

I shall comment in detail about your writing a little later on.

New Guinea
April 5, 1945

My darling Mama Kate:

Three candles twinkle on my writing table. My watch shows a quarter past nine. Outside, men's voices pop up every once in a while; among the trees to the rear and side of Sleepy Hollow jungle noises hum. Lou & Ford & Krummen are discussing salami. I am hungry although I ate heavily of a fairly good supper tonight.

I've just been reading the first installment of your biography (I mentioned in my last letter about receiving the second installment). Reading your account of your early days interests me as much as reading any adventuresome novel or biography I ever read – Speaking of genre, your description certainly contains it. You recapture the scenes (of course I didn't know them) perfectly. I fall into the story completely. What I am trying to say, in my awkward way, is that I was transplanted to the scenes and spirit of your childhood completely. Your account of Harriet is deft and concise and clear cut. Somehow, an atmosphere of Fall of slight sadness runs throughout – I think however that such really doesn't exist, but that I read that into it because I think of the Molloy history in terms of unhappy endings. And even, when I fall into the spirit of the family Christmas and your going to gather, I have the uneasy feeling of one who follows the characters of a book through their happier moments, and yet know the ending & therefore has a sort of fateful feeling all along. I think I exaggerated the above, but I do have a perhaps subconsciously – frustrating feeling about our history. I've always had the desire, which originated in my childhood – to see the Molloy's back on top (crudely put) – I have always had a deep seated and fierce pride where we are concerned.

Another thwarted feeling I have – along a more practical line – is that your writing will never receive its due acclaim & that you will never get any money for it – The fact is – that whether you realize it or not, you could write a successful book – just the subject matter you are covering with all of its ramifications in detail – could become and [sic] intensely good story – or family biography – you could never write it as you are now, by that I mean, that your routine (although you have lots of time) is not conducive to comprehensive writing. But if you and I were off somewhere by ourselves, and I helped you by proof reading, and minor suggestions (my writing could never compare with your because innately I am not an intelligent person) and we had six months or so you could turn out a book that would see.

Well tis nearing ten pm – and I must begun to draw this letter to a close – We turned our pig loose because it seemed unhappy & was getting thin, but it would not leave the area, but kept tagging along after Pin Up – I scolded Pin Up for being too rough in her play with the pig, but when I called her away the pig trotted after her. The monkey, whom I previously said was getting mean is now friendly and mild. I played with him a long time today – He grows on one just as a puppy does – climbs all over one – runs off and then changes back on one.

I am glad our lambing is so successful – I am anxious to hear from Ed – what do you think of Okinawa? And our advance in Germany? Goodnight nearest to an angel

Your loving son,

John