

MRS. NORTON BASKIN  
CASTLE WARDEN  
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

April 1, 1942

Dear James:

I am writing especially to pass on a lovely message that I have for you. It weighs as heavily, undelivered, as any sense of guilt.

A month ago I had nearly a week's visit from Sigrid Undset, at my grove at Cross Creek. I had long stood in awe before her writing, and as a woman I found her simply magnificent. She is formidable in appearance, and one has an impression of great physical and mental and spiritual strength. At first she seemed hardly a woman, only one completely frozen and dammed up <sup>by</sup> tragedy. She had two sons. The oldest was killed in the first two weeks of fighting when Germany invaded Norway. She was the first Norwegian writer banned by the Nazis. She had twenty minutes to escape from her home, and must have left with not much more than the clothes on her back. The younger son came to this country with her but is now back with the Norwegian forces wherever they may be, waiting for the chance to strike back. His chances are not too lousy. The Germans are in her lovely home, which dates back to the year 1,000 and is filled with antiques older than the house. She says that even if the Germans are driven out, they will burn everything behind them. She expects never to see her home, her books, again.

MRS. NORTON BASKIN  
CASTLE WARDEN  
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

She has a sister and many relatives and friends still in Norway and I finally understodd the strange frugality with which she ate my good rich Cross Creek meals. She could not enjoy them---. It was advisable for her to escape, for the Germans use all important personages as hostages, to hold over the heads of others.

Then as timewent on, her warm humanity emerged, and she was even able to laugh heartily now and then. I took her out to the scrub country and we had lunch beside the sink-hole. She loved my Florida, and knew an immense amount about the birds and flowers. We came to love each other very much.

She picked up your "Hounds on the Mountain" with keen interest, and said that she had read your two other books. She said that she was very certain that in time you would be one of our major American writers. I gave her the second copy of the poems, which you had signed just with your name, and she was @lighted. She was immensely happy to hear that I knew you, and asked me many questions about you and your life. Then she said, "When you write him, please give him my love."

Consider it delivered. I consider it an accolade.

Maryni Parling Baskin

**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

April 2nd.1942

**Board Meets:**

First Monday  
Each Month

Dear Jimmie:

When I wrote you a letter I did not address it right and I, I am afraid it did not reach you. I am anxious to know just what you are doing now. I presume you are in Hdgs. Company and doing clerical work just as I thought you would do and I think it will suit you better than anything in the service. I wish you would write us every few days as we would like to know of your whereabouts and your possibility of remaining stationary there. Will you be surprised to know that we have bought our place where we live. We are more than tickled to death with it and the best satisfied people in the world. We paid \$4000 for the place and I, I am not sure right now whether \$8000 would but it . We have not got your things yet. We have been waiting for the road to get better and now I think we will go in a few days. General Fugates brother was here from an adjoining camp there to you on a leave . We would be glad for you to come when you can, and be sure to let us here from you often and I will promise to answer. We are having our garden plowed today and it sure seems good to be planting a garden. Patatoes and onions have been planted sometime.

With best regards and let us have a letter

As ever



1514 Cadillac Blvd, Detroit, Mich. April 2.

My dear James Still:

Why does one postpone answering letters?

Yet I did postpone a word to you for a very good reason. As the day it came, telling me that the Yale Review would be made more interesting by one of your stories, I had an offer from said Review which would save me money if I only would send two dollars. So you cost me two dollars.

Through the years I've found it wise to acknowledge a friend's book of verse at once. It's been smart to say "I pass forward with eagerness" or "I anticipate great pleasure -- as soon as -- I find time". At least many times it's easier than to circumlocute about a book that ought not to have been precipitated or perpetuated (as Dan'l Webster put it in his Oration) after you've really read it.

But I liked your Yale Review story. You see the good in the ordinary. The natural character I found in Kentucky I too liked but the devious political thinking that can operate in and about even a church college was more than I was willing,

even if I were sure I could win, to spend my seventh decade with.

So we came to Detroit to live near three of our four married sons, two of whom have given us liberty in helping them raise granddaughters. Here Mrs Crooks still shows in many ways as nothing in or of me does but I'm a fair baby tender.

Next week I make my second trip to Oregon, where I worked for ten years, because of the death of an elder brother and affairs connected with his estate. I shall have more to him on because of his love for me and mine but shall still be in the lower income brackets.

Do you ever invade the industrial centers? We'd be very glad to see you here. Mrs Crooks and I wish to have folks visit and we were abnormally lucky in finding an old house with an upstairs just made for such as accumulate books and things and hang on to their own.

I believe you've a lot of good work to do. I shall take a personal interest in it.

Cordially  
A. M. Crooks.

OFFICE OF THE  
EDITOR



8 ARLINGTON STREET  
BOSTON

## The Atlantic Monthly

3 April, 1942.

Dear Mr. Still:—

It is doubly disappointing to have to turn back this narrative of yours which has been held here awaiting my return from the West. Your stories have exerted a very real claim on our affections, and it troubles me to find that there is less enthusiasm for his new one than I had hoped for. As always, your idiom is a delight to the ear, but as you develop this narrative I am conscious of a feeling that you are making too much of a good thing. You have allowed yourself, I think, too many words of an original import. They get in each other's way and obscure rather than clarify the issue. Again, and this I believe is an equally serious criticism, the story is weakened structurally by the inclusion of so many characters. "Unclear" is the final verdict of one of your most loyal admirers in the office. I am sorry.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. James Still,  
Dead Mare Branch,  
Littcarr,  
Kentucky.

*Edward Weeks*

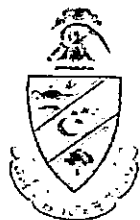


Gainesville, Fla  
April 16, 1942

My dear Mr. Still;

Certainly was glad to hear from you. I had been wondering where you were. I had heard about you're being in service somewhere.

I had you book On Troublesome Creek with me the night that R. Frost was in the Aud. after he was through speaking, students who knew somebody that knew Mr. Frost were invited upon the stage. He immediately ask me where I got that splendid book that I had in my hand. I told him that I knew you. He said "you should consider that an honor". I ask him what comparison would be made between you and J. Sted. He said "your writing was superior in every respect to that of J. Sted's. He said that he admired you very much, "not only for what you had done, but for what you would do." I ask him if he would write his name under yours in my copy of your book. He hesitated as if to doubt that I knew you then he wrote these words under your name — — — "and his admirer Robert Frost. After this he handed me the book and told me that you had visited



ANNO DOMINI 1800

the  
him in Vermont mountain. He invited me  
to attend the ~~middlebury~~ Middlebury School  
of literature appreciation in Vermont, where  
he is an instructor in the summer. He shook  
my hand again and wished me good luck  
in life.

This is about what he said, it may  
not be in the same order. The words in  
quotation marks are exactly his words.

Shelby's address is

Pvt. — of course

Battery "A" - 14 Br, 5<sup>th</sup> Train Regt.

F. A. R. C.

Fort Bragg, N. C.

write me again

Edwin Stewart

P.S. Sharp isn't here anymore, he is teaching agr.



Fairfax, Alabama

April 10, 1942

Dear James,

Life + work goes on here about as usual. On a recent visit to papa Comer was glad to find him well and plenty busy. His work seems to be making him - if not happy - content.

Wednesday - Comer took the car to Columbus, and came back on the bus. Since selling the car, I'm sure I must have walked off several pounds. And I'm very glad that exercise is being forced on me. Otherwise I never get any.

Rose many wants you to know she had a hand in the candy we sent. She's interested in the workings of Uncle Sam & his army. Most of her money goes into defense stamps now.

Nathan has passed the physical and is now waiting orders to report in the air corps as a pilot. Doesn't know yet where he will receive training. Being in Tennessee now. He comes home occasionally.

Had you find life there liveable. The idea

That you would be  
leaving the states without  
another visit home was  
rather disturbing to Lois,  
especially.

Comer is still a fisherman  
He will write soon.

As ever,

Mary

Princeton, N.J.,  
April 10th 1942

Dear Jimmie:

It's just hard to realize that 13 years ago this spring, you and I graduated from S.M.U. at that time, the "depression" wasn't fully on - but work for all that wanted to work was there for the asking - plenty of money too - and no one dreamed then that this country would be at war in 1941 - that all we had been taught against was in the 20's would be cast aside - but not until the war was at our very door steps.

Last night, I turned the lights out - sat in this room alone and listened to the radio report from Cincinnati at 11:00 o'clock. I listened to the report of the fall of Bataan peninsula, it was a grim bit of news that made my blood flow warm and my face burn. We are at war - I say we are - you are there now! I'd like to know just what your work is, I see you are in the air corps.

Your letter touched me when you said that you <sup>had</sup> just locked



evenings, Smoking became such habit with me  
 I quit - wrote an article against it - then I  
 started gaining a pound a day until I reached 235  
 pounds - too big for all my clothes, I returned to  
 smoking and went back to my normal weight  
 200 pounds, you didn't smoke cigarettes at  
 S, M, U, did you? - I don't believe you  
 did, I don't believe that - one can easily  
 smoke a pipe in the Army -

When you write me, tell me where -  
 or about where - I can reach Don West  
 with a letter, So, he's back at  
 preaching - return to the Ham; he first  
 planned to do, I can't get over it -  
 the man who started out to change  
 the world - to start a revolution in  
 this country is now preaching - preaching  
 what? he told me the "Counter Revolution"  
 was already on!

I don't know whether I wrote you  
 or not about Jack Adams but while  
 I was in Scotland I got a letter from  
 Jack. It was sprawled all over the  
 paper. Jack said he was then going  
 into Battle - that he heard the thunder  
 of artillery in the distance. His  
 letter had been sent to Kentucky and  
 then forwarded to me in Edinburgh, I  
 wrote him the day I got his letter.

but I never got an answer. Later when I was  
down at London, Ky. I learned where Don had  
solicited machine gunners for the Spanish War - from  
the Kentucky Mountains, Jack Adams, naturally, was  
one, if he has not returned to the Kentucky hills  
he is dead - he was killed, you know that  
he would be back if he were alive.

I am sending you a list of Guggenheim  
fellowship selections for this year, I know  
you'll get one of these but since it's sent  
second class, I doubt that it will be  
forwarded to you, I'm sending you an  
article about "us" written by Dayton  
Kohler - you may not have seen  
this -

I'll be expecting to hear something  
from you to tell me how you like  
military service - Good luck to you -

Always,

Jesse Stuart.

Shawmut, Ala.  
April 13, 1942

Dear James.

I read your <sup>letter</sup> to Camer last  
night, at Camer's

After preaching last night, Allen  
and I went to Fair Fax & spent  
about an hour with them.  
Just to get your address seen  
like was only way to get it.

I wrote you four or five weeks  
ago, Littcarr, Ky.

Every body sewing pretty good  
as far as I know. Allen sitting  
by fire listening song Rock & Rags  
Wilfred in school, for my self.  
I am alot better & just work 48.



hours last week, that means I will soon have a D. Bond put out  
to stop at one.

I got the Rose putting Ok. I also have six Lily of Valley slips, as they  
are call. I have bought some flower seeds I planting the ones you  
sent me last year.

The Violets were down when you were in Feb. they are still blooming  
then Johnquiles, Daffodils and Yellow Narcissus they lasted  
four weeks first I've had. Golden Bell were in  
Strip, Prideraft, Johnny Jap, Rose of Sharon, White Chris are  
blooming now, you just ought to see the Lilac bush and  
Roses begin to open. I do wish you could enjoy them too.

O yes the shirt you ask me to put up until I came back from  
Ellore's "white with blue stripe" I am sorry I bor got it. I send shirt  
to you if want me to, or feels it for you just say.

Wilfred was glad to get the stamps you sent, he will  
write you in a few days. Would love to hear from you.

Lois.

215 Montague Street, Brooklyn, N.Y.  
April 14, 1942.

Dear Jimmy Still:

Mr. Loomis gave me your address several weeks ago and I told him I would write you, but the days have gone by without a chance of time to myself. Mother has been ill practically all winter and all through March was fighting through an attack of bronchial pneumonia, from which she is slowly recovering. As she is 88 years old you can imagine my anxiety- for of course at that age the chances are all against her. I have a nurse with her by day and take the night duty myself, so I have been sort of sunk.

~~Mr. Loomis is away on the spring jaunt to Middlesboro, Detroit and so on and I know how he will miss the stop in Lexington to see you. He writes that all is well, but that it is HOT down there (South Carolina just now.) He's probably sticking to his winter underclothes as he did the last winter he was in Florida- Miss Hamilton said she simply could not talk him out of them. He has been very well all winter in spite of staying around New York, but we have had a very mild winter with practically no snow and ice.~~

I can't tell you how sorry I am that you have had to lose the peace of your mountains and fare out over the "White Highways" to what I imagine may be a private inferno for you. Since both your family and mine have been here since practically the beginnings of our country we can say these things without hesitation - and war- with everything connected with it- is simply waste. I hope by some miracle it may end soon. The atmosphere of any army camp must be hard to live in. I have always remembered a part of the "Fountain" in which the hero ( his name has slipped my mind ) told of the feeling of peace that came to him when he was interned with one or two friends in the castle, and all the duties and responsibilities he had carried all his life were wiped away by the closing of the gate. I could understand just what he meant. By the way, Billy Carr is on his way to some foreign port. Of course we do not yet know where but he wrote that "one day on the ocean is just like another and after a while you lose track of them" and as the letter was mailed at New Orleans the chances are that he was on the Pacific.

I am enclosing some clippings- a review of Mrs. Rawlings' new book and the reactions to it. I have not had a chance to read it yet for the reasons mentioned above. You will see that Theda Kenyon has just had another published, "Pendulum", which I understand covers the lives of three women during a war in each of their generations. I saw it on a counter yesterday - it is a thick book and somehow I dread reading it, though of course I shall have to. It has always been my conviction that she cannot write about real life. Perhaps this will prove me wrong. I have not seen any reviews so far. I notice that it was not published by Ives Washburn. Kate Loomis told me that she raised an awful row in their office just before Scarlet Anne came out and it may be that relations were strained to the breaking point.

I do not know, of course, whether you can get papers and periodicals down there- or if you have much time for them- but if there is anything that you would like to keep in touch with that I can send you please let me know and I'll be very glad to do it. If you don't get the papers perhaps you would like "Books" each week. I have sent



Litt Carr  
April 14, 1902

Dear Jim

We sure do miss you, but we still have Royce + Timothy with us. Spring is opening up time to plant corn + garden. you sure have got some pretty flowers over at your place, those up to the steps are blooming. They are about all gone now.

We are all well. We have been over and raked of the strawberries and flowers every thing is looking good now. The little Kant hen is setting on eleven eggs in the hollow —

Apple tree. Had some shooting  
at Hindman last week  
Marion Martion + Hall boy  
from Beaver Creek was  
kill. Winton Hale was kill  
from a straw bullet.

We have got our house  
built at last. School will  
be out pretty soon, then  
Dad will pour it on me in  
corn field. We are sending  
you one of your tulips they  
just began blooming

Ever  
Emell

April 17, 1942

Dear Jim:

I have a system of listing everything I have to do in the course of the current day or week, and then from time to time I make fresh lists carrying the un-completed items forward much the same as a bookkeeper does. For weeks now, I have been carrying forward the item, "Write to James Still".

It has not been put off repeatedly because I have regarded it other than as a pleasant item. Instead, it has been postponed because I have wanted to write when I had enough time to really get down to brass tacks.

A lot has happened since I last wrote. The main thing being the acquisition, by the approved methods of course, of the cutest little baby girl I ever thought possible. She was born February 25th and was named Sharron Dawn. She's a honey. She just eats and sleeps and only cries loud enough so that her mother can hear her and her father can't.

How would you like to see her? All you would have to do would be to plan to give us a call the next time you are in or near Chicago. We'll dig up one or more bones the dogs have buried and add a meal in the bargain. If it is convenient to your itinerary, we would be happy to add a night's lodging to the board.

Our home phone number is Villa Park 3807, which is just twenty miles west of Chicago and easy to reach on the suburban electric, and a half hours warning is all we need to follow one of the dogs to where he has buried a bone.

How has the war affected you? For all I know you may be in the service somewhere by now. If that's the case let us know and we will increase the number of letters in an effort to make your mail bag heavier. I guess it won't be very long before darn near every able-bodied man will be in it.

I am still with the same company and have the positions of Ass't. Treasurer and Secretary. However, I am breaking my neck to get into defense work by getting a small shop going in which I will have an interest. It looks very hopeful at the moment and thirty days might see me making a fresh start.

It doesn't seem right to have all this fuss and feathers going on and not be in it in some way.

The buds are beginning to burst on the trees and once more the gardening season begins. It sure feels good to get out and putter around again. We're going to have a pretty good sized vegetable garden as a result of being victimized by propaganda.

I have been watching all the papers and quite a few magazines for a sign of some really good songs or poems which might have been inspired by the war. So far nothing has impressed me very much. This song they sing every Sunday on One Man's Family is a dud, I think. Have you seen or heard anything good?

What will happen to your cabin retreat if you go into service? Will the neighbors keep the roof from springing a leak, etc?

I am at the office now and it is high noon. A friend has just dropped in and proposed a sandwich so I will close without really getting at those brass tacks. How about your dropping a note to let me know what's going on and then I will answer it within a day or two.

Give'm Hell,

*Bud S.*

Sunday April 19, 1942

Dear Jim,

Just another lonesome Sunday afternoon.

The day is just warm enough to make one feel lazy, altho the nights are real cool. Cool enough that a quilt and blanket still feels good.

We had our first string and new Irish-potatoes for dinner. I thought about you. I canned 24 lbs of cabbage for slaw last week, and the bean, tomatoes, + peas will soon follow.

Mel finished setting tobacco Friday. Didn't even have to water as a big rain came in the nick of time. For once in a life time it took the drudgery out of the tobacco setting.



We are all O. K. Earl is hauling and working at  
the Farmers market. Helen is packing cakes.  
Pakey + Tommy stays here most of the time.

Pakey comes she says Hello Grandma, Grandpa  
and every body. Tommy says - How are you  
doing, I'm fine. after being here a while  
he says, lets ask the blessing, I'm hungry.

Well Earl is coming and I'm sending  
this by him in mail. Will write again  
next week.

Love

Ellen