

Colette R. Gerstbauer
1201 Lincolnway West
Mishawaka, Indiana

Monday night
7th? March 4, 1940

Darling,

So far I'm behaving beautifully. It's 8 o'clock and I'm in bed already. I'll be asleep by nine and that will give me ten hours sleep tonight on top of a very busy day today. It started to affect me toward late afternoon but I just slipped away from the office & relaxed and thought about the grand weekend. I just seemed to live the rest of the day out in a happy dream of last weekend. Dear, I hope it won't wear off for three weeks.

Now got a letter from Aunt Effie in Detroit today. She's living in the 200 block on Lathrop. I believe she said it was just in back of or just north of the Fisher Bldg. I have the number downstairs. She said when I come to Detroit I should stop & see her; and that she wished she could invite me to stay with her but being in a small apartment they were cramped for space. She said too that

There were a number of very nice sections where we might locate but not knowing where you worked she didn't actually suggest anything.

I thought of something today that I wanted to tell you yesterday. It was that I do know what my new name will be, and that it is spelled Hornung and not Horning. In fact I laughed and laughed when you told me that I had written Horning. I must have written it in a big hurry. I certainly didn't do it intentionally.

Tell now Mr. Hornung, since there isn't any news since just last night I'll start my dreaming again. Last night after you left I drove Mom and one of her lady friends to a card party and came home and went to bed. So I'm any thing but neway now. Then while I'm resting and writing here, you are up there sloving over the books. I wish a dear, sincere frame as I've got. Can't figure out how I rate. If I were only there I'd be fixing up some tea & chocolate cake for when you get home at 9:30 or ten. Or maybe you'd like something heavier - perhaps waffles & syrup? Just wait, we'll see. So long for tonight dearest.

Yours own *Wette*

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Wednesday morning
March 6, 1940

Darling,

Just got in and decided to drop you a few lines before the grindstone starts rolling around. I got your nice letter yesterday morning and when Naomi walked into the office and saw me reading it, she said: "A letter already? and he just went back the other night? That's true devotion." Seems like it is.

But that's what I thrive on — devotion, to you as well as from you.

Too bad you had to have another bad trip back. But it can't last long anymore. If the weather keeps up like today is so far you won't have any more icky, foggy trips back. The sun is shining in on me so nice right now that one girl told me to watch out or I'd get sunburned. My office is the only one that gets the morning sun.

It's so wonderful. It must be atonement for yesterday, because yesterday it rained or drizzled all day and tried so hard to snow; in fact it did snow some. So we do deserve the good weather to make up for that.

So they are really keeping you plenty busy with the studies — I wish I could make that work lighter for you instead of going to bed at 7:15 as I did last night. It's helping though — slowly but surely I'm getting over it. I haven't heard anything about any quizzes in the past week or so. Aren't your new teachers as generous as those of your past semester? Of course, I know that wouldn't bother you. You undoubtedly would just as soon have them forget quizzes etc.

You speak of going into the subject of houses with Mrs. O'Rourke the other day; well, last evening on the way home from work Mr. Heckaman and I went into the same subject again. He thinks it's silly for us to worry about houses, apartments, etc. before we're married. He said the best thing for us to do would be to take just a very, very small apartment, even if just an in-door bed-living room & kitchenette — the most inexpensive thing we could find until we are there a short while. Because after we are there awhile. After we are there awhile we are bound to become acquainted with some people there and then you know how fast news flies, we'll be hearing of an available place here and one there so fast we'll probably be hounded by landlords and landladies.

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It is true - it probably will work out that way for us since there is so little we can do in advance about the situation.

Hell, darling, there's nothing doing so no news. I'm going to church tonight for a change, then tomorrow night Jan Pennel wants me to go to a movie, so we'll have dinner together and then go to a show but I don't know yet what's on in town. It's a lot of fun getting out with the old pals but - gee I'd just as soon stay home and do my monogramming and sewing for my hope chest. I'm trying to finish a quilt (patchwork) but haven't found time yet. It's just one prolonged thrill to get ready for June 27.

I must say goodbye now, dearest, I'll write again soon.

Love and kisses

Russie.

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Sunday evening March 10th

Darling,

Just like a long lost friend or something - you finally get a letter from me. I'm ashamed of myself - I should have gotten a letter to you on Saturday + Monday and didn't. It isn't that I didn't have anything to tell you either, it's only that I haven't been able to get time to write. Friday night we had training school at the office, and Saturday afternoon Tilla + Ang met me after work and we shopped and shopped and shopped for June 25. Then Ang had to go back to relieve Dad at 6 but Tilla and I went to see the play "Around the Corner" at Turner Hall. (Very good and we enjoyed it a lot). We had oceans of fun shopping. He said we really ought to keep a scrapbook of all the things we said and did in these 5 hours. It was such a thrill. We're going to continue our work on that job next Saturday.

Talk about a coincidence - while shopping in Wyzma's - we were shopping from a book and getting our ideas from this book when in walks Margaret Ray and

Betty Myers. Then we saw them again at the play; in fact they brought me home.

How are the glass eyes by now, Butch? Have you gotten used to them yet, and are they doing you any good? I'm anxious to see you in them. I'll bet you look very dignified and big businessmanish. At any rate I do hope they are what you needed and that they will make your work and studying easier for you. You seem to be doing mighty alright though with an 83 in math. Good for you.

You speak of me on the uphill physically - you said it - I'm "shooting" uphill now. Getting over it beautifully and trying very hard not to overdo. Through such things as our big day Saturday which naturally is tiresome, tearing from store to store, still I'd rest wherever I could and tried hard to keep calm and not get tired. Then we ate a big supper, and then between 7 and 8, before the play, Tilla and I went to the LaSalle hobby and reclined in their nice big soft, comfy, chairs which we both needed. There's only one thing: Due to my funny diet which cuts out everything except fruits vegetables and lean meat, I'm unable to eat fattening things and put on any weight, which is what I want to do. But I've even got

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that all figured out. Beer is very, very fattening, and bock beer is supposed to be very good for you. Soooooo I'm going to buy myself a whole case of Kamms Bock and drink it all myself. a bottle (maybe two, but?) each night ought to be very healthy for me. A good excuse not? If you come back before my "medicine" is all gone I'll share it with you but nobody else. I'll have to hide it though, with this German household. Anyhow I'm being good and getting healthier every day (I sound like it don't I?)

Yes and I'm looking forward to my vacation - ooh la la la! And it would be a good idea for us to talk to Aunt Effie when I get to Detroit. Honey, do thank Mrs. O'Liberty & Joe for offering me the place to stay. I would love to do that. Aunt Effie said she wished she could have me stay with them but they are very cramped for space. Milt & Elvira also invited me several times but it's so far out I wouldn't be able to see you much and I would just be a burden there in that they might "do" for me since they know

me. That all sounds sort of involved but you know what I mean.

Glad to hear that you got further information from Miss Tower, and I'm anxious to see ~~or~~ or hear what you have on these other places.

Into your letter of Thursday - your speaking of last Sunday afternoon gets me. Playing possum - you vision. I'm glad I changed my mind in a hurry last Sunday afternoon. When I went into the front room to turn the radio off when it went haywire, you were (presumably) sleeping so sound and peacefully I was going to stop and kiss you when I started back to the kitchen, but for some reason or other I didn't; guess I must have been afraid of waking you, and I did want you to get some rest so badly. But wouldn't you have had the laugh on me if I had, thinking you were asleep and weren't. When I did come to you I did so just because I wanted to. My common sense told me all afternoon to let you get some sleep, but my weaker sense kept wishing that you would hurry up and awaken because I wanted to sit down there with you, and be near you, which I did. (And I'll do it again - if you don't mind, Sir & May I, Sir?)

Now, my dearest, I'd better say good-bye because I've got a huge week ahead me - my new receptionist is sick, and going to have an operation which means I double up again for a month or two probably, and go back on the reception desk.

Your loving
Olette

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March 11, 1940

Dearest Frank,

On account of this is being started after work, supper, study, church, Sodality meeting, walk home, & another half hour's study, it won't be a very long letter. You are probably thinking "why church on Tuesday night?" and "why study?" why church answered is a retreat, or mission, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday night for all unmarried people from seventh grade up. I figured that meant me so I'm making it. As for the studies I believe I told you, maybe not however, that every Wednesday night - starting last Wednesday ^{until July!!} is training school at the office. Every other Weds. night it is conducted by one of the administrative heads from Indianapolis and this Weds is one of those nights so I have to study my lessons. Just between you and me, next Weds. night, I mean next week I think I'll be feeling bad around 5 o'clock. That ought to make a good excuse to skip school, not? After all what good is it going to do me?

Darling, I really disappointed you right this past weekend didn't I? No letter on Saturday and you are good enough to pass it off and think "well maybe Monday" and then no letter on Monday. If you did that

to me I'd be heartbroken and never forgive you. But you know us women - if we do it, it's alright but let our boyfriends, fiancés, and husbands neglect us that way, oh boy, the 4th of July is everyday.

You shouldn't have minded too much though; after all, how could you think about silly letters from me when you can spend the morning with flapjacks, sausages, toast, jelly and coffee?

Honey, I'm glad you thought our ideas about going into a very, very small inexpensive place good. The more I think about it the wiser I think it is. A strange example came to me yesterday - Sunday - morning at church. After Mass Frances Kansas, a fellow choir member, and I were talking about plans, etc.; she's marrying in April and they are going into an apartment - big living room - in-law bed and kitchen. They it was just vacated by Elmer + Catherine Weinkauf who just moved into the home which was just vacated by Willie + Helen Trice who are moving into another home & buying it. They are all pretty good friends and all are getting just what they want through the set up. Sounds crazy but very logical (and true).

P.S. Tired now, going to bed - will write more first thing in the morning.

P.S. Tuesday morning: Pushed to death. Will write tonight
Callie

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Wednesday morning
March 13, 1940

Darling,

Today being one of the "ugliest" days we have had in a long time, the business is very dull. By an ugly day I mean that it has poured down rain all morning so far and the temperature has been between 26° and 34° making these two cities one sheet of ice with a very strong wind to boot. However, as long as one can stay inside it isn't bad and in my case it is good because I've had an opportunity to catch up with things here, which I have been doing fast and furiously. But now for a change I'm going to continue where I left off so abruptly yesterday.

The next question on the docket from your letter was whether or not I intended to go home after the honeymoon or go directly to Detroit. To tell the truth I don't care how we work that. I think it depends only on when we are able to get our bag & baggage up there. I would just as soon go directly to Detroit, especially if we should take a

northern trip it would save us coming down here and going back up. But then again we would have to load up a certain amount of our things before we could even begin to live in our new place. In Mind & Jim's case they came home around 6:30 or 7, I believe, and there over night. They were going to stay at our house and then they went up to tell Mrs. Shamo they were home and landed in the midst of a party so they called and stayed there over night, and then went out in the country to their new home the next day. Now of course you will have to be back for work on Monday, but we could go home ^(maybe Saturday) and get our things or even stay at our house over Sat. night and go to Detroit on Sunday or some such set up. We'll have to figure that out some way. Yes, aren't there just a million and one things to figure out. My mind has been in a whirl with plans, etc, but it's thrilling. There's only two things wrong about it all and they are first that you can't be here to work with me on it all and enjoy the thrill of it too, and secondly that I can't devote all my time to it instead of having to make it a sideline to my job here.

Darling, about my vacation and trip to Detroit, I have already signed my leave of

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Absence for the two weeks following
Easter Sunday; so at least it's definite
now. Then your idea about Thursday
evening is just what I would like
to do because as you say I want to
see Aunt Effie and I would like get
downtown a bit for ideas. That would
take the place of a trip to Chicago which
I had wanted to do. Mama says that
Aunt Effie has an aunt (or sister) who
is a very good seamstress and designer
in one of your Detroit Dept. Stores (don't know
why I capitalized that but in hurrying now), so I might
even look her up. So if you like the
Thursday idea I think I'll plan on it too.

You asked about this thing called
anemia - it's nothing serious; it's just
low resistance and mainly too low
blood count. The only thing they do for
it is advise rest, rest, rest, rest
and eat lots of blood builder - upper-
liver mainly. I won't die off on you
so don't worry about it, and it has
nothing to do with T.B. consumption +
such things.

Now, dear, I've got to skee daddle.

Tonight we have training school and a number of us are going to eat steaks at Palms Steak House between work and school time. Right now I feel like I could eat a horse.

I'll put about 15 cents postage on this letter because it carries about 3 lbs of love from me to you.

Yours
Colette

P.S. The postman said he'd carry the 3 lbs. free.

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Thursday
March 14, 1940

Honey,

"Think of me some, Love, Hank."

Darling, if you could only know how much I think of you. Every minute of the hour, every hour of the day, every day of the week. The minute I walk in the office door in the morning and before ^{saying} "good morning to anybody, I rush to my desk to go thru my mail for a letter - before I ever think of shedding coat, hat, or even gloves. Every hour of the day I think "what's he doing now?" "I wish I could squeeze in a letter now so that I could send it to the P. O. and get it to him earlier than by writing tonight" and such thoughts. When I don't find a letter in the morning I do stop and tell myself I'm greedy, I just got one yesterday, or else tell myself "You don't deserve a letter today." But my thoughts of you start even earlier than receiving the mail - when I open my eyes in the morning you are looking at me less than two feet away. In fact if I stretch in bed I knock you over with the spread of my arms.

I shouldn't tell you this but it's true —
Sometimes I even take you to bed with
me! After all, dear, your picture at least
brings you here to me. It's Paddy, the
next best thing, to me. Sometimes when
I start talking to you - sitting there on
my night table angels wonder if I'm all
there. Sometimes I think I just can't bear
to be 180 miles away from you this way.
I just long for one little kiss, one kind
word, one big hug from you. Sometimes
I think to myself - "Could he possibly love
me and want me forever and ever as much
as I do him?" "How did this all come about?"
"Why do I think only of him?" "Why do I
want to do nothing except what he would like?"
"Why do I want for nothing except what
he can give me?" "Why do I pray and
pray that everything will go all right
for him - the way he wants it to be?"
"Why do I pray and pray that nothing
will ever happen to him or to us
that would change things?" If there
was anything I could do to show you
how much I love you, I would. But as
it is now, and until I can show you
I will simply have to be satisfied with
telling you that I love you and I'm always
ALWAYS, night and day, thinking of you.

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This morning when I read your letter, I think I could read between the lines that even though it was cheerful and kidding in parts, I think it was only that way in parts; and that even though you said you couldn't get mad at me for that, or anything else, still down in the depths of your mind you were sort of peeved (or something) that I was neglectful and forgetful, which I really didn't mean to be. In fact when Naomi walked up to my desk while I was reading, I said to her "It's a good thing I haven't got a car or you'd be short two people in the division because I would be somewhere between South Bend and Detroit." She said "It's awful to be in love, Colette, more power to you".

I only hope, darling, that my neglectfulness and forgetfulness, if it be such, be not, is not, and could not ever make you think that anybody or anything comes before you in my train of thoughts. Because, dearest Frank, I want you to know that if for any reason whatsoever you were to say to me —

"Come up here - or come to me," regardless of where I was, what I was doing, who I was with or who said yes or no, I'd be there, and all the king's horses couldn't stop me. And I don't mean to exclude anything - even my job. I'm sure you realize that I'd quit in a second if it weren't for the fact that I was trying to swell my bank account - not for me - but for us, you and me.

Next, dear, I may be way off the track; I may be bringing up something that never has entered your mind (I hope), but just in case, I want to say that I hope you do not mistrust me. I hope that you have not thought, or are not thinking "these meetings (?), this training school (?), how about after the meetings (?), and after school sessions (?), and after church (?), and after night work (?)" I wish I could tell you without seemingly bragging, how faithful to you I have been and am; and how easy it is to be so. There never has been anything afterwards except home. (and above). Not once unless perhaps ages ago and then not without telling you the full details. Not that I don't have any number of chances and invitations, but just that it has to be you or mix. No interest, no fun, otherwise. So trust in me and rest

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assured that I'll never fail you.

Now I should get down to the business of answering questions and please darling, recall those that I have failed to answer and fire them back at me.

No, indeed I'd never put a one of your letters in a desk at the office. I carry them in my purse until they get answered then they go to file which is a white satin ribbon under lock and key, and I carry the key all the time. (one of them) Invariably on questions pertaining to the wedding, etc. ~~not~~ my not answering them there has been the fact that I just didn't have a decent, definite answer yet. If I could but know now what they were I'd try to answer them. There is one that I do remember. It has puzzled me since last week when you asked it and I just couldn't be sure whether I had answered it or not. So I will again in case I haven't as yet. It was about whether or not I had summed up all the news of the past year for publication on March 24. well, it wasn't hard to do because only one major thing

happened last year. That happened on the night of December 22nd when ^{one} "swell guy" from Detroit asked one numbskull gal from Miskawaka if she would marry him. Now I remember every word of it.

But in print it goes very different something like this: "Mr. + Mrs. J. Louis Gerstbauer announce the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter - - - - da - da - to - da - da - da. The wedding will take place on June 22nd at 9 o'clock in St. Joseph Church." Yes it's all arranged and we are planning on publishing it Easter Sunday. We intend to do some more shopping this Saturday afternoon. Then while I'm home on vacation Mom + I will get together on the invitation jobby. We'll have to get estimates, etc. Remind me that I want to ask you something concerning the wedding breakfast attendance too. It's rather involved and I'd rather not go into it now.

Darling I don't have the vaguest ideas about prices or apartments around here but I'll find out. I know plenty of ways to find out.

About the training school again, it's definitely set for Wednesday nights. I fought against Friday nights so vehemently that I guess they thought 25 people were fighting against that night which made a majority so they changed it.

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This is really becoming a thing to fill up your Saturday morning with. This letter.

You tell me to take care of myself so that someday I'll be a big girl. That's rich, because usually when women get big and wide and stuff the men don't love 'em any more. I think it would be better to stay little. But I'll take care of myself anyhow.

Sweetheart, the clock crept up on me and struck a quarter of 2 a.m.! I simply must throw in or I'll be leaving the horn tooting to take me to work before I know it.

One more thing - my ring really does need some sizing. I thought I would grow into the tiny difference, but it is a little too big. It can't come off - not that big; but it does slide around too much.

Now, dearest, I hope I have made you feel a little more at ease about some things, and I hope I

haven't said anything in all these
pages to hurt or gripe you, and
I hope you won't take any of it
any differently than I meant it -
(as though you could possibly know
what I meant) I'm a bad person
at trying to express myself.

It is now Friday again. If only
it could be next Friday instead
of this one with a whole week
more to wait. I'll write again
soo. Goodnite. Have a nice
weekend.

All my love, dearest
Colette.