

at sea

120 miles off Plymouth  
England.

Dear Mom and Dad,

June 25, 1948

The last day of any voyage is never  
so filled with packing, packing, packing  
from our first port of call Plymouth, England, tomorrow morning  
at this time we shall watch the tender pull into Plymouth to  
add of our passengers, the most going to R. H. Thomas in Oslo, Norway  
to that two ports - I shall

Let me begin the Odyssey by the comment - a magnificent  
trip, not because of the weather (swelly though for all fog soon  
has blessed many minutes now for 3-4 days ago - 3 days of  
glorious sun and deck, no particularly because of the heat & its  
accommodations. But because of the "on-upgrade" for the interest of  
possibilities because of so many of the latter aboard. They are  
all around me now in the lounge (at 2:30 a.m. - a great  
mass of us not going to berth before 2-3 a.m. on any night, no is from  
the rolling berths at about 11 a.m. - to start the day over with  
constant talk, good talk if you seek it out, music, art, news,  
news, religion, any topic in any language, excellent meals, the beginning  
in importance and enjoyment as to lengthen, reaching breakfast  
midnight over the 3-4-5 cups of tea & coffee with a cigarette (love you  
me & made myself beautiful every second day out with half-a-dozen  
to catalyze a conversation on French) in the A-deck sitting-room.

But as radio-Paris being in Chopin into the lounge & deck-panels  
(more lately it has been Radio Moscow broadcasting around France  
valuable broadcasts and a strange medley of music, matches of  
Retro Herdant, Russian folk music, and all interpolated measures  
being broadcast) I shall offer a few details of the ship and its  
add cargo of students and the handful of shakers who suppose  
an "entertainment" staff.

The Boat:

The S.S. Monine jumper is a troopship - no doubt of it - but it comes its present  
use in a domestic fashion. Brass plates "Tramp ship", "Rich Day" etc. still  
above its hatchways, but the X-deck tiers of berths, really used for  
two now, rather both offer the berths in its two mess halls, and its new-  
passenger ratio now 2:1 for 500 passengers is much better designed for comfort  
than it was times. The ship was sized by Henry Kaiser, out of Portland, Ore.  
beyond that its ownership, lease etc. is a tangled lineage shared by the  
govt, Moore-McCormack, and J.S. Lines. Frankly, though this is the lowest  
cabin - low priced (70), it is a luxury liner compared to expectations. Food is  
excellent choice on the menu, good cuts of meat, plenty of veg. & fruit  
and served by stewards who know what they're doing, and overall less  
does it well. Passenger decks on C-D-A (but accommodations = only  
12:1 in a cabin compared to about 35 per 1000. This plus port & star  
in the former are about the only difference. The cabin is used for sleep &  
here it doesn't matter, a lounge for cards & talk, "D" deck - recreation  
hall for dancing (to us) and frequent recreation meetings - none of which  
we need attend unless we wish, a small "library" (a couple of fiction  
cabinets). Forward of deck space - a small "A" deck reserved for A deck  
passengers - if any distinction were observed - none is - "Boat-deck" - or  
a main promenade, and the sun deck, mainly consisting of hatches and  
gun tunnels sans guns - plus a bridge and various restricted areas -  
galleys etc. below, made up the jumper - which once coming 2000  
troops no voyage - now about 500 students - and could carry more  
a few rest areas remaining empty.

The voyage:

Left New York harbor at 5:05 p.m. E.D.T. - I mind, thanks to  
gluttony (dinner being served at the time) a grossly naive to the bronze lady  
who watches over the harbor - and could only bid adieu at a distance  
over the shore. Beyond that, the desmugger of the trip on so calm of the  
sea (I have now seen at least, real ultramarine) the red sky at dusk  
portending good day tomorrow, long hours on the crowded sun deck, now  
nearly dark with only a few yards of visible ocean on each side - and  
the interminable blast of the horn, demanding 5 seconds of silence in  
every minute of conversation, usually not over the Atlantic and back -  
de-mer - all can be found in any book on the sea. I must  
confess I have spent no lovely moments <sup>looking</sup> over the side - the  
deep blue passed too full of interest for landlubbers.

The passengers aboard:

Here is where my vision and imagination always used clear  
The 200 odd passengers may roughly be judged into (1) 2/3 + going to  
Yale University in Norway for summer session, a rather dull group of  
undergraduates who are for some reason going to study Norwegian language,  
history, marine life, or geology for no discernible reason in most cases.  
It's good to get ahead etc. But the mass of interesting people are not  
in this group by any means - (2) The groups getting off at Plymouth,  
various odd lots going on their own small groups (like Ruth Lunnell -  
and I know name I w. abriter - and me - from Colton College  
and of no going all year with her prof. of German; quite lovely, quite  
young, <sup>from</sup> St. Andrews in Scotland for a summer work -  
Frances like the Bates of Fairville, Ky. whom I most remember  
and others including our two travel mates from Michigan  
Dean Brewer and John Shaw.

(3) the "disorganized group" getting off at Le Havre for France  
a large group to Fairville, Helen Pons to study music (like Bill  
Gross, a student composer under Ray Norris), art (like Boston's Diana  
McCall (maybe name = Diana Hathaway, took me 5 deep and 2  
insults to meet the woman - a rather nice cultured partier + type  
friches, beach hair (descriptions for future reference), Jim Rhenberg in  
sociology (from Conn.), others to study piano under Robert Casadane  
like Nellie Wupper - others to travel, requiring 5 ports like  
ourselves, Julie Blume and Helen Wicks, two Michigan girls  
going to study (No!) at the Sorbonne (to them see I care  
among other things, several windy nights on the bridge aft. -  
my very good friends aboard (constant lay at the W. Wesam. miller,  
Charleston French Teacher, (ah Bayar -) Eleanor  
teacher at Cornell College N.Y. and Christian Dillbert, parent  
John Comdine - like weather <sup>continually</sup> in a dirty pair of white striped  
pants, long rain coat, ill-recept mustache - history of not teacher at  
Fairville, Ky - off to Rome for the summer.

I have forgotten Allen Crouch of Fairville, Am. now at  
Cornell Law School - very interesting and well educated  
we shall seek him out in Zurich. August Jansson - of  
Amsterdam - sym in Mayflow Conc. camp, now studying at Ed.  
we shall stop at his home. and other more casual acquaintances  
no name - many gifted, many others very naive and not  
blessed with great deal more than passage wits, although I have one

no uniforms aboard - Everybody in jeans, pebble-purses, dirty sweaters, old shoes, no protocol, no standards of elegance to annoy w. some to equal - all very much students, all easy to meet, most of funny warty conversation, a few good advice. <sup>while</sup> ~~divided~~; though for most this is the first voyage. The passenger list contains a very few oldsters - all of whom teach or did so - and even ship's doctor - per excellence - Madam Hurst (of Smith <sup>coll.</sup> to see husband in Paris, and setting a new non-stop record for vomiting cigarettes). There are many nationals on board, going home again - at the table, one can sit next to a boy going back to Copenhagen, to London, or to Heidelberg, and many of the travelers speak well several languages. There are day or more quick practical language lessons in small groups, if one wishes - mine with good old Prof. Menge of Colleton College in beginning (the very beginning) French, so that hapless bicyclists will not be without disarming phrase like "je suis américain"; many faire un promenade avec moi au clair de lune, non cheri etc. - although the bicyclists will still be very hapless for awhile & trials. Our first meeting of the French peasant will be memorable for France in 1872. I listen in <sup>in</sup> ~~to~~ all conversation, in French and get constantly all the initiated for antique (usually despairing sighs) of my vocalizing.

Women? - <sup>not</sup> enough attractive ones, although there are adequate representatives of good stature from Bowling Green, Ohio - to the ~~usually~~, very unimpressive, poor representation, most, however, seem to be in groups, pre-arranged - but the voyage has not been dull.

The medical student (I know from Duke one aboard to study pediatrics at old Guy's in London, were given a tour of the ship's hospital - not used to capacity, the surgeon had not yet figured out how to turn on the O.R. lights, but very complete thanks to previous <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~it~~ was built.

Cham & John continued a deck tennis game which keeps most of the passengers near momentarily off on the starboard side of the boat deck - but when a quick movement when all is accidentally dull. - actually haven't been with jelly on the deck for very much, spending most of the time in other heavier conversational groups, meeting new people constantly is always a pleasure - luckily most of the interesting people will return with us on the 14th!

odd bits of intelligence - adequate showers, warm towels with clean towels and soap - had Piles on ship -

circulation program seems to consist of discussions, lecturing - and a couple of B-narratives - most of which I had air freight to see before - as shown below, and

