

May 21, 1968

Darling Mum:- How are things? -- which is sort of a dumb way of starting a letter when you don't even know where it's going to fetch up. Phil and I talked about you last night and were even tempted to try telephoning; then we found out that no transatlantic calls were being put through except "official" ones. Anyway it would have been midnight or one a.m. and we'd have probably woken you up.

I have poison ivy on my left ear, of all glamorous ailments, and it's driving me crazy. I covered the spot with a bandaid and couldn't help getting some hair gummed up in the process. What do I do tonight, when we're supposed to be dining in town? I should look really lovely! Isadore and Marie-Jo Levy were here last week~~END~~, on a brief U.S. visit; she said that one of the deciding factors in their moving to France was her extreme allergy to p.i. which troubled her every summer and even sometimes during the winter.

How awful about Queéteville. Such a lovely house. How do they go about rebuilding? It must be extremely difficult to ~~EN~~ reproduce a beautiful old thing like that. The only time I was there that I remember with any clarity was in 1950, when Lauder ~~gr~~reenway led our children through the railroad tunnel. He's told me since that he's a tunnel buff, which I didn't know existed.

I saw Shirley last Saturday. He was sweating out (literally, in good old Carter fashion) a year-end students' show. I didn't dare ask him when he was planning to go to the Cape. I myself bridle whenever someone says "when are you off to Whiskey?" because we don't yet know. Believe it or not it all rather hinges on politics. Jenny wants to work for McCarthy and this depends on how he fares in various upcoming primaries, including the New York one which occurs on June 18th. St. John and Patricia's boy gets married in Washington on the 22nd. I know we must attend but it all makes me tired just to think of (confidential!). It would be much more convenient if Jenny wanted to work for Mr. Rockefeller -- Linda says she'd welcome her with open arms any time as that office is very short-handed -- but Jen, who has just discovered politics, would be outraged if anyone suggested that her current hero could be abandoned. She made a list of questions, during her last weekend home, then drove to the nearest "McCarthy for President" hdqrs & grilled the lady at the desk with probes into what McC. thought about ___ and ___ and ___. I doubt if she got many satisfactory answers and felt sorry for the desk lady!

When I say that our departure for Whiskey hinges on Jen's summer plans it sounds as if we'd become her door-mats. It's just the matter of timing. She wants to work here for 10 days or so between getting out of school and MWC's primary, then go off with a friend to visit colleges and after that assess the situation and work for whichever remaining candidate she prefers -- Kennedy, possibly? she tends towards the Democratic thing. I don't want her on the River for too long a stretch and it would be good for her to have a summer job. We'd thought she might work out of the Watertown Democratic office, but she prefers NYC (so far) & can stay out here with Phil when he's here or with Linda or one of our neighbors. She got into a club at Farmington called the Perilhettes, which is supposed to be quite an honor. ~~XXX~~ It numbers about 7 girls, chosen from the best singing voices and they sing at other schools, make records, write musical plays, etc. I'm delighted.

Dave's book comes out in June. Viking is sending out announcements in the form of post-cards, and also Macdonald, the British publisher. You're on one of these lists -- I don't think Viking is allowed to sell books directly in Europe. There are noises about a French publisher being interested (conf.) and David thought I could do the translation. I'm immensely flattered but could not handle this: French into English I can do, but not the other way around, and also his novel is very idiomatic in the dialogue and this would present special difficulties to any translator. I remember how Françoise's sister Josie suffered over a certain chapter in Paul Gallico's "Snow Goose" which she was translating. I am suggesting the Ardodin family to DB but don't know how these things are handled. Maybe a given publisher has his own favorite translator. Remember this is still very vague and not to be mentioned.

Lindy is having a lot of fun running the Rockefeller for President office. I said a few mild words about her long hours, but she pointed out that this thing won't last very long.

I must get this to the mail man.

Lots and lots of love,