

Hello darling:

22 July 1944 6:30 P.M.

Well, my sweet, I did alright by you to-day & as a result I'm dead broke. That means that somewhere along the line during the past 22 days I've spent \$70.00. However, I'm extremely pleased with myself & yet a bit disappointed. The disappointment is the result of not being able to do something which would have thrilled both of us more than anything you can imagine next to my coming home. But let me tell you the story.

To-day Johnnie Newack stopped by on some business & stayed for dinner. He let slip that he was going to a certain famous town quite a distance from here to see what he might be able to buy. I immediately suggested that I go along & he was glad to have the company. He told me about a place in a nearby town where he had bought some pieces of hand wrought marble the last day I met him, but said that they wouldn't have many nice items left because when the fellows in the battalion heard about the place they came there, despite the fact that it was quite a long drive, & just about bought the place out. So we went on to the big city. The trip was thru mountainous country & was simply beautiful - but I'd better not try to go into any detail on that because I'm sure you're getting tired of hearing me rave about the beauty of Italy. Be that as it may, when we arrived in the town it was 2:30 & all the stores were closed until 6, just as they are in Rome. Since we couldn't wait around until then we looked over the town superficially & started back. The town hasn't been damaged much by bombs & it has narrow streets like the old section of Rome & like Rome has old houses & new ones intermingled so that they look out of place. It does not have any of the modern type architecture which is so common in Rome, the newer houses being built in the same style as the old ones. We passed thru a couple of interesting arches in entering the city - relics of the days when walls protected these old Italian towns. I was surprised to see that they had murals on their walls & ceilings of these arches.

At any rate we returned to the town not far from us & Johnnie showed me where the marble carver's shop was. When I saw the stuff he had for sale I went wild. His stockroom was upstairs, a fact which I did not know, & when I first entered I entered the work room on the ground floor. There were only a few finished pieces there & I felt that I wouldn't be able to find a thing because the battalion HQ group had bought him out. However, that upstairs room was simply loaded with stuff. I just bought & bought because his prices were amazingly reasonable. Let me enumerate my purchases -

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| ① An alabaster bridge ash tray set - consisting of tray, cigarette box (round) & 4 ash trays in the shape of club, diamond, etc. | 1.50 |
| ② A paired set of marble vases | 3.00 |
| ③ An alabaster lamp - simply beautiful | 4.00 |
| ④ Another one - prettier than the first | 4.00 |
| ⑤ A hand carved bust of a boy | 3.50 |
| ⑥ A beautiful alabaster candy dish | 3.00 |
| ⑦ A set of book ends - alabaster books | 3.00 |
| ⑧ An onyx agate figure of a giraffe | 10.00 |
| ⑨ An odd piece - a book with a bird on it | |
| | gratis |
| | 31.00 |

Somehow or other it totalled only \$28.50.

Was that a spree, or was it a spree?

I then got the idea that, since the work was so fine, it might not be a bad idea to investigate the feasibility of having busts made of Judy & Elaine. I spoke to the man about it & he called in a sculptor from a few doors below. He looked at their pictures & said "yes" he could make it. I inquired how long it would take & he said 40 days. Well, gosh, I have no idea where I will be in 40 days. I hadn't even asked the price up to then, feeling that I'd have it done regardless since he did such beautiful work & all the things were so reasonable. I inquired & was told \$40.00. Gosh, honey, you couldn't have comparable

work done in the States for \$400. He was so eager for the order as I was to give it, but I explained to him that I had no idea where I would be at the end of 40 days. I certainly wish there was some way in which I could have the thing done. I'm mulling over in my mind the possibility of having Father Joseph take care of the situation for me. I could work it some way, I believe. I'll let you know about that later. At any rate I'm broke until payday. I'll be glad to give all my pay for the month for a pair of United States of America. The sculptor has about 7 years of study at art school - & even here it takes quite a talented man to last that long at school. He showed me some beautiful full length figures of 3 Japanese maidens in native dress - exquisite workman-ship & simply beautiful; very detailed work, too. He wanted \$400 apiece for them. I'm telling you, sweet, it's a good thing that I made that allotment out to you, because I'd have spent all my money in that place & ended up with a home simply cluttered with art figures.

I adapted in the work shop to get an idea how they do their work. It was full of pieces of marble of varying sizes. I didn't see how they make this marble into the proper sizes but I imagine they do it by using a saw. I saw one of the four workmen in the shop using a saw to cut away an opening for the mouth of a horse which he was making. A circular knife is used to round off bases of objects, i.e. if they are to be round. Foot power provides the energy to turn the circular knife. A regular file is used to take off rough edges & make ornaments & hair etc., & finally polishing is done with cloths of various sorts. If I have the opportunity I plan to return Mon- day to get a pair of horse and rider were in the process of being made & then I hope to find out just how they do their work from start to finish.

When I arrived back in our cave I was so loaded down that I had to have the jeep drive right up to my cubby hole in order to unload it. The proprietor of the place had wrapped all my packages carefully using straw as protection, but just as I stepped, I ran down into the things without so much as a by your leave, so that I'll have a real job of packing the stuff. I hope to get it off to you in the morning, but I have your doubt that I will. I have to go to San HQ in the AM to appear before a board which is sitting on Sgt Hall's case, & this will probably take up my entire day.

You should have seen how dark covered we were when we pulled into the cave. It really was amazing. I'm all excited about my experience to-day & I really am going to try to make some arrangements about getting these facts done.

Now to get back to my more or less hum-drum existence.

You know the pleasant feeling of a job well done. Well, I had the nicest sample of that yesterday that you could ever hope to see, and on such a simple job as the digging of a latrine. As you know (I'm sure I wrote you about it when I was first on maneuvers) a latrine is usually about as wide as a shovel's width, 6 feet long & 2 feet deep. Macie called out 3 boys & 1 man - com to dig the latrine & since there was nothing else to do they decided they would really make a good job of it. Instead of 3' deep they made it 5', & a little bit since we have no latrine screen at present, & ended up by putting some unprintable signs about 10' long inside of 6. They then hid the latrine from the road, from which it was visible, by using in my next letter, pitched in night with the boys in digging, which, to put it mildly, is most unusual. I'm afraid that it is the policy in this company, as well as practically every other one in the army, for the men - com to oversee a job without doing a lick of work, but I'll let it go that type.

I'm going to close now, & probably won't have the chance to write any more in the morning because of my trip to HQ. All anyone to you & the kids darling. I just no close to you when I have done some- thing that I know you will enjoy, so: writing a letter or buying something. Love, W.