

At Sea

April 17, 45

Remember that there is absolutely no need to worry about me.

My darling Mother Kate:

Hello again from son John who is still aboard ship. No [sic] much to write about. We are hearing little news, and life on a vessel is the same daily. I had to ask the date of today, and had no idea what day of the week it is.

I have just taken a shower; there are hot showers aboard. Showered and put on [illegible] trousers and t-shirt. Have been sitting and standing on deck since sun down talking to our group and to the first mate.

I gambled this afternoon for about five minutes and lost guilders. That is ample reason why I shall never gamble much. I always lose and I hate to lose.

I read "Winter Wheat" today, I "disremember" (as the men say) the name of the woman author. It holds one's interest, but is not especially good. I believe you mentioned reading it. She brings her college sweetheart back to visit her New England father and Russian mother who owns a monstrous wheat farm. The difference in their respective way of living scares him away from marriage. She comes to view her parents in the light in which he saw there, but later, after much writing, (a fact that is the intere [sic] theme) she [illegible] sees them in their true blue lights. However one catches the feel of wheat land in the winter in an place like Montana. Truth varies from fiction in that real characters never experience the wide gamut of [illegible] felt by fictitious characters (I think we have both expressed this several times)

Tonight I shall start on "Young Ames" by Walter Edmonds. How did you like "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" – I found it fairly in fact pretty, interesting. The character, Johnnie Noland, the young drinkin' [sic] father who dies, was well depicted in fact, about as clearly so as nearly any character I ever read about. Both novels are ones of frustration – such types always end in the same aroma of frustration. I will always prefer the Dickens type of novel. There is plenty of sadness in there but they end satisfyingly. Well perhaps soon I shall be terrifically busy again. I hope we stay at our new destination for about 3 months and then move again. It's a shame to push against time like that, but I am anxious for this year to pass; then I can start sweating (you & Ed & I can) the months out in earnest.

I would like to see a good show tonight. If I had my choice of any place in the world I would be right now, I would of course chose first to be somewhere with you; second I believe I had rather be in Sydney. Riding a taxi from Cheryl's on Elizabeth Bay Road past Kings Cross and to Mavis' home at Oxford St. at Wallerah.

I wonder how China would be; although I would like to go there, I couldn't envision it with much interest. I imagine we might get up around there last of this year.

The weather at home should be pleasant now. I can't remember what April was like at home; one felt the heat in May – isn't April the best month next to October?

Mama, does Leonard [illegible] ever visit Eden? Does Elvira Hobby ever go to town? Some [illegible] should write a novel based on her. I wonder how Kenneth Wood is liking overseas life; I'll bet he is the

most unbothered man in the world; there is a world of difference between the living condition of officers and enlisted men (that sounds snobbish but its true.)

I used to enjoy writing to my girls but I can think of nothing to say anymore – absolutely nothing, in fact I am falling down on my correspondence with everyone except you.

I hope you and Ed are in good health; I'll bet I've picked up ten pounds on this trip. I should havbe a letter from Ed soon – Good night my good mama – I cherish you.

Your loving son,

John Harrod