July 23

My darling Mama and Papa,
and Lini ♡ —

Please please forgive this long and unforgivable silence. I know how much you worry when you don't hear from us and as you know, the guilty one feels the harder it is to write. On top of that, things here, as you can imagine, have been TENSE, to use the understatement of the year. The trial was emotionally a nerve-wracking business, for Bill because it was all argued at such a low level, and all the main issues were ruled out as inadmissible evidence (the illegality of the war, the

2/ the immorality of the way the draft is administered, etc.) — All the tension and discord between us personally seemed to get magnified as though under a glass — It was rather awful. There he would be, surrounded by swooning admirers (of which I was one too as long as he was in the witness chair) and then the moment there was a recess it was as though we were total strangers — It became apparent that we simply could not wait another year or two to hear what the Supreme Court (if it ever gets there) has to say before we come to some decision about our own lives. So we are now going

3/ through the agonizing procedure of trying to decide what to do. It has <u>nothing</u> to do with other people on either side, which makes it simpler, in a way — He absolutely does not know anything as far as I am concerned which is unbelievable — but it was proved to me beyond a doubt last night as we lay in bed having a very friendly, ~~and~~ improbable, amiable discussion, while I rubbed his back, of whom he might marry if we were divorced — he ruled out the possibility of a young graduate student on the grounds that she would still be young when he was 55, and he said "God, I could not <u>bear</u> to be jealous of a

4/ younger man!" as if the very thought had never entered his head before - As for him, I know he is not involved with anyone seriously, if at all - So it's between him and me. Naturally it is the question of the children which makes it so agonizing. Except for the summer in Puerto Rico I have seldom been as emotionally unsteady as I am right now, and I am certainly in no condition to take the children, set up housekeeping for them elsewhere, find a job - and compensate to them for everything - it seems only logical that they should stay here, in any case - and Bill is hardly going to be away at all next year

5/ as he felt something was about to happen and refused nearly all invitations out of town - I can almost cope with the idea of leaving as long as I can see them on weekends - until I start to think about Amy, and then I can't face it - or any one of them, if I think of them one at a time -

— Now you see why it's taken me so long to write - I really wanted to write when I had made some sort of firm decision or plan, so you wouldn't have to be upset by other possibilities etc. — But it will take a little longer to really shake things down and figure out what is feasible and what isn't ~~#~~ and that is what I'm trying to do. So whether

6/) go to New York and take a course in photography for a couple of months, then look for a job in a studio (possible – I've even seen some agencies) or try and find a job right away – (much harder, I don't really know enough) – or whether at this point I am scared and confused enough to really have to "go away" for a few months to figure out what I can cope with and what I can't. I just don't know. Going to N.Y. is frightening, competing with people fresh out of college, 15 yrs. younger than I am, is no joke. On the other hand, if I were in a real sink-or-swim situation I might just possibly learn to swim, or at least float: — the going-away place is frightening too, as it is hardly an escape kind

7/ of set-up, and no-one makes it a pleasant retreat for you - Most people can't wait to get out - Everybody else there has problems too, and they don't let you get away with anything - Group therapy sessions can be rough enough to make you prefer almost anything else - No one tries to spare you anything. So it's Scylla and Charybdis - Then there is the equally frightening thought of staying right here, as though nothing had been said - which seems the most impossible of all - I'm afraid that with all the will in the world, even if we pretended things were fine, it wouldn't last very long and we would be right where we are now. I really didn't want to blurt out all this in such a messy way, and I've been mulling

8/ over the perfect letter for weeks and ending up with nothing at all - so there it all is -

The children don't know anything yet, though of course they've surely sensed something going on - Amy has been in Michigan a month already, and after three letters in the first ten days, two slightly homesick after listening to Mozart !) not a word since July 5 - we assume that it means she's gotten thoroughly involved - She'll be there until the 19th of August - [Cabin 4, Junior Girls Div., National Music Camp, Interlochen, Mich.] Bill and Alex may drive out to see her after David takes off to you - he's been looking forward to it enormously and obviously can't wait - he has all kinds of plans to take over Jason completely and

9/ teach him to swim and everything - His ticket was ½ fare because he was traveling with Paul, but I'm afraid ~~if~~ he comes back alone it will be a little more on the return trip - I don't suppose Alina is heading home (here?)? Has she made any plans for next year? I miss her! Johnny called me this morning from Calif. where he is re-rehearsing "Clear Day", with a slightly different cast, to do ~~at~~ the Spole Theatre. I gather he is back with Flora, for the moment. I had lunch with Paul in N.Y. a few weeks ago, and told him a little of what was going on, and tried to get a reasonably realistic idea of how to start looking for a job, if I really decide to move - He couldn't have been nicer and more willing to help,

10/ in his own pedantic and matter-of-fact, completely un-emotional way - (for instance, I mentioned how hard I had been trying not to spend money on clothes, the way I used to go on binges - and that ~~most~~ all of the money I earned from the theatre or from odd photo jobs went back into camera things - and he said very seriously - "Oh well, if you're going to work in New York, you've gotta have clothes!" But he was very sweet - he didn't say a thing about his own affairs, and when I walked back to his office and left him at the door I asked "how is your life" - and he gave that up-one-side-of the face smile, said "Lousy," and went in. He wasn't going to mention anything to you and probably won't bring it up, so you can tell him it's all right - I don't

11/ think he told Leslie anything, though, and I would really rather she didn't know for the moment —

I will tell you immediately if we come to any solid decision soon. I am sorry to have dumped all this turmoil like this — I really did want to say something much calmer and well thought out — But at least now you know what's going on, and why it was so hard to write — Please forgive your old cipa for giving you worries for so many years —

I love you —

♡

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