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Mann, Klaus

Camp Crowder, 1943-11-18

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copy

Post Public Relations Office,
Camp Crowder, Missouri

November 18, 1943
(my 37th birthday, if you please!)

Dear Grace,

It was very sweet of you to write to me, and not to be mad at me, because of my inexcusable silence. Of course, I'd LOVE to come to Little Rock - ~~me~~ or rather, to 1000 West Second Street - on a 3-day pass, over Thanksgiving Day. But I am afraid it can't be done, just now.

The one difficulty is that I've had a 3-day pass a couple of weeks ago: as you may know (from Bill Bancroft and other Robinson friends), those precious things (3-day passes, I mean) are coming just once a month. - But even if this routine obstacle could be overcome, I don't think I could make it. For I am "on the alert" again -- not officially so, but practically. In other words, I may be shipped out any day -- far away, I hope. Naturally, you never can tell - in this man's unpredictable and capricious army: I may have to stay in Missouri for the duration plus six months. But, more likely, I'll go across before long. So I really think that it wouldn't be very tactful to ask for 3-day pass, under the circumstances.

It's too bad and a great, big pity. Mais, que voulez-vous, ma pauvre amie: c'est la guerre...

I have been living in a state of uncertainty and suspense for the past five months (since I came to Camp Crowder): waiting, first, for my citizenship papers to come through, and, secondly (since my naturalization) for that overdue overseas assignment. Apart from this constant strain (to me, waiting is one of the most strenuous occupations!), I didn't have a bad time here, really. My job is interesting and satisfactory. I've been doing quite a bit of writing for our camp newspaper, THE MESSAGE, and some lecturing - on the post and in the neighbouring towns. I enclose one clipping from THE MESSAGE herewith - just to give you an idea what kind of thing I am doing. (The "Europe" article is the last instalment of a series, "Cities in the News," including sketches of Paris, Naples, Berlin, Tunis, Hamburg, Vienna, Moscow, and so forth.)

Remember me to everybody who still remembers me - especially, of course, to your attractive mother and to Bill Bancroft, if he's still around. I am really sorry that I can't have turkey with you, next Thursday - and it makes me positively nostalgic to think of the dessert which I'm going to miss... I expect you to be a little disappointed, too, and to feel sorry for me.

Yours,