

Mr. Wm. Gallo
151 Worcester St.
Boston, Ma.

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Hello, Frankie!

I'm very glad to hear that you are well. I am at this moment visualizing you in uniform. What a sweet little gob you make!

You know, little sailor, I don't think there is an uncle who can boast of having the grand nephews that I have. When they are home they treat me princely. When they are relatively near home or in far-flung lands they write nice letters to me. One thought at this moment fills my whole being--that my nephews think I am as grand as I think they are.

But in most cases to be thought grand one must do something--such as, in this case, writing letters to his loved ones far away. If, therefore, the standard of being thought grand is writing letters, I must be thought the diametrically^{opposite} of grand--lousy.

For I owe letters to all of you who--through man's greed, hypocrisy, half-truths, ignorance--are put at the altar of Moloch to shed your young blood.

If it is not too late, then, I want to make a few amends. First I shall write to you, then to Mario, and then to John.

You know, little boy in blue, I am not at all surprised at hearing the things that you have learned in the Navy. To me it was like snow in January, like grass in June: quite natural. For I think you are a pretty smart boy. In anything you'll tackle you will, given half a chance, hit the mark.

Why, in my imagination I have already seen you a hero. I have seen you at your post, have seen you under fire, have seen you fulfill every duty, have seen you decorated, have seen you...die.

To die. What an awful thing to imagine, you might say. Not exactly. It is not awful to die for a great cause. Why, heck, a man will readily give up his life for even one person--the girl he loves. However, if such thing should come to pass, remember, my dear nephew, that we who remain will fight to rid the world of the causes of war, of ignorance, of hypocrisy, of poverty, of those supposedly all-powerful myths in which we are made to believe and which cannot, when the crucial time comes, save the life of even one man.

Enough of that. Yes, Frankie, Mike's passing was sad. I liked him very much and I miss him and shall always miss him proportionate to my liking him. Death...to triumph over death is to live a full life and then when death comes to laugh at it.

But how to live a full life? That's another story. A few words about my work, since you have twice inquired. I have not yet had any of my work published. My job leaves me very little time for my writing, and I have yet to put the finishing touches to so much of my work. When this war is over I have planned to take off three months of the year. However, some time ago I wrote an article for the Boston Globe and it was accepted, the editor telling me that he read it with much interest.

Enough of me; I am not an interesting subject. (Wow, my back. Being both tired and lazy, I'm typing in bed, and it's not very comfortable.) Don't worry, kid, I won't tell your mother. Mothers are tender creatures: they worry more than is necessary.

And talking about your mother. She and Madeline were here to see me, preparatory to their going to see my brother. I took them to a night club and we dined and wined. I should have said **wiskied**. After your mother had the second drink, her face rosied, her lips reddened, her eyes sparkled. She looked radiant! I was proud of her, and you would hve been,