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A.M.S. Braganza.

?/??/?

Darling,

Picture a balmy sunny afternoon,
a flat calm sea, dazzling Whites,
glamorous dames, (a little exaggerated that
last bit), and a smoky tenor sax

with guitar. Get a gander of your
old man stretched out on deck,
browning in the sun with sun-glasses
'n all - or shall we say redning in
the sun. Round about me are the

other unfortunates, (sic), in a similar
state, some of whom have bowed
public opinion attuned to England's
wintry skies + have taken off more
than the existing regulations permit.

(Cries of - "Blimey, what Ruces" - or -
"Yoo hoo" - and others too numerous
or indecent to mention). The
tune being played is "Sentimental
Over You" and you don't need three
guesses to find out who requested it.

All this and "luckies" too. You got all that sweetie-pie? Well that's how it is - a bloomin' pleasure cruise - pay pounds for this in peace time - servants to wait on you - eggs and bacon for breakfast, (belay that last drip of mine concerning food - it was just the chef's day off), with a current delicacy, "Butter Flavoured Cookies". The only fly in the ointment is the lack of beer, etc. - this is a 'dry' ship.

I understand from Jim that he's written to Muriel suggesting that he's keeping a keen eye on me + watching the body grow daily. I think I'm keeping the old woodypois in check - no way of telling, of course, but I can still button up the pants and I should say that was good enough, wouldn't you, honey? As a matter of fact both Jim + Geo. have only just come to life - the first two days were very trying to any but the

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strongest of stomachs and the number of empty seats at the mess tables was most noticeable. Of course Old Man Gannet here had a couple of field days - my personal record for breakfast was four boiled eggs and a proportionate lashing of bacon - alcohol I had to take it very easy inbetween times. The trouble was, with the other services aboard the Navy had to keep up a reputation for being good sailors, and if one felt at all queasy one had to stay below in case a sudden attack let the Senior Service down. Incidentally, I can't for the life of me think why they suggest an ocean voyage for invalids, unless it is to give them the idea that after a bout of sea-sickness their original complaint was it so bad after all. As I said before, J. & G. were sufferers to some degree and have only just come round - the immediate result is a reduction in my rations and this

evening I'm forced to yaffle Cookies
by the dozen to keep hunger at bay.
By the way, I don't know whether
you've contacted the other two wives
but if you can compare notes maybe
anything missing in one or the other's
narrative might come forth.

One of my purchases in the Canteen
was a couple of pairs of underpants
à la American - striped affairs - very
pretty, very chic. All the gear sold
is American, hence the fact that no
coupons are needed. (My deepest
sympathy, sweetheart - I've heard
tonight that Mr. Hugh (Curse-the-man)
Dalton has announced that you'll
get no more coupons til Sept. -
I can imagine your feelings!). Judging
by the amount of stuff sold aboard
here it would seem that the States
aren't suffering to any extent in this
war.

I think I'll say "goodnight" now,
darling, & see if I can't get a little
telepathic love over the ether. Do I
love you? You kidding?

The Next Day: - All this reatime isn't doing you one & only's temper any good. Luckily we've been able to see a little scenery for the last day otherwise I'd say that the _____ isn't all it's cracked up to be - just about the same as you see off Sarshead Pier. But it's all a matter of viewpoint I suppose, & I must admit that all sorts of romantic songs went through my mind as I gazed over the rail yesterday afternoon, altho' for my money you can't whack "Home Sweet Home".

The big problem just about now is the dhobeying situation. When one is perambulating about in Whites it's not easy to keep up the standard of the Royal Navy regarding spotlessness, especially when fresh water is rationed & irons non-existent - that is, except with the dhobey firms. We have to ~~patronise~~ patronise these firms but I fear

they don't use persil so that, as the days go by, white becomes battle-ship grey. But we're still the tidiest ratings on the ship & if we had a little more money and, perhaps, a little more polish in our manner, we might be quite a hit with the gals. (When I say 'we' I speak generally, & present company is always excepted - I've got my love to keep me warm).

Speaking of gals - I can't, of course, say who or what they are - I should say that I'm not quite a hermit aboard here & I have had a chat to one or two. They're all volunteers, & before they're allowed aboard they must satisfy the Service that they're unmarried & have no dependants or home ties of any kind whatsoever. You can imagine that such women are meat & drink to the gallants & the things that go on - my goodness. Luckily for the general conduct aboard, everybody

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has to be below decks after blackout and further, all gals must be in their quarters at 21.30. Such restrictions hamper combined ops. more than somewhat, altho' its surprising what goes on at any old time in the day. Of course not all the gals are interested in the more heavy going friendships and quite alot of them work damned hard on the more general side of entertaining. They cause some amusement among the Naval contingent when they talk about the 'blunt end' & such like landlubberly terms, but they get their own back when an aircraft passes over - recognition aint our strong point.

This letter will be dropped off en route like No. 6. So I've got to more or less complete it every time I put my pen down because I dont know when they'll close the mail bag. Whenever I start this

Writing I get to wondering when
I'll get a letter from you. If I
were on my own on the ship I
think I'd go mad with melancholia
& depression & all because there'd
be no word from you to make
life easier. It'll be a fortnight or so
before I can expect to get mail
from home & during that time I'll
got to live on glances at your
photo & memories - I find it
absolutely necessary to make any effort
to put you out of mind for a
period, even if it's only for a half
hour, to relieve the pressure within
me. If I didn't I just wouldn't
be fit company for this crowd. I
wonder how you're taking it, darling,
& I wonder, too, if our hopes of a
little offspring have materialised -
boy, that'll really be news, but if
not, well, ... there'll come a time.
In case this is too far to go, sweets, I'll
say ta-ta for now
With oceans of love,
L

FROM: H.M. SHIP
MAIL OFFICE: MAS. PORT
PASSED BY CENSOR
SIGNATURE: [Signature]
DATE: 14

ON ACTIVE SERVICE
⑦

Received
21.4.45

MRS. LEE WILKINSON

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