

(This is a transcription of my mother's letter to my aunt. It may be difficult to rea

State Sanatorium (for TB)
Booneville, Ark.
April 18, '41

Dear Georgie:

I have been wondering if you would ever write to me again. I wrote you some time ago and sent two poems of mine. I wonder how you liked them? Well, regardless, I would like to hear from you.

I am so terribly worried I don't see how I am ever going to stick it out here. I know George, you think the world and all of Aus. He is your brother. But he has kep alot of his true nature to him self, or rather from you. No one on earth knows what I went through while living with him. I have never revealed it all to a soul. I am afraid to tell it to my people for fear that they would do something that could not be made right easily. It has been no need to tell you. I was just a kid and had no one to go to. But I want to let the past be forgotten. There is nothing that will help it now. I forgave him for everything, because I know I was no angel. I only did the best I could. I think I proved it by landing up here. Well, he treated me like hell when I was here. Kept me worried all the time.

But he has always had a convincing way of talking a person into something. When we got our divorce and he promised to help me until I started working, I fully trusted him, because I thought surely I would be working within a few months. I knew I would not take a cent from him when I began work. But instead of going to work I got a bad X-Ray. He has forgotten he made a promise. I am not writing this George because he isn't taking care of me. I am making my own, as little as it is. I am making pajamas for patients. I should be used to doing without. I never had anything before I married and after married, I sure as hell never had anything except what clothes you gave me. But Aus has been telling me he payed \$45 a month for the children's board, and it is only \$35. Well, as long as he isn't sending me a penny, he can buy those children's clothes. I got a letter from Mrs. Thomas this A.M. She was telling how much she has to spend on their clothes. She also wants me to agree to let some of them be adopted. Well, that would be the last straw. I just couldn't stand it. They are all I have left.

I can never have another man. The thought of going out with one is loathsome. I am only looking forward to being with my children. I will let my brother keep them until I can go to work before I will let them be adopted.

Aus is the cause of me being up here the first time and this time. To every place I went he wrote and told them I had tuberculosis. I was going to school, taking a business course when I came up here to work. He had written and told them at the school a whole mess. I had to leave. The Drs. here didn't want me to work then even tho I got a good X-Ray and had been working eight hours. So when they entered me as a patient I just worried my self sick.

What I want you to do, Georgie, is try to get him to take care of the children. Maybe you will have some influence with him. But if you feel like you do not wash to do so, please let me know immediately. I going to try to make him by law. I do not want to make him angry because he is just as likely to leave the country as not.

I know he has it, because he is not sending me a cent. I think he is putting up a sad story to Mrs. Thomas, and wanting to let his children be adopted, so then he would be free to ruin some other kid's life like he has mine. George, I have been with him long enough. He doesn't give a ~~damn~~ darn for his children. He proved that when I got the divorce. Not one word did he say about me taking the children. But he would have turned hell upside down if I had ask for any of his money.

Well, Georgie, I don't know how you will take this, but I don't see how you can feel he is in the right in not providing for those children.

I was just think(ing) today. It is his birthday, the first in 13 years that I have not done something for him. Before I came up here I always baked him a cake. While up here I either sent him a card and sometimes a present. Not once did he ever think of doing some little thing like that for me.

Let me hear from you soon

Love

Alice

(Four, perhaps five, years after this letter was written my mother was dead of tuberculosis. She was not yet 30 years old. I am trying to locate the poems she wrote. I have them somewhere and will make copies for you. This is the only copy of a letter she wrote that I have.

I am sorry to say that the picture she gives of my dad is pretty accurate. He was more than willing to let his children be adopted. I do not know the full story of the custody battle. I gather from this letter that my mother was granted custody. I suspect my Aunt was instrumental in the subsequent legal battle over custody, which dad won because his sister was going to take care of his children, and, of course, my mother was very ill.

Mother was probably not correct about dad's ability to support us in the home (clothes, board, etc.) He was so busy with Communist party work that his earnings were minimal.

I don't know the full story of my parents' marriage, but I have had hints that it was a "shotgun" affair. Mother was 12 or 13 and pregnant. She was 17 when I was born and I was the third child.)