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FREE

Miss Annie Moore **VIA AIR MAIL**
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Dear Annie

You're very hard to write to. Your mother thinks writing is the ~~easiest thing~~ like breathing to me and if I don't write to her for a while it's like a kid holding his breath until he turns purple to hurt his mother's feelings; but it's not like that really. It's hard for me to write a letter if I care for somebody enough to be afraid of their not understanding what I'm trying to say. I guess it's hard for you to write to ~~me~~ me, too. At least when you write or say something I believe you. There's no reason to believe anything I say, I haven't ever made a habit of telling the truth, always trying to protect somebody or myself. Then when I have something to say that's ~~really~~ true ~~and everything~~ it just doesn't fit in with everything I said before. ~~Anny~~ Anyway it's really a mess.

News is I'm not really doing very much, what work we have here comes in spurts, the rest of

the time I just sleep or read. I have time to write a lot of letters I guess but I just don't feel that good about anything, just want to get this time over with and come home. It's like a prison term, what would you write home about if you were a convict? What all you're going to do when you get out? What all happened before you went in?

There's an air strip with helipads about a hundred yards from this small aid station where I work. One of the helipads is occupied by a dustoff ship, helicopter ambulance you know. The dustoff stays here close to where it might be needed; when somebody out ~~is~~ fighting in the countryside around here gets wounded his leader calls us for help and this helicopter with the red crosses on its nose and doors goes and gets the guy and takes him to

the main hospital at Long Binh, 30 miles south-east of here. Sometimes the dustoff will pick up ~~some~~ wounded soldiers and will be on the way back to Long Binh when they get another call for help. Then they drop the first load of guys here ~~and~~ for us to take care of and go back for the other guys. The medics on those dustoff choppers have to be pretty brave! lots of the time when they land to pick up casualties the fire fights are still going on, they get shot down a lot. I kind of wanted to work in dustoffs here but its too late now. Anyway I was talking to the medic of this dustoff, kind of admiring ~~him~~ the amount of guts and devotion he has to have. But he knew I had been a field medic, right in the fighting, because

of the patch I wear, the combat medical badge
and it was strange, he was telling me that
how dustoff medics admire field medics; it takes,
he said, a lot of guts to ~~say your friends~~
~~comrades~~ get ~~shot up~~ ~~the~~ patch those
patch up your friends without falling apart.
His patients are all strangers, he said, while
mine were all friends, it's easy to do what
has to be done if you're doing it to a
stranger.

So here we are, all the field medics admiring
dustoff medics and ~~themselves~~ belittling themselves,
while all the dustoff medics are admiring
the field medics and belittling themselves.
kind of funny, but really normal. When you
do something like that, actually do it, you think,

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No big gig, anybody ~~would~~ would do the same, while if you haven't done something, you can admire the person who does it, say, "that takes guts, I could never do that." It's the way people are. If I thought as much of myself as I used to think of combat medics I'd be even harder to live with than I'm going to be.

Knowing something like that, that a certain variety of heroism is no big gig is like having a pet invisible dragon in your backyard. I mean nobody ~~would~~ is ever going to believe that you actu-ally have a pet invisible dragon in your backyard. You know? And also you feel a strange bond with ~~other~~ the other owners of pet invisible dragons.

Oh well, Annie, this letter is too long already. What I wanted to tell you at the first is that I like you and no matter how all this turns out, my house is your

house.

love, Pat

P.S. This letter wouldn't be long for your
mother, but it's long for me. - P