

August 3, 1972

Dearest Nell,

How wonderful to hear your blessed voice this evening. I am really sorry for my silence, which has been due to Piedy's illness - a terrible strep throat, the worst she has ever had (and of which she is now quite free,) and then a love affair with Internal Revenue Service, who got me much the same way they got you last year and wasted a lot of my time and took much of my money and mostly irritated me to a point of such exasperation. They have really messed me up, and I am going to pursue this when I get time. Right now I am in that glorious and exhausting state of simply working from the moment I awaken early in the morning until I cannot work any more at night, and every intrusion (such as lawyers, etc.) is more than I can stomach. They are really in the wrong - it is a matter of getting large advances for Pocket Book rights to books for a five year period, and then spreading the income over 5 years, which because of some idiot technicality, IRS is not recognizing in my case. I have just paid them to get it off my back and leave me free to work, but under protest and I may pursue it (I would eventually have to pay it all anyway, as I understand it, but over five years). Well, I am just slightly less astute than you about such matters, so you know what that means; and it appears that my accountant is only slightly more astute. I don't know. Anyway, HMCo has promised to get me a good man who specialises in author's taxes.

Fr. George will be thrilled about your use of his pictures in the child's book. I tried to call him but he is not in, so I suppose he is up on the hospital floors making visits to the sick. Will try him again tomorrow.

This is a poor letter, but ~~perhaps~~ people have just come in. I will close it and add some pictures tomorrow before mailing it. Great love to you, Nell, from all of us here.

*John*

The only recent, recent picture I have of Susan is this big thing. So forgive it. Hope it doesn't arrive in too bad shape. I have no stiffeners here and can't go out and get any without delaying this whole thing too much.