

Dec., 1940

Hotel Roosevelt

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Friday –

Dear Mother and Daddy,

I thought of all of you so much yesterday even though you weren't giving thanks with me. Being here in Virginia's home has made me home sick for my own. I can hardly wait until Christmas. It's been a long stretch, these past three months. I miss all of you an awful lot, especially right now where I have a little time to sit down and relax. Not much time, though. I brought all my book with me and have been trying to get some studying in. I wanted to get a little rest but there's just "no rest for the weary." Every time I have a spare minute there are a hundred things that need doing.

And my work! I'm so terribly worried about it that it follows me around all the time. Its just torture. Finals are closing in on me in just two more weeks and I've been going three horrible periods of nightmares. I've never been in such a horrible mental state in all my life. I break out in cold sweat – I've read about exams effecting people like that but I never dreamed it'd get me, too. There's nothing worse than this.

I guess I cracked up the other day. I've average four hours of sleep every night since the first of October. One night a week ago I got 3 ½ hours of sleep and only five hours the next night. I went to bed last Monday night about 1:00 and they couldn't get me up the next morning. I was scared so I went to the hospital, I'm all right now. All I want is to be able to keep going until the end of the quarter. After that I won't be in a condition to care what happens – even if I flunk Chemistry. Edward says its no disgrace to flunk anything here but if I flunk Chemistry I think I won't come back next quarter honestly and truly. I'm not just talking. I've never flunked anything in all my life and I think I'll lose my mind if I flunk Chem. The one and only thing that makes me wish the work was lighter is missing Helen Jepson like I did a week ago because I wouldn't take any time out from Chem, I've also missed the U.S. Marine Band, Raymond Clapper, [McClecla?] Barclay. When it comes to that I don't know if education is worth it but there's no help for it.

I've also made a rather big decision during this past month. I've been thinking about sororities quite a bit and I've decided that I don't want to go in any or even go out for rushing until at least next year – and probably not at all. I'm so glad I can make this decision because it will make the financial load much easier. I know that if I really wanted to join a sorority you'd sacrifice a lot just for that and I'm afraid I'd be tempted to take it. So I'm glad I can say I don't want it now and probably not at all. I know there are many advantages a sorority can give and give but I don't believe they offer anything I can't get through dorm life and the draw-backs seem to me to be quite glaring. But perhaps I've seen only that side. However, this is the way I

feel about it. By far the most important thing to me now is to develop myself and my interests along the lines we wrote about several weeks ago and to develop my work into just what I want it to be. And I want to fight that problem all myself and be able to lick it without the backing of any sorority or any other organized group behind me and showing me a long. I think I have to do it for myself or it won't mean a thing to me. I think that in my case, dependency on outside group to make my openings for me would be very bad because I'd have too much of a tendency to be a parasite. And nothing is really worth doing unless I do it for myself and there is no reward or joy in success unless I've fought for it myself. So I want my independence. This is my battle and I want to fight it out to the finish myself. I want to be an individual and a darn good student first. The rest can wait.

Then there are other little things, such as sorority gals not standing for the same things I stand for – the things you've taught me. And I love democracy. I like to do my own dating without having everything arranged for me by a pledge social chairman with the “most eligible” men on the campus – always those in only one or two accepted fraternities. And I'd rather date non-frat men – “barks” – than any other class of fellows. The really finest, best men I've met so far are non-frat men. There are a lot of little things. We'll have a long talk about it Christmas. I can hardly wait to get home but I dread the end of this quarter. I want you to be happy and glad that you could give all this to me and I don't know what's going to happen.

I'm having a nice quiet time here in Cedar Rapids. The Richters are lovely people. I'm very thankful that there aren't any parties. We've been trying to study. This afternoon we went shopping and I got my overshoes. They were the las pair in town. I paid \$2.49 for them and in Ames they cost \$3.88. I could not find a hat anywhere! I'm so disgusted so I've decided to quit trying. Couldn't you have my old green snap [brien?] bleached and cleaned and send it to me? I like it better than anything I've seen and it looks best on me I know. It would be a very inexpensive way of solving the hat problem.

And I also bought a Christmas present from you to me. Remember I asked for a pair of shoes? Well, cross it off the list cause I bought them this afternoon. I needed them pretty badly or I wouldn't have sacrificed my hat for them. I guess that was the real reason I finally decided not to get one at all. I needed shoes much worse. They were only \$4.00 and are a good sensible pair. So I'd sure love it if you'd make me a present of the four bucks right now. It kinda takes the edge of Christmas but I sure needed them now! Merry Christmas!

I hope I can hold out until Christmas! Had used to have me out for worrying so over the paper but I've never in all my life worried the way I did now. Its (?).

Saturday

Please don't give me much of a Christmas this year. I get my Christmas present every day I'm at Iowa State. And I don't want you to spend much money. I've decided to let my hat go entirely. I've got my shoes so cross them off the list, too.

There is another item of expense that's just come up. I have a board bill of \$5.45 that's accumulated since September. I was fined several times when I had to have my checks cashed

through college. I had to have some extra meals and trays. That seems an awful lot. I wish I could pay it out of my allowance. But I'll pay half of it and gladly because its my fault. I wish I could afford all of it but I can't – especially with Christmas in three weeks.

Only three more weeks and then I'll be home! I'd much rather have tea than a (?). It would be much easier for you and far less expensive. Just something simple cause we'll all be eating a lot of nice food then. Did I tell you that I weigh 132 lbs now? I can still stand 10 more pounds but I'm due to lose from now until Christmas.

This afternoon the Richters have gone downtown to shop some more. I'm all alone so I'm planning on a good long afternoon of Chemistry. I have a lab test Tuesday and a big lecture test Wednesday. I've already quit eating til its all over. I must stop now and get to work. We leave for Ames on the 4:00 train tomorrow and get in about 6:50. The roads are terrible so I'm glad we're going by train. Hope I find some mail from you when I get back –

All my love –

Virginia

P.s. Just checked the board bill again and we missed out on paying for the first few days of school. That's what we're charged for. Its due date is Wednesday, Dec. 4