sent off postals today to Kate Loomis, Edith Schaefer and Christine Innings and will tell the others here in the city. Began to think your organization had had gotten tangled up in some of the scraps in your neighborhood. And all hands began to worry. Glad indeed that all is well with you. No news from this end. Things just drag along for the gas rationing has cut out all touring so am counting on being in the city most of the summer. Hope your pal will call me up. Shall be glad indeed to see him and any member you know who is headed this way let him do the same. The hotel number is Main 4-8100 and the office number is Triangle 5-2639 and they should be able to get in touch with me thru one of them. But if they miss out on one tell them to try the other ere giving up. Dont see how you can have a "dry run" in such a moist climate. Explain sometime what it is. Am in fine shape and hope you watch your step and keep the same. Best of Luck

Note the -2- after Brooklyn. Put it on mail to me. A new Postal Regulation.

Affectionately yours

KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED AND YOU MAY GET BACK FOR A "LOOK SEE"

If you need anything dont hesitate to ask for it but the bundle cannot be larger than an ordinary shoe box nor weigh more than five pounds These are Postal Regulations.

Uncle g--

V...-MAIL

Mc Roberts, Kentucky
June 12, 1943

Hello Jim,

I have written you two letters and never did receive an answer to either of them. I am wondering if you received them or if I am one of those persons you intend to write but never do.

Each time I have written you I have been at a different place. I first wrote you at Whitesburg, second at Eastern State Teachers College, and now at Mc Roberts.

Grand Mamie moved to Mc Roberts just after Christmas and while I was at college.

I like Mc Roberts O.K. Maybe I am just getting accustomed to my "gypsy life." However, I am sure that my life would not have been quite so interesting had not it been for two people to whom I give everything. I am sure I need not mention their names.

I had planned to go to summer school at Berea but almost before my freshman year was over I had changed my mind because I wanted to come home. However, just before I left Eastern I received a letter from Berea telling me not to come until July 1; I can enter later, that is, in September. I am not quite sure what I will do. I think I will "evacuate" Mc Robert every other girl and boy seems to have, and go some place and get a job.

Jim, Morris is working in Cincinnati - can you imagine that! He has broken his great romance with Helen Sexton. Babina Smith is working there too. She along with several other people, went with Morris. Babina married while she was at Cincinnati. She married an Queens boy from her home.

2.
Andra is here at Mc Roberts. She has been going to a nurses school but she just recently married Jimmie Darnley and came home. I think Jimmie is in the Air Corp. I suppose you have heard Andra talk of Jimmie - who hasn't. Ha!

Geraldine is working in Ohio. Andra said she was going to go there this weekend and live with her sister-in-law. She will probably work while there. Gethro and Ranie came up last Wednesday and stayed a while. Gethro said he was going to Sardinville. Ranie is going too. I suppose you know why, Ha! He and the "cough Syrup" aren't as serious as they use to be.

I haven't been home quite a week yet. We are going to the Dead Mare very soon. I haven't been there since last fall. I only came home three times while I was at school and each time I just had time to say "hello" and "goodbye". Mamie and Dad were over there a few weeks ago. Mamie said your flowers were beautiful - just like they always were. Dad said everybody asked about you.

Jim, you remember those tales you use to tell me about college life. Well, I have experienced a lot of the things you told me about. One thing I learned while I was there was not to "cram" the night before a test. I did it the first quarter but ^{now} I would know less about what I studied after I studied than I would have if I did not study at all. A "coke" won't keep you awake either.

A division of the Wood's ~~is~~ stationed at Eastern. They came at the end of the second quarter - 750 of them. The girls in Burnham Hall had to "migrate" to Sullivan Hall. I was one of them. The sophomore, junior, and senior girls moved into three of the boys' dormitories. The girls at Eastern seemed to be rather upset when the Wood's came along - they wanted the Army, Navy, Marines, or Air Corp.

A month or two before I left Eastern a new book came to the library. The book was Twentieth Century Authors. I read your piece of writing. I like it better than Who's Who (I mean the book). I

Jim, do you remember Mr. Keen. He liked your poems very much. I took a course in English under him a while. Every time he could find time he would read us poems and he read yours more than anyone's.

In April, Governor Keen Johnson set aside a specific date in that month for the Annual Kentucky Post Day (I have forgotten the date). I read about it in the Courier Journal. It listed the contemporary Kentucky poets whose poems were to be read over the radio. Yours along with Jessie Stewart's and several others. Your poem was "White Highway". I listened to the program and it was beautiful too. Your poem was even more beautiful, Jim. Jessie Stewart's poem was not read as was listed in the Courier Journal. There was no explanation whatever.

Jim, I was an usher at the Baccalaureate Service (I hope that's spelled right) and at Commencement at Eastern. "Copper" John Campbell from Hindman graduated (I suppose you remember him). He is the star basketball player at Eastern.

I like the bluegrass but gee, these old rugged hills are wonderful. Even though you are miles and miles away I know you feel the same.

We still have Zero. He is two years old now. He isn't a very big dog and he likes to ride in the car even more than I like to drive it. I can drive Jim, but it doesn't do me very much good because of gas rationing. I use to scare you to death when I drove didn't I? - well, Jim, I do not blame you for being afraid. I suppose you should have more confidence in a woman. Ha! Maybe I'm an exception though.

I went up to Cat's yesterday. I suppose Conie will have to go to the army very soon. They sure do have a cute little boy. He doesn't look like the Amblurgey's though. He looks like Cat's people.

James Ronnie wanted to go to sleep and before he would go to sleep I had to tell him some "wed time stories" at 40'clock in the evening. I.

told him three or four stories. He liked the ~~best~~ best about "Little Black Sambo". I told it over and over again before he went to sleep. In the meantime I went to sleep too. Ha!

We live about four houses below the first school house in Mc Roberts. I never saw so many kids in one place in all my life. Our next door neighbor has a swing in their yard and every morning about 7:30 a half a dozen kids come to swing. And the swing is just across from my bedroom window. I'll never need an alarm clock as long as I live here.

Mamie said when she and I had moved here at Mc Roberts a little girl came to see her and said, "Can I play with your little boys and girls?" Mamie told her that she did not have any little boys and girls. And the little girl said, "Everybody else does!"

I od is wanting me to go to Iowa for him so I guess I had better "hoit" this money down. Ha!

Say, Jim, I am a little suspicious (I don't know how to spell it). This makes the third letter I have written you. "Third times charm" if nothing happens then it never will - I'm just kidding, Jim. I understand that they could have been lost.

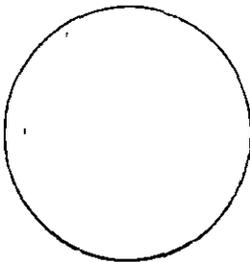
I have written eight letters today and I am about to run out of words. Maybe I need to broaden my vocabulary.

Always,
Pauline

P.S. Write me anything even if it's just about the weather. It doesn't have to be "romantic" as you say.

My Address: Pauline,
Pauline B. Amhurst
Box 156
Mc Roberts, Kentucky.

No. _____



(CENSOR'S STAMP)

S/ Sgt James Still 35133320
Hq. & Hq. Sq. 8th A. O. N. A. A. F
A. P. O. 625 - Coy Postmaster
Miami Florida

W. Comer Still
(Sender's name)

918 Spruce Street
(Sender's address)

Dadosen Alabama

June 15, 1943
(Date)

Dear Jim,

Another week and still no letter from you. I imagine tho, that you don't have much time at present for writing; as every minute counts in this great offensive.

I read every day of the 8th A. A. F. and I am inclined to believe that the 8th is doing its share in this great (Slaughter).

They has been sick for a week but is much better now and up.

Rance Osborne is stream lined now. The Army is dealing him a nice hand.

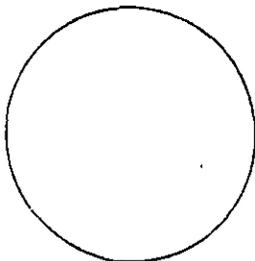
Kembrew is a Supervisor now in the Weave shop, so Lonie writes. Papa is fine Lonie said Tom has made a fine looking Soldier. I am working everyday. Write.

hurry home
your Bud
Comer

V.-MAIL

Print the complete address in plain block letters in the panel below, and your return address in the space provided. Use typewriter, dark ink, or pencil. Write plainly: Very small writing is not suitable.

No.



CENSOR'S STAMP)

S/ Sgt James Still, 35133320

A. P. O. box 625

C/O Postmaster

Miami, Florida.

J. Alex Still, DVM.

(Sender's name)

R F D. no 3.

(Sender's address)

West Point, G.A.

(Date)

June 16.1943.

Dear Jim . As I have not heard from you in some time I thought I would write. We ar all well at time. Tom came home for a week Alfred was home some time back Got a letter from Comer the other day. I Got a letter from Mr Guy ⁴umos 2 weeks ago he said he had not heard from you in some time and for me to write to you and tell you that your uncle Guy was uneasey about you.

If you have not wrote to him do so at once.

Heres hoping you ar all right.

Write soon Asever POP

V...- MAIL

KNOTT COUNTY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Members of Board

T. C. Campbell, Chairman
Bent Newland
Cleve Combs
Sid Adams
T. B. Sutton

JETHRO AMBURGEY, Supt.

--

HINDMAN, KENTUCKY

Board Meets:

First Monday
Each Month

June 21st, 1943

Dear Jimmie:

It has been two months or more since I have heard from you. I have been thinking that you have moved and have not been able to write. Everything is getting along fine here, we are about through with our garden now but we are not having as good a garden as we had last year. We are having a summer school here conducted by the Richmond faculty of five weeks in length. It certainly is a fine thing for the teachers. We have an enrollment of about 55 students, most of them high school graduates who are expecting to teach on emergency permits.

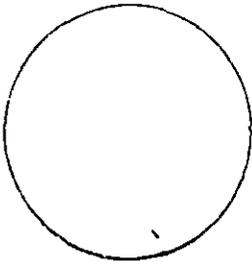
We have been up to your house recently and things looks good up here. They are now planning on building a bridge at Litt Carr to start the first of July. And we are sure anxious to get it built. I am awful busy now and will be for awhile because our schools are starting July 1st, I am taking our school buses to Lexington next week for repairs. I wish you were here to go and drive one of them down for me. Write me soon and tell all you can about yourself. I had a letter from a friend of yours who bunked with you in North Africa, and told me a lot of things about you which I was sure glad to get. I knew about where you ~~were~~ were before I had the letter from your friend, and he sure said some nice things about you. I'm pretty well sure you have moved by this time. Let me have a letter from you soon. Your bonds are coming in regular now. I want spend them all just a few until you get back. I will save enough of them to go to Lexington on.

As ever

Jethro and family.

P.S. Morris is in Dayton working in an ~~xxxxxxx~~ airplane factory making 75¢ per hour.

No. _____



(CENSOR'S STAMP)

S/Sgt. James Still 35133320
Hq. 8th Sq. 8th A.O.D.-A.O.F.
P.O. 625 - 40 Postmaster
Miami, Florida

W. Comer Still

(Sender's name)

918 Spruce Street

(Sender's address)

Tadeden, Alabama

June 22, 1943

(Date)

Dear Jim;

Well, I suppose by now you have changed your address or location. Something must be wrong, or I would have heard from you by now. Perhaps in the hell a storm is in the brew. I am expecting things to happen by July 4th.

I sent papa a shirt, tie & handkerchief, to match for Father's day. I want to get off a few days and go to see him. Mney is doing fine. Peanut is working in the shop with Doug.

I am sending you some film #116 by air mail. I hope you get them

Write often
Luck to you
Comer

V - MAIL

AIR FORCES OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL
MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

[1943?]

June 22

Dear John, Art, Jim and George,

I know that you gave me specific orders, Jim, not to write a community letter. However, when you get to 3 C's I think you will understand and forgive me. I wanted to say hello to all of you and gosh knows I don't have time to write separate letters. What a rush!

I entered J. C. S. three weeks ago Sunday. Since then I have hardly had time to sit down. An example of our schedule will show you what I mean. We get up at 5:25 when the whistle blows and have a minute and a half to dress for we have to be down & out of the hotel and formed for reveille by 5:30. We eat about 6:00. Then we have until 7:30 to get

our room cleaned and our bathroom
they must be spotless too. We
have classes from then until 1:00.
We eat & have a very few minutes
of free time before we go out to
drill. After drill we have
physical training and then it is
supper time. After supper we can
go out to the P. X. until 8:30. From
8:30 until 10:30 we are supposed
to have the time free to study,
but there is a movie, or a
lecture or a cleanup detail. In
addition we have to shine shoes,
shine belt buckles, wash sun hats
wash belts and a few other
things: It is not a below life.

The "gigs" which are
dementa fall thick and fast. I've
been lucky so far but gigs have
been given for dusty window sill,
dirty belt, shoes arranged in the
wrong order under the bed, one button
on a fatigue jacket in closet unbuttoned.
The weather is terrific.
It is hot and this drill and P.T.

AIR FORCES OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL
MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

almost melt me away. The academics wouldn't be hard if I had any time to study. We could study from 7:00 until 8:30 P.M. if it weren't for the fact that if we're in the hotel the upperclassmen "brace" us. That means we're out in the hall, standing at an exaggerated "attention" and singing or answering questions.

I was lucky to make the class I did. The next class has four months. All O.C.S. schools are being extended. I imagine I will have four months. By the way, he called me when he landed here. He got to see his brother.

Bill Munster is in the same class but a different squadron. I have seen him only once since school started.

If you can't read this it is because I'm writing it.

on my knee in bed waiting for the
lights to go out. I will try to
write you decently in the not
too distant future.

Best of luck to all of you
and don't let the finance office
force on the personnel work too
hard.

As ever,
Arnold

Thanks for the letters boys
and the "Who Dat's". They
were greatly appreciated. Hope you
are O.K. now John.

Madison Ala.
June 29, 1943

Dearest James, Am writing you
no word in four weeks we want
to hear from you as often
as can. Dad called by phone last
Thursday night. he ask us
when we had heard from
you its been four weeks since
he had heard from you. I
have been sick am fighting
an operation although I do
know I'll have to have it soon
or later I have not worked
any in four weeks. Ream is
in the shop with his dad,
of course he will go to school
when school ~~is~~ start again
Louise spent two weeks up in
Heener, Ala. Well James
Johnson, has a A.P.O. #30,
no. 1111 Madison is just above

~~now~~ in way any way - ~~and~~ yes
any, ruin and its so bad. I
do hope by the time you get this
you'll be back in the state of
course I'm sure a feeling
you'll be as soon as you do
please wire me and dad at
once. The Steel girls spent
part of last week with us for
Rome Ga. I want to go berry
picking this week in Central
Louisiana get a letter from Tom
occasionally. Mrs Adams and Rose
Mary had been in Fairfax two
weeks. Mary went down this
week end. They have a sonnet
and wife staying with them they
re from Philadelphia. Corn is
doing fine. Present went for them
last Thursday night and we made
room. he fixed my machine. Dough
is ready as the land to work. I
a picker. I'll promise not to
not so long to write you. Sure
I still don't have in
re you are well. M. L. Adams.