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Letter, Virginia Brainard to Dudley and Merl Brainard [November, 1942]

Virginia Brainard

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Thursday noon

Nov., 1942

Dear Mother and Daddy,

I'm sorry I'm so late about my ~~finished~~ Christmas list. I hope that this will help you somewhat. I'm glad that you're going ahead and using your own judgement, though, cause Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without surprises.

1. a fountain pen--I lost mine a month ago
2. several prints of that picture Carl Fritz took of me in August if they aren't too expensive--don't get any frames, just the prints
3. a brown skirt
4. a cotton housecoat that wraps around me and ties--I have the darndest trouble getting in and out of mine and never can get it washed, cause I don't have anything else to wear
5. an appointment with Mrs. Lawrence to make my suit and a blouse, the material for which I will get down here--also, ~~make~~ alter my new formal slightly

Now please write me immediately and tell me ~~me~~ what you all want for Christmas. I will probably shop in Des Moines before I come home so please tell me what you'd like.

I've been collecting alot of home ec. material, Mother, and have a large file of stuff on homemaking and foods and nutrition. I ~~can't~~ can't bring the whole file home because it's too big but if you'll tell me about any special ~~me~~ problems or recipes you'd like to have, I'll bring home whatever material I have on the subjects. And I have about everything.

So Jeanne McC. Blair is coming home for Christmas. I wonder if that means that Neil is being sent into foreign service immediately. I haven't heard from her since the middle of Nov. when she was hoping for the best. I wondered at the time what I'd do and how I'd feel if Fred were ~~sent~~ suddenly shipped out and ~~it~~ it seemed so remote at the time. And now here we are. I guess that what both Jeanne and I would really like for Christmas isn't going to be in our stockings this ~~Christmas~~ season and maybe not for many seasons. The irony of the whole thing is that Fred and I are only 25 miles from each other and we still can't be together. He's had 3-cents in his pocket for the past two weeks and won't get paid until Dec. 30. He was out of camp on convoy duty and couldn't sign the pay roll. Consequently, he won't get his check for another month. I can't go to Des Moines because there's no place to stay and he can't get up here because he hasn't any money. There isn't anything that we can do. If we could only make the most of these last weeks that he'd near here it would be bearable but we can't even do that. It's like being locked up in two separate cages. So there's nothing that either of us can do about it.

I think it would be nice if you would write and invite him up to St. Cloud for Christmas, Mother. He ^{probably} can't come but it would mean something to him to know that ~~he's~~ he's welcome, anyway. Don't mention a thing about this money problem, don't mention his being sent into foreign service. We've hashed it over so many times ~~and~~ that we finally promised ourselves that we wouldn't mention it again until the time came. He's so close to it that he doesn't even want to think about it until he has to and talking doesn't do any good.

His address is: Corporal Fred Jess
Infirmary Reception Center
Camp Dodge, Iowa

He'll probably worry and worry about how to answer you because he doesn't know anything about his plans and won't know until the week of Christmas. ~~So you might take him to the hospital~~
So when you write you might tell him that you know he can't make many plans but that he's welcome, etc., etc.

I do enjoy your long, newsy letters so much. I hope Marilyn Morrison is better. I still ~~remember~~ have a vivid memory of the time Connie was hit by a swing.

This is the season when we should all take heart and look into the future with hope and faith, rather than with pessimism and fear. Who is happy these days? We know that we have much to be thankful for even though we also have much to endure. ~~xx~~ Perhaps the only important thing is that we love each other.

I have much to learn about self control and discipline.

Love,

Vergna